

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE BRUNTS SCHOOL

Mansfield

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 133266

Headteacher: Mr J Dalton

Reporting inspector: Philip J. H. O'Neill  
3162

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 249852

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 - 18

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: The Park  
Mansfield  
Nottinghamshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P. A. Lyons

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3162	Philip J H O'Neill	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are students taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
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30596	Jack Brown	Team inspector	Chemistry	
17011	John Clawley	Team inspector	Science	
30215	Helen Feasey	Team inspector	Geography	
23137	Ron Fewtrell	Team inspector	Business education	
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology Biology	
15606	Christine Hill	Team inspector	Design and technology (sixth form) Special educational needs	
3755	Trevor Hulbert	Team inspector	Psychology English as an additional language	
11548	David Lee	Team inspector	Mathematics	
32222	Christopher Marshall	Team inspector	English Drama	
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Art and design	
32215	Andrew Philips	Team inspector	History	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Brunts School is a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school with 1544 students on roll, including 261 sixth form students. There are 26 more boys than girls in the school. The school is bigger than other secondary schools; the sixth form is also bigger than most other sixth forms.

The school is located on the north-east side of Mansfield. Ninety-seven per cent of students are from white British backgrounds; 37 students have English as an additional language and at two per cent, this is below average. Fourteen per cent of students claim free school meals; this is close to the national average. The proportion of students on the special educational needs register, at 11 per cent, is below the national average; the proportion of students with Statements of Special Educational Need is average. All other indicators suggest that students as a whole come from a range of backgrounds similar to that of students in most other schools. The attainment of students on entry is average. The school has Specialist Arts College status held jointly with All Saints RC School.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The Brunts School is a school in the making, where students learn well as a result of a high proportion of good and very good teaching and standards are above average in many subjects. Leadership and management have been focused on the re-organisation and the transition to the new accommodation, which has required a disproportionate amount of energy. The headteacher has a clear vision of what is now required to mould the school into a cohesive learning community. Against this background, the school succeeds in providing a good education and offers satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school achieves good standards in many subjects, particularly in science.
- Students receive a high proportion of good and very good teaching and some that is excellent and, as a result, they achieve well.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good and they work hard in lessons.
- What is provided for students with special educational needs is very good and they are included well
- The sixth form is a strength of the school.
- The careers advice and guidance provided for students in Years 7 to 11 is very well organised and well connected to the world of work.
- Teachers and support staff are fully committed to the best interests of the students and have worked very hard to mitigate the negative effects of re-organisation.

#### **What could be improved**

- Information and communication technology is not used well enough to support learning across the subjects and not all students in Years 10 and 11 are taught information and communication technology.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- Students are not supported satisfactorily in their spiritual and cultural development.
- Assessment is not always used well enough to support students' learning.
- Students' health and safety are not always assured in the present state of accommodation which is unsatisfactory overall.
- The learning resource centre is not used well enough to support learning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED**

This is the first inspection of this new school. The staff and students have only been together since September 2002. Since then, the energies of the school have been directed towards containing the demands of the changeover to a site which has made it very difficult to sustain the ordinary routines of the day. The headteacher and his senior colleagues have worked tirelessly in preserving the level of order and safety needed to support the students' learning. Years 8 and 9 have experienced three different school contexts within the last three academic years and have no previous involvement with other students. There has been considerable work in helping these students to settle in to yet another arrangement. Given these circumstances the school has made significant moves forward in establishing the new regime.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 and students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	N/A	N/A	B	A
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Just one year's results are available. In Year 9, standards in the 2002 tests in English were well below average for all schools and for similar schools, with girls doing better than boys. Results were average in mathematics and well above average in science. Overall, results in the GCSE examinations were above average for all schools and well above average for schools in similar circumstances. The gap between boys' and girls' results was narrower than the national gap. The subjects that attained the best results were double science, physical education, art and design, textiles and food technology. The subjects that did less well than the others were mathematics, English literature, German, graphic products and music.

In lessons and in work seen, standards are above average in drama, mathematics, science, art, geography, history and music. They are average in English, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education and citizenship. Standards are below average in information and communication technology, as students are not taught the subject well across the curriculum. Standards of literacy are average, whilst those of numeracy are above average.

Students, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their earlier known standards.

The school has set challenging targets for improvement.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes to learning are good. They show enthusiasm for their lessons and work hard. A few students are more reluctant learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is good; around the school it is less good. Students are frequently noisy and occasionally oppressive. There is too much litter and some damage to new accommodation.
Personal development and relationships	Teachers and students generally work well together and are supportive and mutually respectful. Students are not yet formed into a cohesive community and their relationships and personal development show some immaturity.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory attendance is having a negative affect on achievement. There is far too much lateness to lessons and this disrupts learning.

Students make a real effort to make sense of their current rather unfinished environment. Given the fact that there are no social areas where they can relax, they preserve a reasonable sense of order in their lives.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion that is very good and some that is excellent. Teaching is unsatisfactory in relatively few lessons. English, mathematics and science are well taught, as is numeracy across the curriculum. Literacy is satisfactorily taught. Teaching is good in all subjects and very good in design and technology. Information and communication technology is taught well in lessons dedicated to the subject but satisfactorily across the curriculum.

Students with special educational needs are very well catered for by the teachers and support staff. Students for whom English is an additional language get good support in acquiring the level of fluency needed to keep pace with their peers.

Students are good learners. They are eager to refine and improve their work. They enjoy their studies. Learning in design and technology is particularly keen.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a satisfactory range of learning opportunities with strengths in what is provided for students who are disaffected. The school does not meet the requirement to provide information and communication technology and religious education for all students in Year 11. It does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Students with special educational needs are provided with very good support in lessons and when they are withdrawn for special help. They are included in what the school offers to the full extent of their capability.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Students with English as an additional language are supported well in the acquisition of fluency.
Provision for students' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory overall. Teachers offer good role models and what is provided for students' moral and social development is satisfactory. However, there are too few opportunities for students to reflect on issues of deep personal concern, they are not well prepared to live in a multi-cultural society and they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop mature and responsible attitudes as a school community. However, the satisfactory social and moral provision enables students to work successfully in groups and in teams. Provision for students' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its students	Recent upheavals mean that the school does not yet achieve satisfactory standards of safety. It does not monitor all aspects of health and safety routines with sufficient rigour. Teachers know the students well and support them well in their learning informally. However, the school does not use well enough the data available on attainment to inform teaching and learning.

The school works satisfactorily with parents and works hard to get them more involved in students' learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers have worked extremely hard to manage the transition and consequently the school has not grown appropriately as a community. They are now well placed to develop the whole-school policies that are needed to support the long-term growth of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well led in the exercise of their responsibilities and offer a good level of support to the school's work. They have ensured that statutory requirements are met apart from those relating to the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all students and the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes some measures to evaluate its performance in relation to other schools locally. There is not sufficiently rigorous interrogation of the attainment data.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are well used, with the exception of information and communication technology and the learning resource centre, which is under-used by subject areas.

There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory in art and design. Resources are inadequate in modern foreign languages and physical education. The school is not yet in a strong position to compare what it provides with that of other schools, but does take care to ensure that in all items of major expenditure considerations of cost and best value are paramount.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Their children are well taught.</li> <li>• They find it easy to approach the school with concerns or questions.</li> <li>• Their children like the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The range of activities provided for their children outside lessons.</li> <li>• The way the school works with them to support their children's learning.</li> <li>• The way work is provided for their children to do at home.</li> <li>• The behaviour of some children.</li> </ul>

Sixty-seven parents attended the meeting that was held in advance of the inspection to gather parents' views. Thirty-seven per cent of parents returned the questionnaire and it is the views of these parents that are represented above. The inspection findings confirm the parents' positive views of the school. The inspection judgement is that behaviour is variable: the great majority of students behave well in lessons but do not behave as well outside lessons. Inspectors judge that the school's work with parents to support learning is satisfactory, as is the information provided for parents about their children's progress. The work provided for children to do at home makes a satisfactory contribution to their learning.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM THE BRUNTS SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form caters for 261 students, attracting broadly equal numbers of male and female students. It is enriched through the inclusion of students from overseas. It is bigger than most other sixth forms nationally. Most students follow a combination of A/AS and vocational courses. Twenty-five AS/A Level courses are offered, four of which are offered through partnership arrangements. Overall, attainment on joining the sixth form is average. A high proportion of the students leaving Year 11 stay on into the sixth form. A few students transfer from other schools. Students are admitted on to courses on the basis of their interest and capacity to succeed. The sixth form is steadily growing.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an effective sixth form and a strength of the school. Teaching is very good and students reach good standards and achieve very well in relation to their attainment on joining Year 12. The sixth form is cost effective. It is well led and provides good value for money. It meets the needs of all students well and provides them with very good advice and guidance. The school and wider community are enriched through attracting students from overseas to the sixth form.

#### Strengths

- Standards attained are very good in art, chemistry and business studies and good across the subjects.
- The quality of teaching and the support and academic guidance the students receive are very good.
- The range of one-year courses enriches the curriculum through widening students' experience.
- There are very good relationships and the level of personal development is very good.
- The sixth form is well led.

#### What could be improved

- The quality of teaching and the standards achieved in psychology in Year 13 are unsatisfactory.
- The learning resource centre is not used to best effect to support learning.
- Religious education is not provided as required.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Very good.</b> As a result of very good teaching students make very good progress with their learning. Standards achieved in 2002 were above national averages. The subject benefits from very good leadership and management.
Biology	<b>Very good.</b> Students achieve well as a result of very good teaching, which motivates students to strive to do well. The subject is excellently led and managed.
Chemistry	<b>Very good.</b> Well-planned lessons taught by enthusiastic teachers ensure that all students are fully engaged in their learning. Consequently, students make good progress in relation to their prior GCSE results. The subject is very well led and managed.
Design and technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards of work are satisfactory because design skills are underdeveloped. Teaching is satisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop as independent learners. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory.
Business	<b>Very good.</b> Achievement, teaching and learning are all consistently very good. Leadership and management are very good.

Information and communication technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards in examinations were well above average. Teaching and learning are very good. There is not enough use made of information and communication technology to support learning in all subjects. Overall, the subject is well led and managed.
Art	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average. The specialist teaching is very good and promotes high levels of technical skills in observational drawing and painting. The subject is well led and managed.
Music	<b>Very good.</b> Students are achieving well because of good quality teaching and an ethos which provides support and a stimulating musical environment. Leadership and management are very good.
Geography	<b>Very good.</b> Teaching is very good and standards are above the national average. Students with a wide range of prior attainment make good progress. Fieldwork makes a good contribution to students' learning. The subject is well led and managed.
Psychology	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Teachers' subject knowledge is good and the GCSE course is effectively taught. The quality of teaching at AS level is inconsistent and it is poor at A2. Absence of effective monitoring of progress and weak liaison between partner institutions further limits the progress of higher-attaining students.
English	<b>Good.</b> Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, they teach well and as a result students contribute very thoughtfully and their written work is detailed and perceptive. Leadership and management are good.
French	<b>Good.</b> Students generally achieve well. They benefit from small group teaching in receiving individual support. Teaching is always good or very good and students are enabled to learn independently and co-operatively, while authentic materials bring the language alive. The subject is well led and managed.
German	<b>Good.</b> Achievement of students in Year 12 is unsatisfactory, while the one student in Year 13 achieves satisfactorily. Teaching is good or very good and materials are well chosen. This results from good leadership and management.

The teaching of physics was sampled and found to be at least satisfactory and students reach average standards. In one lesson seen in English literature, students demonstrate average standards, which represents good achievement in relation to the standards they brought to the course.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are supported well in their learning and are helped to keep effective track of their progress.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is well led and satisfactorily managed overall, though the head of the sixth form does not have a strong enough role in monitoring and evaluating teaching and overall provision.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What some students feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their teachers are accessible to help them with their work.</li> <li>• The school helped them to settle into the sixth form and its demands.</li> <li>• They are challenged in their work and taught well.</li> <li>• The range of courses available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advice about their future options.</li> <li>• The range of activities available outside lessons.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their progress.</li> <li>• The advice they were offered about the courses they should take in the sixth form.</li> </ul>

About two-fifths of the students completed a questionnaire in advance of the inspection and inspectors had meetings with different groups of students during the week of the inspection. The inspection team agrees with the students' positive views of the sixth form. It also agrees that, although careers advice is provided and some of what is offered is good, it is not sufficiently refined to support students in their future pathways.

Sixth form students like the school. They recognise that staff teach them well and help them to become mature and responsible. They enjoy the range of activities provided for them. The inspection team judges that this range is wide and varied and does not, therefore, support the concerns of some students. The inspection team also refutes the concerns of students about the advice the school gives them about sixth form options, which is good. The school also gives students good guidance about their studies even though the quality and detail is variable.

A significant number of students expressed concern about the advice the school gives them about future options when they leave school. The school has a wealth of information available. This can be daunting for the students, particularly those in Year 12 who have recently begun to focus on life after school, without very regular and skilled tutor support. The support is caring and committed but not always skilled in specific careers guidance.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

*Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.*

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and students' achievements**

1. Just one year's results are available. In Year 9, standards in the 2002 tests in English were well below average for all schools and for similar schools, with girls doing better than boys. Results were average in mathematics and well above average in science. Standards in English are beginning to improve under the clear direction of a new head of department. Standards in mathematics are also improving as a result of greater emphasis on basic skills in numeracy and effective teaching. At the heart of the good results in science lie good teamwork and a shared commitment to excellence in the department. In general, the school is becoming more focused on the students' learning and is tackling weaknesses in assessment that get in the way of even further improvements.
2. Overall, results in the GCSE examinations were above average for all schools and well above average for schools in similar circumstances. The gap between boys' and girls' results was narrower than the national gap as teachers have taken care to match what they teach more to the needs of the students. The subjects that attained the best results were double science, physical education, art and design, textiles and food technology. In these subjects the students' enthusiasm for their work is a marked feature. The subjects that did less well than the others were mathematics, English literature, German, graphic products and music. Differences across the subjects can be traced mainly to differences in the quality of teaching and, in some cases, to changes in staffing.
3. In lessons and in work overall, standards seen are above average in drama, mathematics, science, art, geography, history and music. They are average in English, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education and citizenship. Standards are below average overall in information and communication technology as students are not taught the subject well across the curriculum, so they do not have enough experience of the subject-specific applications of information and communication technology. Additionally, not all Year 11 students have dedicated lessons in work with computers. Standards of literacy are average, whilst those of numeracy are above average. There are inconsistencies in the way that numeracy and literacy are taught across subjects. Students reach good standards in the vocational courses.
4. Students, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their earlier known standards. The teachers are good at building steadily on students' earlier learning through effective recapitulation of what is already understood. A further key to the students' good levels of achievement is that most lessons provide a progressively challenging range of activities.
5. The school has set challenging but feasible targets for improvement.

#### **Sixth form**

6. Overall, standards in the sixth form are above average. This reflects the good standards reached in examinations. In lessons and in work seen standards are well above average in mathematics, chemistry, art and business studies. These high standards are rooted in the quality of teaching and the students' will to succeed. Standards are above average in English, biology, geography, modern foreign

languages and music. Students reach average standards in design and technology, information and communication technology and psychology. In information and communication technology, students reach well above average standards in the examinations, but students do not demonstrate a sound knowledge of the uses and applications of information and communication technology in other subjects.

7. Students achieve well as a result of the very good teaching they experience. Students build well on their earlier learning through a good emphasis on tracking progress and through discouraging the fainthearted from settling for less than excellence in their work.

### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Students like their school and enjoy their lessons. They work hard and enjoy their studies, particularly when teachers engage their interests through good teaching. Year 11 students, for example, eagerly anticipated their mock interviews with local business people and gave much thought to their letters of application during their careers lesson. The results would have pleased even the most particular prospective employer. These positive attitudes ensure that lessons progress with focused intent. Parents recognise and appreciate these characteristics of school life. Only occasionally is this not the case. A few students allow their concentration to lapse and become restless and disruptive, mainly when they find the lessons dull. Teachers rarely allow these negative attitudes to upset the learning of others.
9. Students talk engagingly about their involvement in activities outside lessons. Music is a particular favourite. A highly appreciated feature is the reunion concert for former students.
10. In lessons, students are courteous and disciplined and behave well. They respond to the clear expectations of staff and recognise when they fail to meet these expectations. There is a significant difference between some students' behaviour in lessons and around the school. It is not easy for a school population to behave sensibly when routines keep changing because of temporary changes to play areas, paths and walkways. Many, but not all, students appreciate these difficulties and manage themselves sensibly around an extremely difficult site.
11. A significant minority of students are careless of their environment and disrespectful of the needs of others. The buildings and grounds have too much litter and damage. Unnecessarily rowdy and boisterous behaviour sometimes upsets the pleasant socialising of most of the students. The school usually manages to persuade the misbehaving students to conform to expectations by using a good range of sanctions. The school rarely excludes students permanently but often excludes badly behaved students for a few days to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and secure environment. The school deals quickly and fairly with any bullying incidents.
12. Students relate well to each other in lessons. Genuine trustful relationships amongst the class in a Year 10 health education lesson, for instance, ensured that the students spoke easily about potentially embarrassing topics. This results from the schools satisfactory provision for the social and moral development of the students. Many students care tenderly for others who have challenges due to physical disabilities. They notice when colleagues in wheelchairs need help in corridors. Students are usually, but not always, kind to one another and considerate of the needs of others. A few students are disrespectful to other students and even to adults. This is not the norm but is nevertheless a feature of some of the behaviour in the grounds and around

the school. However, most of the interaction between adults and students within the building is positive.

13. The incomplete condition of the site hinders students' personal development, which is satisfactory overall. Most students try hard to negotiate the changing environment and the temporary routines. Some offer help to visitors encountering these difficult circumstances. Those students who have been given some responsibility for school life fulfil their duties carefully. They are proud to be members of the school council and say they would welcome greater involvement. Some students, however, use the environmental conditions as an excuse to be irresponsible and careless, a disconcerting feature of school life reported by some parents. These students do not demonstrate appropriate maturity for their age and fail to act as sensible citizens. They do not yet identify with the school.
14. Too many students, particularly in Year 11, are often absent. This means that attendance is below average for secondary schools. Figures for unauthorised absence are high due to the difficulty of correctly registering students on alternative curricular courses that take students out of school. The school is careful to describe every single unexplained absence and additional holiday as unauthorised absence. An increasing number of parents remove their children for holidays during term time despite determined efforts by the school to dissuade them. Attendance is slightly better than last year as students settle to their new school and routines begin to bed down. The late arrival of students often disturbs morning registrations and individual lessons. This inhibits the purposeful start to sessions and restricts the time available for constructive work.

### **Sixth form**

15. Students in the sixth form have very good attitudes to their studies. They apply themselves diligently to their work and are eager to achieve to the full extent of their competence. They work hard to refine and improve their work and seek help when they need it. When they join the sixth form they are quick to establish the habit of independent study. They are hampered in this, to some extent, by the location of the learning resources centre. In lessons, they are good at engaging in discussion and refining their ideas through debate. Their work is presented to a good standard with careful attention to the conventions of writing. They use information and communication technology, often to good effect, in the presentation of their work, but not all students have the same level of skill and confidence with computers.
16. Students form constructive relationships with one another and with their teachers and this shows in the relaxed but focused way that lessons are conducted. They work in an atmosphere that is calm and free from oppressive behaviour. They are thoughtful about their younger peers and many of them work with them in reading and other activities. They show in their dealings with one another a deep respect for the differences of belief and background represented in the sixth form. Relationships with the international students are a real strength. Attendance is satisfactory and improving.

### **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

17. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 11. Of the lessons seen, teaching in one in every 22 lessons was excellent, very good in a third and good in a further third; a quarter of lessons were taught satisfactorily. There were a few lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory and in one teaching was poor.

18. What secures the good quality of teaching above all else is the quality of planning, rooted in a strong level of expertise in the subject taught. This shows itself, too, in the skill with which many teachers present even the most demanding ideas in a way that students can tackle. This helps students to see themselves as significant thinkers and encourages them to take risks with their own ideas. There are times when lessons are seething with curiosity and an eagerness to find out more.
19. The sharing of the point and purpose of the lesson with the students helps them to see the relevance of the proceedings and almost unfailingly engages their interest and enthusiasm. The most abiding features of many lessons are the crisp start, the clarity of purpose and clear expectations for behaviour and pace of learning communicated by the teacher. Teachers are adept at combining serious intent with a wholesome touch of good humour. There are a few students who would test the patience of Job but they are usually helped effectively to settle and overcome the temptation to accept a modest pace or entertain their neighbours. Teaching is occasionally weakened when teachers do not manage behaviour effectively or when they do not provide opportunities for students to express their ideas. There are inconsistencies in the way homework is provided but it is generally used satisfactorily to support learning.
20. The quality of teaching in almost all subjects is at least good and is very good in design and technology and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in information and communication technology. The teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are some inconsistencies in practice. In English, teaching is strengthened by providing a progressively challenging sequence of activities, pitched at the right level for students of all levels of attainment. In mathematics there are key strengths in the teachers' knowledge of what they teach and in the quality of planning. In science, teachers are good at working with individuals to let them know how they are doing and how they might improve. This results from the good use of honest praise. The teachers' knowledge of their subject is a recurring feature of good teaching across the subjects. This is particularly evident in the teaching of religious education.
21. Students with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers and support staff understand their needs and ensure that they make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Their needs are not always carefully addressed in mixed attaining classes. Students for whom English is an additional language in the home are taught well to develop a good level of fluency in speaking, reading and writing. Teaching is good in the learning support centre and the student support centre, for students on flexible learning programmes and literacy progress units. Students respond well to the very good teaching in the student support centre where the retention and success rates for students entering further education or employment are high. Students get very good support from the teaching assistants who know them very well and are excellent at building students' confidence and raising their self-esteem.
22. Students are good learners. Most have good concentration spans and apply themselves to their work with a mixture of earnestness and good will. They usually know how well they are doing, but often not precisely enough to know how to improve. This is a result of weaknesses in the way assessment supports learning. Learning in design and technology is particularly good: the students' interest and enthusiasm for the subject is palpable.



## **Sixth form**

23. The overall quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good. Of the lessons seen, one in 14 was taught excellently, a half were taught very well and a quarter well. One in every six lessons was taught satisfactorily. There was unsatisfactorily teaching in only one lesson. In the sixth form, as in the rest of the school, the most marked feature of good teaching is teachers' breadth and depth of knowledge. This gives students the well-founded assurance that they will be challenged to the full extent of their competence. A further strength of sixth form teaching is the logical structure of the lessons: ideas are developed in a way that engages the students, without overpowering them with technical language.
24. The teachers are particularly good at building on the students' existing knowledge and in relating what they teach to their everyday preoccupations. This acknowledgement of the students as thinkers and as makers of meaning provides spiritual depth to what might otherwise be dull intellectual exchanges. The relationships of the teachers with the students acknowledge the students' capacity to control their own destinies and to have well-founded views.
25. In the subjects inspected, teaching was very good in almost all subjects and good in English and physical education. The teaching of psychology was unsatisfactory in that it did not provide students with the right level of understanding for A Level work. Furthermore, students are unsure about how to improve their work as they do not get clear feedback on their level of understanding or their progress.
26. Students in the sixth form are very good learners. They take their studies very seriously and set out from the start to reach standards that do justice to their capabilities. They know how well they are performing and how to improve their work. They do not settle easily for their predicted grades but seek to exceed them.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?**

27. The school offers a satisfactory balance and range of learning opportunities to students from Years 7 to 11 and these are improving as the building work becomes less obstructive. The curriculum meets statutory requirements apart from those relating to the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Not all teachers introduce students to the applications of information and communication technology that relate to the subjects they teach. Because of the timetabling arrangements in Years 10 and 11, one-third of the students in these years are not taught information and communication technology.
28. Although arrangements for setting work to the advantage of most students, there are weaknesses. In modern foreign languages some boys with behaviour difficulties are placed in bottom sets and so denied access to German. In geography and history the GCSE syllabus content is taught to all students in mixed-ability groups. These arrangements do not always work well for students with special educational needs and for lower-attaining students.
29. The option block arrangements are complex. Option Blocks 1 to 4 operate an alternating four or five lesson allocation, thus averaging nine lessons a fortnight over the two years. Option Block 5 only provides four lessons a week. As a result of these arrangements, double linguists have to study German from Block 5 (because French only appears in Block 2). Similar restrictions apply if students opt for a selection of performing and creative arts that necessitates taking a Block 5 choice. Arrangements

for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Though there are examples of good practice, for example in religious education and music, there are inconsistencies across subjects in the extent to which teachers use opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy to best effect.

30. Students with special educational needs receive a very good range of activities and additional support. Their individual educational plans are carefully constructed and used well to support learning. All teachers are aware of the needs of these students and respond appropriately in lessons through tailoring what is taught to meet their needs. The withdrawal programme for English and physiotherapy is very well organised so students have the same curriculum as mainstream students at a level matched to their individual needs. Information and communication technology is used well to support students' progress in literacy. The planned curriculum is wide ranging and well balanced. It is relevant to the needs of all students, who present the school with a wide range of needs. However, the school has not identified students who are gifted and talented. Its provision for autistic students is affected by the unsatisfactory accommodation in the learning support centre. In the student support centre there has been a very good development of courses for 14 and 16 year olds that involve outside agencies, parents, heads of subject and students in the planning and organisation. Some of these courses involve students in effective work-related learning, linking with the community and local employers to prepare them for the world of work. Students enjoy these courses because they are challenging. There are good established links with partner schools and colleges.
31. Students for whom English is an additional language in the home get good support in the acquisition of the level of fluency in English required to pursue their courses confidently.
32. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, restricted as a result of the present state of the site. There is a good range of sporting activities, given the limits on outdoor facilities. There are many activities related to performing arts status. There are few lunchtime activities because of split lunch hours, but there is much art, drama and music work after school. This takes the form of tutorials and workshops rather than clubs. These activities make a good contribution to broadening the students' experience.
33. What the school offers to support work-related education is good. Elements of the personal, social and health education programme in Years 7 through 11 are specifically work related. Good careers education is strengthened through strong links with commerce, the emergency services and armed forces. This programme culminates in a very effective Year 11 module that closes with very formal applicant interviews, conducted by personnel staff from local businesses and services. This activity is particularly helpful in giving the students confidence in presenting themselves and their talents.
34. The personal, social and health education programme is well devised but not always taught to the same standard by all teachers. The school takes health and relationships education very seriously and ensures that students are taught by a highly skilled team. This means that sensitive issues are discussed openly and freely, helping students acquire informed opinions. Outside agencies contribute regularly to the programme so that students get good advice and information about, for instance, the dangers of drugs.
35. Arts College status and the accompanying activities mean that the school has good links with the local community. Local organisations engage school students to perform

at various functions, for instance at the local printers' dinner. The school organises a local arts week in July. Many local businesses sponsor activities at the school and this positive involvement helps students' understanding of life beyond school. Specialist College status also helps promote good links with the primary schools. The school led an arts project with several of the local schools who now have Artsmark recognition. The school plans to send dance and drama teachers to work with the younger children.

36. The school has a good induction programme which involves Year 7 students visiting their old primary schools to support the next intake. These features mean that the overall links with primary schools are good.
37. Students' personal development is satisfactorily catered for as teachers work hard in lessons to ensure that students behave well and are confident about their learning and themselves. Parents recognise this feature of the school. Students take sufficient responsibility for themselves and others in lessons because they are expected to. Parents, however, also comment that behaviour around the school is not as good and there is too much litter and damage to school property. The inspection team endorses these parental views. The school has not prompted the students to feel sufficient ownership of this new environment. This is because the school has paid insufficient attention to aspects of students' personal development beyond the classroom.
38. Overall, the school makes unsatisfactory provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. What it offers to support moral and social development is satisfactory. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. There is too little emphasis on this aspect of the curriculum and on its impact on students' progress, attitudes and achievement. The teaching of religious education provides very good opportunities in these areas and there are valuable examples of opportunities for reflection and discussion of spiritual and moral issues in some lessons. The personal, social and health education programme contributes little to this area. Students are encouraged to consider and respond to questions about the meaning and purpose of life. However, many opportunities in most subjects are missed to enhance this aspect of students' personal development.
39. Assemblies take place twice each week for each year group. Assemblies rarely constitute worship although one assembly attended did provide a small opportunity for reflection, but was not connected to the overall assembly theme. There are no plans to provide for tutor time to operate a thought for the day programme that is linked to assembly themes. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. There is some evidence of planning in departments for spiritual development, but this is inconsistent and lacks structure.
40. Provision for moral development is satisfactory. Opportunities are targeted largely through the personal, social and health education programme. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex education, drugs awareness, values and family life, equal opportunities, vandalism, discrimination, prejudice and ethical issues such as human rights provide a sound curriculum for discussion and for the development of positive attitudes and values. The school has clear expectations of students knowing right from wrong and they respond well when they are corrected. The headteacher and staff are good role models for students. Several subjects contribute well in providing opportunities for moral development. In religious education, for instance, students respond to aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues. In physical education there is a clear awareness of the importance of playing by the rules. However, there are too many missed opportunities throughout the school to enhance this important aspect of students' personal development.

41. Provision for social development is satisfactory. The school provides some good opportunities for students to take responsibility and develop social understanding. The personal, social and health education programme provides many opportunities in this area, in dealing with topics such as rights and responsibilities, healthy environment, sex and love, citizenship and decision making. The school council provides good opportunities for students to develop their communication skills and make important contributions to the life of the school. Almost all subjects enable students to develop social skills. Their ability to work well together in groups, to participate in discussion work and to respect the views and opinions of other is a strong feature of classroom life. More needs to be done, however, to develop greater personal responsibility and social understanding.
42. Provision for students' cultural development is unsatisfactory. There are several opportunities for students to be involved in activities that extend their cultural development. The school's curriculum, however, does not provide planned opportunities for students to develop an awareness of the variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country. There are, however, aspects of religious education that make a significant contribution. The school's curriculum in personal, social and health education provides some opportunities. For example, topics such as that on individual differences make some contribution, but this area could provide for greater opportunities to develop attitudes and values. There are aspects of religious education that make a significant contribution, especially in terms of the study of different religions and the cultures that support them. Some subjects do make a significant contribution to the cultural development of students. Visits to the theatre, museums and art galleries all provide opportunities for students to explore their own cultural heritage and those of others. Too many opportunities are missed for students to develop a full awareness of both their own culture and that of others in multi-cultural Britain.
43. The school has good links with colleges and universities. The link with Sheffield University is particularly strong and helps students gain a good understanding of university life.

### **Sixth form**

44. The sixth form offers a good range of courses and other experiences to the students. However, it fails to provide religious education as required by statute. Courses meet the interests and aptitudes of the students but do not provide vocational pathways at the higher levels. The arrangements for managing the consortium arrangements with the college and other schools generally work well, are carefully monitored and have helped to enrich and extend the range of options offered. Communication with the nearby college has been poor in respect to the teaching of psychology but very good with respect to law. A strong feature of the sixth form is the enrichment provided through the admission of international students on to courses.
45. Sixth form students are helped to become mature and responsible young people because the school pays good attention to their personal development. They are carefully guided to correct programmes of study so they feel good about their courses. They appreciate their own common room and enjoy socialising at breaks and during free periods. They are encouraged to study independently and the school has created suitable study areas for this purpose. Students help younger students with their lessons. The sports leadership programme is a particular favourite. The sixth form committee confidently feeds back ideas and concerns to school management. The school encourages students to organise their own activities and they respond well.

46. Arrangements for ensuring that students develop their skills in communication and numeracy work well. The provision for the development of skills in information and communication technology is not good enough in all subjects.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?**

47. Despite the recent upheavals, staff already know students well and take time to meet individual needs as they emerge. Parents and students recognise and applaud this feature of school life. Students say they always have someone to go to for help and support and this helps them feel secure in the school. Year team leaders lead their teams well, helping tutors and teachers provide support to worried or troubled students. Staff care carefully and efficiently for students who are sick or injured. The school uses child protection procedures correctly.
48. Some major health and safety concerns, mainly related to the buildings and construction activities, mean that the school cannot ensure the safety of the school community. Stairs and corridors in the new block are too narrow. This adversely affects evacuation procedures. Some of the other arrangements for ensuring that students are protected from fire are unsuitable. Construction staff do not adhere to safety procedures at all times. The turmoil experienced during the building programme has interrupted routine inspecting and recording programmes of, for instance, the proper inspection of electrical equipment. The programme has also presented the school with construction activities which have not been completely identified and assessed for risks. Some of the departments with practical activities do not yet have secure arrangements for protecting students and staff at all times.
49. The condition of the buildings and site also adversely affects the behaviour and personal development of students. Staff help students behave well in lessons with the consistent application of a clear classroom code of conduct. The school has not succeeded in creating the same consistency of approach outside the classroom. The inspection team recognises the severe challenges which the condition of the building and grounds present. It also recognises some missed opportunities to promote and support good behaviour around the school. When students do behave badly, staff manage these situations carefully. They ensure that other students do not feel intimidated. Staff handle bullying incidents quickly and efficiently.
50. The school successfully uses short term exclusions carefully, but regularly, to secure safety and promote improved behaviour. It rarely uses permanent exclusion and only as the ultimate sanction after trying many other strategies. The flexible learning curriculum is a particularly successful strategy which supports those students who might otherwise not be in education at all.
51. Attendance is slightly better this year because the school is improving its attendance procedures. These are now satisfactory because the school has a more rigorous first day response system. Students and parents recognise the system, which is effectively used by many, but not all, staff. Some variation exists in the efficiency of tutor follow up to absence, which means that unauthorised absence looks higher than at many schools. There are inconsistencies in teachers' response to noted absence or lateness.
52. Overall, procedures for assessing students' progress and attainment are unsatisfactory. There are references to assessment in guidelines issued to departments but the school does not have an up-to-date practical assessment policy. The responsibility for establishing a school-wide assessment policy rests with a member of the senior management team. This is in the early stages of development and there are wide

variations in assessment arrangement across subjects. Some of these are unsatisfactory, especially in design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. The use of information available to departments is limited in Years 10 and 11 and even less for Years 7 to 9. The school plans to introduce a new management information system in order to provide accurate information tied to National Curriculum levels.

53. The school has secure procedures for assessing and identifying students with special educational needs. With the review and monitoring procedures that are in place, the school is very effective in meeting the needs of these students. The school sets challenging targets for students that they can achieve and liaises very well with other agencies, parents, pupils and teachers. Teachers and teaching assistants know the students very well and support them very effectively. The school complies with the new Code of Practice and Statements and reviews are up to date. The provision in Statements is fully implemented. The arrangements to support very low achievers in making progress in mainstream lessons are less successful. The monitoring of students' achievements by the special educational needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants is very good.
54. Not enough use is made of assessment information to guide curriculum planning in most subjects. Detailed analysis of students' performance in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in primary schools has just been established. This information creates a base from which predictions and targets for performance in the national tests and subsequent GCSE examinations can be made. However, with the exception of mathematics and science, this information has yet to be utilised by the departments. Currently, there is no cohesive approach to the use of assessment data in this way. Although there is evidence of developing practice in a few departments, not enough use is made of information in others. The school does not monitor and moderate assessment practices within departments to ensure that data is adequately used to inform target setting and that approaches to the marking of students' work are consistent. There is no evidence to indicate that the school is monitoring the achievement of different groups of students and this means that the needs of all students in the school cannot be met. There is an urgent need for the systematic identification of good practice in order to raise standards.
55. The school carefully guides and supports students in their academic and personal development. Tutors know their students well and offer good informal support. Students endorse this and claim they are happy to approach their tutors for help. They praise the help that is given. Some tutors use morning registration periods to support and guide students but others simply perform routine administration whilst students read or chat. This variable quality means that some students get more regular help and guidance than others.
56. Subject teachers also know their individual students and carefully encourage them to try harder in areas of weakness. This was a positive characteristic of many of the lessons seen and one which helps students with their studies and their attitudes to work. The school has successfully introduced student development interviews. These happen several times each year for every student. Students welcome these sessions and recognise their value. The school currently lacks a system for collecting and collating detailed information about every student in each of their subjects. This inhibits the potential of these interviews to offer focused guidance and specific targets for improvement. This also prevents the school analysing data to identify, track, predict and target improvement or progress for different groups of students.

57. Staff produce satisfactory annual reports for students, but these do not always contain enough detail about what students actually need to do to improve their performance in all subjects.

### **Sixth Form**

58. The school guides and supports students carefully in the sixth form. This helps students perform well in their studies and become sensible and mature young people. Staff constantly promote attendance and insist on explanations for absence. This means that attendance is satisfactory in Years 12 and 13. Very good relationships exist between students and staff so students confidently seek help and guidance.
59. Staff provide very good information and advice about how to work and study. The learning resources centre is, however, too far from the sixth form area to be of value. Sixth formers appreciate their own small study areas. Many expressed concerns in the inspection questionnaire about the advice for future options. The school produces a wealth of information about careers, courses and choices and helps students visit universities and experience work situations. Students find this plethora of information daunting and claim they need more specific help. Some tutors are skilled in meeting these needs, but others are not.
60. Students are kept closely informed of their progress. In addition to their annual report and regular parents' evenings, students receive a report giving clear details of the standard at which they are working in each subject, along with a target grade. Informal assessment is used well to support students in their work and teachers provide clear positive and helpful feedback on work. The general data gathered on examination results, however, is not used well to guide the planning of students' learning. However, teachers make some good use of target setting to help students achieve to the full extent of their competence.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

61. Parents commend the school. They recognise that the school expects their children to work hard and to do their best. Some parents feel that the school gives them insufficient information about how well their children are doing. The inspection team judges that annual reports are satisfactory. Most teachers give parents an adequate description of students' progress because they know their students well. The lack of carefully defined assessment criteria in some subjects impacts negatively on the quality of the detail of this information. The school fails to report separately on information and communication technology for those students who do not take it as a specific subject. This means the reports fail to comply with legal requirements. Nevertheless parents recognise that their children are well taught and know about the good progress that students make.
62. The school tries hard to communicate with parents. Parents get a comprehensive booklet, in addition to the prospectus, before their children start at the school as well as the chance to see the school individually during the school day. This means that Year 7 students settle quickly in their new environment. The school subsequently surveys parents to ensure that this settling has occurred and to glean ideas for the future years' induction arrangements.
63. Most parents find it easy to approach the school with concerns and questions. This is because the school is eager to work in partnership with parents. Year team leaders and other pastoral leaders quickly follow up any emerging situations. They send letters

home congratulating students for good performance. Staff instigate parental discussions when they have identified concerns.

64. Some students use their planners well to manage their homework. This is not always the case and therefore the inspection team appreciates why some parents might not commend the school's use of homework. However, most staff give homework regularly and this supports the progress which students make.
65. The school is particularly good at involving parents in the careers education programme. Throughout this programme, which begins in Year 7, parents are kept informed. By the time students do their work experience and mock interviews in Year 11 parents have sufficient information to ensure that they can support their children's future choices.
66. Parents of students with special educational needs are appropriately involved in discussions about their children's education, particularly in the reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs. Parents are positive about the extent to which they are involved.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

67. The school is well led and satisfactorily managed. At the forefront of what it provides is a clear commitment to raising standards and to promoting an environment where all students thrive. The realisation of these intentions is currently thwarted to a considerable extent by the state of the environment and uncertainties about the completion and usefulness of some of the new buildings. There is also a general lack of preparedness for the kinds of leadership and management needed to manage the creation of a new school through the amalgamation of three schools where there were strong loyalties to established practices. The headteacher works hard to manage the emergence of the new school and has done much to preserve a reasonable level of order. The development of the new school has not been experienced by all the teachers as a benefit. There are residual longings for the way things were.
68. The headteacher is well supported by his senior colleagues, but senior managers do not yet work as a high-performing team. They have been individually preoccupied with managing the impact of the development of the new site. Delegation to middle managers is not strong enough, particularly in relation to their monitoring role. Despite these weaknesses, the teachers are driven by a desire for excellence and feel that, generally, they are well supported in this enterprise. The school knows its strengths and how to build on them. It uses information on attainment well to manage future provision and to plan developments. However, information and communication technology is not used well to support learning. Challenging but feasible targets are set for improvement and progress towards these targets is monitored carefully. The school has not been in a strong position to create a development plan to guide the long-term development of the school. What exists by way of planning is intended to support the school in its current transition to a new school.
69. The leadership and management of all subjects are at least good and very good in music and religious education. Leaders of subjects have ensured that work is supported by the right level of documentation and that policies and procedures are implemented consistently. There are some weaknesses in the monitoring of teaching and learning, with the result that there are inconsistencies in the whole-school management of behaviour. The implementation of school policies on behaviour routines and expectations are not always adhered to by all teachers. It must be said, however, that the school site, in its current state, is very difficult to supervise effectively.



70. Provision for students with special educational needs is very well organised. Both the learning support centre and the student support centre are very well led and managed. They make a valuable contribution to students' learning and progress. The very well-informed governor takes a very active part in supporting the work of the centres. Both areas reflect the school's aims and values in their work, especially in helping students to enjoy learning, develop positive attitudes and self-image and to reach their full potential. Through regular meetings and informal discussions there is good monitoring of the work of both centres. There is a commitment across all staff to meet the broad range of students' needs and the capacity to do so. The individual education plans of students with special educational needs are drawn up with great care and their use is managed well.
71. The management of finance to ensure that expenditure is appropriately directed to agreed priorities is good. The headteacher and the governors are provided with the level of financial information they need to carry out their responsibilities. Spending decisions are clearly rooted in the students' interests and the long-term benefit of the school. Funds earmarked for particular purposes are appropriately spent. Funding and resources set aside for providing for students with special educational needs are consistently directed towards the purposes intended and this shows in the quality of what these students experience. The day-to-day administration of finance is very good. The carry forward of 5.3 per cent is sensible in the context of remaining uncertainties about the state of accommodation.
72. The school is not complacent about its achievements and compares them regularly to other schools nationally and regionally. Governors are closely involved in the justification of all major items of expenditure. Contracted out services are closely monitored to ensure that they provide the best value for money. The day-to-day running of the school is very well supported by efficient administration staff. First contact with the school communicates a sense of order and purpose, despite the general disruption created by the building site.
73. The governors are well led in supporting the work of the school. They work closely with the headteacher. They have done their best to redress the undue stress created across the school by the current building programme. They are steadily forming themselves into a group that uses well their wide range of complementary experience and expertise. They have ensured that statutory requirements are met, apart from those relating to the provision of a daily act of collective worship, the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum and the provision of religious education to sixth form students. They take care to ensure that the school's commitment to the inclusion of all students in all that it offers is borne out in practice, particularly in relation to students with special educational needs.
74. There is a good number of qualified and experienced teaching and support staff to teach the full range of the curriculum. The high turnover of teaching staff has not had an impact on overall standards or the quality of teaching. There are areas of the school where there has been insufficient take-up of training to assist staff in meeting the demands of reorganisation and the need to teach a wider age range of students. Overall, there is a good match between qualifications, experience and responsibilities. The school's strategy for performance management is good and is backed up by an effective policy for staff development.
75. There is an effective programme for the induction of staff new to the school. Student teachers are provided with good support and worthwhile experience during their time at the school. The school recognises the need to develop a specific induction programme

for newly-appointed middle managers and for the impact of in-service training to be monitored better.

76. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is good in music but unsatisfactory in art in that the kiln cannot be used until the new building has been completed. There are many aspects of the new buildings that already cause concern. Not least of these is the unsatisfactory location of provision for students with special needs. Additionally, the main stairway in one of the main buildings is too narrow and the corridors and pathways are inappropriate for wheelchair users. The learning resources centre is half the recommended size for a school of this type. Despite these difficulties, senior managers work hard to maintain the level of order and safety required to sustain the life of the school. The general appearance of disarray does not encourage a feeling of belonging amongst the students.
77. There is an adequate range of resources to support students' learning. Resources are good in music, religious education and citizenship. They are unsatisfactory in art and design in that there is not enough information and communication technology equipment to support learning. This is also the case in physical education. There are too few books available to students in modern foreign languages and the tape recorders tend to produce distorted sound. The learning resource centre is not used well enough by all curricular areas to encourage independent learning. Humanities is the curricular area with strongest links with the centre.

### **Sixth form**

78. The sixth form is well led and satisfactorily managed. The head of the sixth form has a clear vision for its future development but does not have a strong enough voice in decision making. Her role is not clearly enough defined, particularly her role in monitoring the quality of teaching. This showed itself recently when there were problems about the quality of teaching in psychology taught in a partner institution, which were not addressed effectively.
79. Governors take an active part in shaping the direction of the sixth form, ensuring that it is cost effective and runs efficiently. The school makes good use of other local providers and works efficiently in sharing resources and teachers. The cost and benefits of the sixth form are clearly understood. There is a well-founded belief that the sixth form raises students' aspirations and helps them to become clearer about their destinies beyond school. It also has a significant impact on encouraging students to continue on in school.
80. A strength of the sixth form is the good range of qualified and experienced teachers who teach the courses offered. This shows in the quality of teaching and in the high expectations for attainment communicated to the students. Staff have many opportunities to develop their professional skills and make good use of these.
81. Though the sixth form social area is well appointed and often provides a good place for students to interact informally with one another, it becomes over-crowded when all the students assemble and this occurs regularly. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory, though very good in business studies and music, and unsatisfactory in art and design. There are too few places for private study and the learning resources facility does not work well as a stimulus to independent learning. However, it must be said that the students are quite imaginative in finding quiet corners for study.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to improve further the standards of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

### **raise standards in information and communication technology across the school by:**

- ensuring that students' skills in this area are developed through all subjects;
- ensuring all students in Years 10 and 11 have an appropriate level of provision in information and communication technology;

(paragraphs 3, 6, 27, 46, 68, 73, 77, 115, 124, 130, 148, 158, 159, 162, 163, 165 and 179)

### **improve attendance and punctuality by:**

- implementing more consistently the attendance policy;
- ensuring that all staff respond consistently to lateness;
- working closer with partner institutions in monitoring the attendance of students on alternative curricular courses that take them out of school.

(paragraphs 14, 16 and 132)

### **address weaknesses in provision for students' personal development, including their spiritual and cultural development ,by:**

- offering more opportunities for the exploration of beliefs and values;
- meeting the requirement for the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all students;
- promoting styles of teaching that value students' questions and their capacity to think for themselves;
- encouraging students to take responsibility for their own actions through, for example, respect for property and through caring for the school environment;
- making better use of tutor periods in order to reinforce the school's values and ethos.

(paragraphs 38, 39 and 42)

### **strengthen the use of assessment by:**

- using the data available on attainment to set reasonable targets for students;
- developing a rigorous assessment policy and implementing it consistently across the school.

(paragraphs 22, 52, 54, 113, 164, 179, 184, 189, 191, 201, 214, 216 and 219)

**address urgently the risks to health and safety identified during the inspection by:**

- meeting legal requirements in relation to health and safety;
- addressing the matters raised in paragraph 48.

(paragraph 48)

**seek ways of improving the use of the learning resource centre in supporting learning**

(paragraphs 77, 133, 249 and 264)

### **Sixth form**

**address the weaknesses in the provision of psychology to Year 13 by:**

- improving the quality of teaching;
- working more closely with the providing institution in monitoring teaching and standards of attainment.

(paragraphs 263, 265 and 268)

**provide religious education in the sixth form as required by statute.**

(paragraphs 44 and 73)

**The following are additional matters for the attention of the governors:**

- the role of the head of sixth form, as currently understood, is not strong enough;

(paragraph 78)

- the monitoring role of middle managers is not always carried out effectively;

(paragraph 68)

- homework is not always provided consistently.

(paragraphs 19, 64, 265 and 267)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	153
	Sixth form	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		72

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	7	45	58	35	7	1	0
Percentage	5	29	38	22	5	1	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	4	31	13	9	1	0	0
Percentage	7	53	22	16	2	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form here as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### Information about the school's students

<b>Students on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1283	261
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	176	

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs	14	16
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	150	23

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	32

<b>Student mobility in the last school year</b>	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	66
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	53

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	141	113	254

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	55	86	101
	Girls	70	79	82
	Total	125	165	183
Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above	School	49	65	72
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC Level 6 or above	School	15	42	37
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	65	89	88
	Girls	77	84	79
	Total	142	173	167
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	56	68	66
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	18	35	31
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	116	138

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	63	103	109
	Girls	83	124	133
	Total	146	227	242
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	57	89	95
	National	51	87	95

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	40.8
	National	39.8 (38.4)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	71
	National	N/A

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	45	41	86
	Average point score per candidate	28.6	25.5	27.1
National	Average point score per candidate	37.2	42.4	39.8

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	45	41	86	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Average point score per candidate	28.6	25.5	27.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
National	Average point score per candidate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1481	100	1
0	0	0
14	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
1	2	0
0	0	0
8	0	0
2	4	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
12	0	0
3	0	0
13	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	88
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.3

#### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	33
Total aggregate hours worked per week	949

#### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	60
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#### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.3
Key Stage 4	22.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	2,686,811
Total expenditure	2,552,177
Expenditure per student	1,743
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/a
Balance carried forward to next year	134,634



**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.72
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	8.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate 37%**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1564
Number of questionnaires returned	564

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	52	9	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	37	52	8	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	54	14	5	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	59	16	5	3
The teaching is good.	25	62	7	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	43	22	5	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	45	8	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	41	4	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	24	46	18	5	7
The school is well led and managed.	33	48	8	1	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	51	10	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	38	17	7	15

**Other issues raised by parents**

Parents expressed concern about the disruption caused to their children's education resulting from the establishment of the new school. They had particular concerns about the state of the site.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good overall, and some is very good or excellent.
- The leadership of the department is good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Results in the Year 9 national tests are well below the national average.

82. In 2002, standards were well below the national average in the national tests at the end of Year 9. The results gained by girls were better than those for boys. Standards in English were well below those attained in both mathematics and science and far fewer students gained higher levels in English compared with the other two core subjects.
83. Work seen during the inspection week, however, was more in line with national expectations. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement. By Year 9, higher attaining students speak fluently, explain their ideas fully and use terminology precisely when describing the features of literary texts, for example dramatic irony. Most other students respond well to questioning and show a willingness to develop ideas when encouraged to do so. Most students read confidently and in lessons where there are high expectations they are keen to read aloud. They understand the texts they are studying and are able to locate information when carrying out research.
84. More able students write fluently, thoroughly and with a good degree of accuracy. Their work shows a good awareness of audience, is well organised and ideas are expressed precisely and imaginatively. For example, Lady Macbeth diaries written by Year 9 were carefully worded and a Year 7 poem described the sun as 'exercising' the flowers. However, there are students who write in far less detail, make frequent spelling mistakes and who only write in simple sentences which are not always correctly constructed. Their work is not always paragraphed and they do not achieve the right tone for their intended reader.
85. In 2002, the proportion of students gaining A\*-C grades in English was just below the national average. Girls' attainment was better than that for boys. Standards in English were a little ahead of those attained in mathematics but below those in science. The results in English literature were below those for English and well below the national average. Students tend to do less well in English literature than in other subjects they take and the gap between the attainment of girls and boys is wider than for English.
86. By the end of Year 11, work seen during the inspection showed that standards are close to the national average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement. Higher attaining students speak confidently when discussing literature and refer closely to texts to support their views. Their good command of terminology enables them to make points concisely. This was evident in a single gender Year 11 lesson where students studying Wilfred Owen responded articulately to questions, listened attentively to each other's views and talked purposefully in pairs. Most lower attaining students also contribute positively to discussion, though their comments are less sustained.

87. Most students in Years 10 and 11 read competently and have a sound understanding of the literature they are studying. A Year 10 top set worked in a very focused manner on *Great Expectations*, highlighting the techniques used by Dickens. When reporting back, their comments demonstrated a subtle understanding of language. Year 10 students of different abilities worked well on poetry, making good use of their knowledge of sonnets to deduce missing words. However, some less able students experience difficulties when trying to locate evidence to support their views.
88. The best writing is detailed, carefully structured and accurately written. High attaining students adopt a formal tone when writing about literature and comment perceptively on the effect of techniques. Their narrative writing features varied sentences and some are adventurous in their written expression. Other students organise their writing well and revise it to improve accuracy and tone. Less able writers produce work which is not detailed and have difficulties with the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation.
89. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers provide individual guidance and involve them in whole class teaching. Sometimes more accessible tasks are provided, though this was not evident in all lessons. When available, teaching assistants offer a good level of support. In one lesson, a sixth form student worked very effectively with a Year 8 boy ensuring he understood the work.
90. The quality of teaching is good and students learn well. However, during the inspection week there were significant variations with some lessons that were very good or excellent but two that were satisfactory. The best lessons have clear aims and are carefully structured. Activities are varied and the pace is good. Teachers have high expectations, show good subject knowledge, are skilful with their questioning and ensure all students are actively involved. As a result, they are motivated, keen to contribute and develop their understanding. This was evident in a mixed ability Year 8 lesson where students were analysing *The Ballad of Billy Rose*. Clearly recorded objectives and very focused questioning ensured all students were immediately very attentive. Students' understanding was carefully developed through a well-pitched sequence of linked activities, with students reading and discussing the ballad, finding out more about its conventions and drafting their work.
91. In less successful lessons there were insufficient structure and variety so that some students became inattentive. Teachers were less clear when setting tasks and in one lesson the task was too challenging for some students to complete fully. As a result, some were confused and unable to make good progress.
92. Most students have positive attitudes and their behaviour is good. During the inspection, it was evident that high expectations and good planning ensure that behaviour is correspondingly good. However, it deteriorates when lessons lack pace and firm management. Overall, teachers' marking is encouraging and offers constructive guidance. However, while a clear marking policy has been introduced, not all staff apply it consistently.
93. Though students produce English work on home computers, it is not easy for whole classes to access the school's facilities and as a result, few English lessons benefit from new technology. Independent reading and research are usually conducted in English rooms rather than the learning resources centre.
94. A start has been made on implementing the literacy strand of the National Strategy, particularly in Years 7 to 8. Some teachers are incorporating literacy objectives in their planning and using the recommended lesson structure. In some lessons, good use is made of strategies such as modelling writing and using grids to organise note taking.

This good practice needs to be spread into all lessons across Years 7 to 9 further to improve both literacy and teaching. Though the department has a clear long-term plan for work in these years, there is no corresponding medium term plan to identify where exactly teachers will address specific objectives. Currently, there is no member of the English staff with sole responsibility for developing this aspect of the department's work.

95. Though the Curriculum Team Leader has only been in post since September 2002, she is already offering good leadership to colleagues and there is a strong commitment to the further development of the department. The current development plan identifies appropriate priorities and offers the department a very clear sense of direction. Understandably, at this early stage in post there are aspects of management which need to be developed further. For example, there is no departmental policy document to guide the team's work and, although lessons are observed informally, there is no formal procedure for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The department has the will and capacity to improve further at a rapid rate.

## **Literacy**

96. Provision for literacy throughout the school is satisfactory and standards of literacy are average. Some aspects of the literacy strand of the National Strategy have been implemented in Years 7 and 8 English lessons, for example, teachers' planning sometimes incorporates specific literacy objectives and there is a clear focus on reading and writing skills. In a number of other subjects there is some support for the development of students' reading and writing.
97. In Year 7, the teaching of literacy to those who need special help is well organised and established. Here, good liaison between the heads of English and learning support, supported by careful reference to test data, ensures the right students are identified for these lessons. The units are taught well by teacher assistants to small groups of students and an emphasis is placed on transferring skills into subject work across the curriculum. This work is complemented by the use of a computer program that meets the literacy needs of students, engages their interest and enables teachers to monitor progress. The development of less able readers in Years 7 to 9 is well supported by a paired reading scheme. Sixth formers work regularly with younger students in the learning resource centre and comments about progress are rigorously recorded in reading journals.
98. In some subjects, support for literacy is well established and informed by attendance at training in literacy across the curriculum. This is particularly evident in history where, during the inspection week, a teacher attended training and on the next day successfully tried out a strategy for improving students' literacy skills. Using a cut up and jumbled essay, Year 11 students had to decide on the correct sequence and identify the title of the essay. This close attention to language successfully enhanced students' understanding of how to write a good history essay. In other subjects such as art and information and communication technology, attention is paid to the understanding of key words and, in the case of art, students are helped to write well-organised evaluations.
99. Despite these elements of good practice, the development of literacy across the curriculum lacks co-ordination and currently there is no member of staff responsible for managing its further development. As a result, students' literacy is supported to different degrees in different subjects and good practice is not always shared.

## Drama

Overall, provision for **drama** is good.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good and students learn well.
- The monitoring of students' progress in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- There are detailed schemes of work for students in all years.
- Leadership and management are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Procedures for monitoring the progress of students in Years 10 to 11 need to be developed further.
- Current accommodation is unsuitable for teaching drama.

100. Overall, standards are good. In 2002, 19 students were entered for GCSE and 10 gained A\*-C grades, which represents good achievement in relation to their earlier attainment. The standards seen in lessons indicate that students make satisfactory progress throughout Years 7 to 9 and make good progress through Years 10 and 11.
101. Students in Year 9 reflect on the quality of their work and identify both strengths and areas for improvement. They follow instructions carefully, participate keenly in warm-up activities and are able to use a variety of drama techniques. In a Year 9 lesson, students listened attentively to the teacher's explanation of an African myth and then worked sensibly in small groups developing ideas for their own performance.
102. By Year 11, work seen shows that students have made good progress and are achieving a good standard of work. Written assignments in portfolios are detailed and show that they are able to explain ideas clearly and make thoughtful evaluations of their own performance. In lessons, they are very committed and able to discuss and refine their work. A wide range of techniques is used and students have a good understanding of different drama conventions. They comment constructively and astutely on their own work in progress and that of peers. In a Year 11 lesson, students worked very co-operatively in groups to develop their performances for GCSE assessment. There was good attention to pace, movement, gesture and expression and the lesson ended with a very focused discussion on how work could be further improved.
103. The quality of teaching is good in drama and this results in good learning. Teachers have high expectations and have established clear routines. Lessons are carefully prepared, well structured and activities are chosen to engage the interest of students. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make clear to students what they need to do to improve their work. They intervene in group work to good effect, encouraging students to reflect on their work and offering practical guidance. As a result, students' attitudes and behaviour are usually very positive, especially in Year 11 where they work with particular commitment.
104. Leadership and management are good. The experienced head of department has developed a clear and pertinent development plan. There is also a concise policy document and very detailed long, medium and short term plans to guide the work of colleagues. The progress of students in Years 7 to 9 is carefully monitored, and procedures for evaluation, involving both students and teachers, mean that all students have clear targets. Extra-curricular provision is good and includes regular theatre

visits, a drama club and a residency with a local theatre company. The department manages to work well despite the lack of good sound and lighting.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

This is a good department with many strong features.

### **Strengths**

- The teaching of mathematics is very good.
- Standards achieved by students at Key Stage 3 in national tests match national standards.
- Standards achieved by students at GCSE are above national averages for A\*-C grades.
- Teachers develop very good relationships with students which have a significant impact on their learning and the standards they achieve.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very effective.
- The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy contributes significantly to raising standards in Key Stage 3.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Not enough use is made of assessment to inform planning and set students targets for improvement.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support students' learning

105. Standards of attainment by students by the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with national averages. The proportion of students achieving the higher Level 6 improved in 2002 and was in line with that achieved nationally. This improvement has occurred largely as a result of good teaching and the increase in students' numerical confidence. Generally, boys and girls achieve similar standards, although in 2002 more girls achieved Level 5 and above than boys. The standards in mathematics are higher than that achieved by students in English and lower than those achieved in science. The standards in Key Stage 3 over the last two years continue to improve.

106. Standards achieved by students at GCSE A\*-C grades rose significantly in 2002 when compared to the previous year and were above the national average. The proportion of boys achieving the higher grades was significantly higher than girls. The school recorded three A\* grade students in 2002. The proportion of students achieving the A\*-G grades remains close to the national averages. Students have made good progress from their national test scores of 2000.

107. Students in Years 7 to 9 are gaining considerable benefits from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The practice of mental mathematics at the start of lessons is very effective in increasing students' confidence and understanding of many basic number relations. The attention that is devoted to students' numeracy development has resulted in an increase in confidence and enables students to make good progress with their mathematics. Students are generally confident with number calculations and work well with fractions, decimals and percentages. These skills are enhanced further by work from other subjects, for example, in design and technology students measure accurately and weigh quantities using the appropriate units. In geography, students make full use of a range of diagrams and graphs to depict information about tropical rain forests.

108. Students in Years 7 to 9 are making good progress with their mathematics. Attainment in lessons reflects this progress and at least matches the results achieved in the national tests in 2002. Higher attaining students achieve well because the work set extends their knowledge and understanding. For example, students in a Year 9 group confidently worked on solving a pair of equations by eliminating one of the unknowns. The more able students in this group were eager to extend their understanding by attempting more complex equations that involved fractions.
109. Attainment in lessons of the current Year 11 students suggests that results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 will not match those of the previous year. For example, students in a Year 11 able group found difficulty with finding solutions to inequalities, because they were not confident with working with negative numbers. As a result they made less progress than would be expected. In contrast, a group of Year 10 students working with regular solids calculated their volumes and surface areas very confidently using quite complex formulae.
110. The overall achievement and progress made by students with special educational needs across the school is good. For example some students in a Year 10 lesson made impressive progress with their understanding of scatter graphs and in drawing lines of best fit to represent the relationship between two sets of information. The support these students received from their teacher made a significant contribution to their learning. The achievement by high attaining students is improving and more students are being considered for the national tests higher paper at the end of Year 9 and achieving the higher grades A and A\* in the GCSE examination.
111. The quality of teaching in mathematics in lessons seen is, overall, good. Very good teaching occurred in just under half of the lessons and in one lesson it was excellent. The majority of these very good lessons occurred in Years 7 to 9. Teachers work very hard at planning interesting lessons that motivate and stimulate students to learn. This is impacting on the standards they achieve and the quality of their learning. All teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use this effectively through exposition, demonstration and asking challenging questions of students. They make very good use of the time and resources available, in particular the over-head projector and small whiteboards, to underpin learning.
112. In the very good lessons teaching is exemplified by well planned and structured activities. These lessons start briskly with an effective oral or mental activity to develop students' basic numerical skills. In almost every lesson effective use is made of white boards and enabling teachers quickly to assess students' understanding. On most occasions these starters usually link into the main activity. Expectations of students are high. The skilful mix of probing questions, discussion and a good range of tasks enables every student to make good progress and achieve high standards. Tasks are well matched to students' needs and students have time to consolidate their learning before moving on to new work. Teachers ensure that students with identified special needs or from a different ethnic background are fully integrated into the teaching group. These students make progress that is in line with others in the group.
113. Teachers develop very positive relationships with their students which results in them gaining good learning habits, displaying appropriate attitudes and good behaviour in lessons. Teachers assess students' performance largely through homework and class activities. However, they make insufficient use of the assessment data collected on students from national tests and other commercially produced predictors of future performance to inform lesson planning. Students in Years 9 and 11 are aware of their current performance, but they are not given sufficient guidance of what they need to do to improve their grades. The introduction of self assessment would act as a meaningful



tool for a student to judge their own progress and the gains in knowledge and understanding they have made. Students in general are very positive about their mathematical education in the school.

114. There are inconsistencies in the marking of students' work. The three part lesson has been widely adopted by teachers across the school. However, at the end of lessons, some teachers do not lead effective reviews of the learning that has taken place and thus students are not always in a position by which they can assess their work.
115. There is not enough use made of information and communication technology to support learning. There are few interesting and stimulating books about mathematics for students to read in the school's learning resource centre.
116. The faculty has good facilities and is well led and managed. The curriculum team leader provides very clear leadership and educational direction. Teachers are well qualified and teach effectively across the ability range and to all levels. There is a real enthusiasm in the faculty to embrace new ideas and methods of teaching as part of the drive to improve standards.

## **Numeracy**

117. Standards of students' numerical skills are, overall, good. They are confident when working with whole, fractional and decimal numbers. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has contributed significantly to this position. Although there is no whole school policy for the development of numerical skills, students use their numerical skills in other subjects well. For example, in science students use a range of graphical methods to extrapolate information. However, not all students are able to use complex formula and calculate solutions accurately. In geography students in Year 7 understand scales and competently use co-ordinates in map reading. Students in Year 10 understand river discharge figures and use these accurately to plot hydrographs.

## **SCIENCE**

Students achieve well in science and the subject is a strength of the school.

### **Strengths**

- Standards are high in national tests and GCSE examinations.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students are keen to learn and behaviour is good.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- Teachers have a strong shared commitment to high standards and to including all students to the full extent of their capabilities.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support students' learning.
- Too many split classes in Years 7 to 9 hamper students' learning.
- Aspects of assessment policy and practice are not rigorous enough.

118. In 2002 the results of Year 9 national tests in science were above average and significantly improved from the previous year. Whilst there was little difference between the overall results for boys and girls, there was a good improvement in the performance of girls. Revision programmes were very well organised by teachers and met the

individual needs of students well. Current Year 9 students are achieving well. The majority are reaching standards that are at least in line with what would be expected for their age.

119. GCSE results in 2002 were well above national averages in terms of the proportion of students obtaining A\*-C grades and those obtaining A\* or A grades. Both boys and girls were well above national averages in terms of the proportions of higher grades obtained. The department is committed to entering the maximum number of students for GCSE examinations. The above average performance in terms of the proportion of A\*-G grades obtained reflects very well on this commitment and the quality of support given to individual students. Current Year 11 students continue to achieve well. The majority are reaching standards that are at least in line with what would be expected for their age and reflect predicted grades.
120. In Years 7 to 9, top set students have an above average knowledge and understanding of a wide range of scientific concepts. They can explain well how animals are adapted to different environments and confidently describe the basic processes that underpin how animals produce energy and waste products from sugars in their food. Students in lower sets can recall satisfactorily scientific facts such as the nature of elements, compounds and mixtures. They are less confident in linking together scientific ideas. Top set students in Year 9 demonstrate above average standards in their experimental work. They link scientific ideas well into their predictions and evaluations and use line graphs well to display and explain results. Some lower set investigative work is low level and poorly presented. In all sets the spelling of key scientific words is often inaccurate and not corrected sufficiently through teachers' marking.
121. In Years 10 and 11, higher attaining students build on their Year 9 work well. They achieve a well above average knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts such as energy transfers. They describe accurately a wide range of uses of enzymes and use information well from the periodic table to explain a range of chemical reactions. Lower attaining students continue to recall scientific facts accurately but have difficulty in describing more complex processes. Teachers attach a high priority to GCSE coursework and work hard to encourage high standards and the completion of coursework tasks. Consequently, top set students produce coursework of well above average standard and often of A\* or A grade quality. They use scientific ideas well in developing ideas to test and use an increasingly sophisticated range of mathematical ideas in presenting and analysing data. In lower sets students continue to link scientific ideas well into their predictions but find it more difficult to use the ideas in evaluating outcomes.
122. Students with special educational needs achieve well in all years. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of individual needs. They encourage the full involvement of students in lessons and students respond to this well. In some lessons this involves well targeted questioning by the teacher and in others the use of group work to encourage participation. Teaching assistants use their detailed knowledge of students to support them very well in lessons and ensure effective learning.
123. Students are keen to learn and behaviour is good. They are keenly interested in the results of module tests and what these tell them about their achievements. Students enjoy practical activities and work well together in groups. Experimental work is carried out enthusiastically and safely. Written work is generally done conscientiously and presented well. A small minority of students are less well motivated. This results in some low level misbehaviour, which is usually dealt with effectively by teachers. A minority of students' written work is poorly presented with tasks left unfinished.

124. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach. This enables them to explain difficult ideas well using everyday analogies and accessible language. It also underpins teachers' good use of questions that challenge students to predict, justify and explain their ideas. The aims and purposes of activities are outlined well at the start of lessons, which enables students to get on quickly with their learning. Resources and tasks are usually well matched to students' needs. Opportunities to stretch the most able students are sometimes not fully exploited. Lessons are well organised and experimental work is planned with due regard to health and safety. The pace of lessons is usually brisk with a good variety of activities that gives all students the opportunity to learn and succeed. A strength of teaching in the subject is the frequent use of praise and spoken feedback that encourages students to give of their best and think about how they can improve their work. Teachers often use the ends of lessons well to check and consolidate students' learning. Homework is regularly set and is an appropriate extension of work covered in lessons. Written work is regularly checked and annotated using the departmental grading system. Students are unclear about the meaning of the grades and teachers' comments do not always provide enough advice on how students can improve their work. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support students' learning. Where teaching is less effective, lesson aims are unclear, tasks do not meet students' needs, activities lack sufficient organisation and the end of the lesson does not consolidate students' learning.
125. Test results are used well to track students' performance and inform entry decisions for external examinations. The assessment of GCSE coursework is rigorous and follows GCSE guidelines well. The tracking of performance in experimental work in Years 8 and 9 is not well established. A good range of assessment methods is being introduced in Year 7 but their use remains inconsistent. Target setting is developing well within the subject but individual targets are not made clear enough to the students.
126. The subject is led and managed well. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a shared commitment to inclusion and examination success. Curriculum planning for Years 7 to 9 is good. Appropriate steps have been taken to meet the needs of Year 8 students in the light of the recent re-organisation. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy is being implemented well. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out and the strengths and weaknesses of the subject are accurately known. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of marking in Years 7 to 9 need improvement. There are too many split classes in Years 7 to 9 and this is adversely affecting teaching continuity.
127. Resources overall are adequate and used well. There are significant shortfalls in the amount and range of computer hardware and software. The quality of accommodation is adequate overall. The new suite of laboratories provides some high quality accommodation, but other laboratories are characterised by poor quality services reaching the end of their useful life. The scattered nature of the accommodation presents significant difficulties in moving resources around the department when multiple sets of equipment are required. The laboratory technicians are well qualified and make a good contribution to the work of the department.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

### Strengths

- Standards in public examinations by the end of Year 11 are above average.
- Students' achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is good.
- Teaching is good across all years.
- Students' skills in painting and drawing are strong.
- Students have good attitudes and behave well.

### Areas for improvement

- The overall attainment of boys by the end of Year 11 is below average.
- The curriculum requires broadening and resourcing to embrace a wider range of cultures and styles.
- The resources and use of information and communication technology to support learning are unsatisfactory.

128. Standards of work, as seen during the inspection are above average overall. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with the national expectation for boys and girls, with above average attainment in drawing and painting work. By the end of Year 11 standards are above the national average overall with girls doing better than boys. The strength is still predominantly in drawing and painting work. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good and there is a systematic structure to the development of knowledge and understanding. Students' achievements in relation to their standards at the start of Year 7 are good. They develop very good standards in their observational painting and drawing because units of work place a high priority upon teaching and reinforcing these skills. The systematic and structured approach in particular helps students with special educational needs to achieve well.
129. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, girls attained above the national average in the higher A\* to C grades and their overall pass rate was in line with the national average. Boys attained in line with the national average for the higher grades, but the overall pass rate for A\* to G grades was below the national average for boys, with around 10 per cent not achieving a grade. The number of students taking the examination was similar to that nationally, but boys and girls achieved a much higher proportion of the top A\* and A grades than is the average nationally. The teacher assessments of standards in 2002 in art at the end of Year 9 show above average numbers of boys and girls attaining the expected Level 5 or above.
130. By the end of Year 9, students have well developed observational drawing skills. They draw and paint with a strong sense of form and tone and use colour very competently to create well-crafted compositions. Teaching focuses on the development of drawing and painting skills linked to observation and this builds students' confidence in their own ability to record what they see. In this aspect of their work, achievement is often very good. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs attain good standards in their drawing and painting above what might be expected. Students make links and reflect on the work of European artists in their own work, but have insufficient opportunities to experience art from beyond western culture. They make good use of their literacy skills to write about and evaluate their art and have a sound knowledge of technical terms and art vocabulary. Whilst students have regular homework linked to activities in lessons they do not develop the use of a sketchbook as a means of recording and developing their personal responses to subject matter. They have some opportunities to develop their skills in three-dimensional work. The lack of resources in the form of computers and associated equipment means that students do

not develop their skills enough in using information and communication technology to support their artwork.

131. High standards of technical skills in drawing and painting are sustained in Years 10 and 11 with good achievement and standards that are above average in this area. Talented students achieve well in relation to their abilities. The clear guidance and structure to units of work continue to help many students achieve. Students build effectively on drawing and painting skills from earlier years, but the over direction by teachers on how to develop units of coursework from observation tends to close down opportunities for more imaginative responses to starting points. When given greater freedom in the interpretation of subject matter and choice of materials, students respond positively. Good examples of this were evident in imaginative plaster carvings and card sculptures of faces. The range of approaches remains relatively narrow with little evidence of students independently drawing upon their local environment or experimenting with media and processes such as printmaking, ceramics or textiles.
132. Many students remain very reliant upon the teacher for guidance. Students make use of a sketchbook to develop their observation skills and gather research materials. Lessons are characterised by good relationships and teachers provide clear guidance to individuals on how to improve their work, which enables them to achieve well. Attitudes of some students in Year 11 are such that their attendance is poor and this impacts adversely upon the completion of their coursework and subsequent attainment in examinations. Some students make good use of the Internet in their own time for the development of their research in sketchbooks.
133. Leadership and management of the department are good with a clear focus on high standards. The examination results for both boys and girls showed improvement in 2002, particularly for the most able students. New teachers receive very clear guidance on the content of units of work and support for their teaching. Students do not benefit from visits to galleries and other centres to broaden their awareness of a range of art. Funding for art is low and has affected the range of books in the learning resource centre and quantity of resources within the department.
134. There is a lack of resources to support information and communication technology both for students' use and day-to-day administration of the department. Assessment systems for students in Years 10 and 11 are clear. They accord with examination criteria and help students improve their work. Teachers give very good oral comments and support in lessons. Around the school and within the department displays of work are used effectively to enhance the learning environment and celebrate students' achievements. The kiln is not sited correctly and cannot currently be used because building works have yet to provide the necessary space and improvements to the accommodation.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- All staff work hard to raise standards and to improve provision.
- The very good teaching results in good GCSE standards.
- Relationships are very good and, consequently, students strive to do well.

### Areas for improvement

- Good practice is not always shared enough.
- There is no common assessment policy in Years 7 to 9, therefore, students are unsure of their National Curriculum levels and how to improve.
- The design element of the course is not fully developed.
- There is insufficient technical support in food and textiles technology, which results in an inefficient use of teachers' time.

135. Provision in design and technology caters for all students in Years 7 to 11 and offers GCSE courses in graphics, resistant materials, textiles, home economics and Certificate of Achievement in Graphics in Year 10.
136. Standards in the 2002 GCSE examinations were above the national average overall, with home economics and food technology attaining well above this level. The results in design and technology were better than the average of other subjects in the school. Only graphics showed results that were just below that average.
137. The teacher assessments in 2002 showed that the percentage of students who gained Level 5+ in Year 9 was below the national average. This was due to the effect of reorganisation, when students were unable to receive the full design and technology experience. When students join the school in Year 7, they have standards that are well below national expectations. This is because they have had little experience of the subject. However, they make great strides in the subject. Students, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in the subject.
138. Lessons seen and scrutiny of work show that standards match teacher assessments in Year 9 and are above national expectations overall in Year 11. Standards at the end of Year 11 are still very high in textiles and home economics and have risen in graphics, but have declined in resistant materials to below national expectations. The reason for the decline is partly due to reorganisation as these students had little workshop experience, and also to instability in staffing. As a result, much coursework in this area is incomplete.
139. Although the design element overall is often not well developed, there are some examples of very good practice. For example, a student not only gained information from catalogues and the Internet, but also included well annotated photographs. However, this standard is not widespread. There are also some excellent examples of matching ideas and specification. Information and communication technology is used effectively. This was seen when students taking the Certificate of Achievement entered the results of their questionnaires on to spreadsheets. Work, which is of high quality, because of the development of students' imagination and creativity, was seen in textiles. For example, a student used research into Impressionists to develop a vivid hand painted and dyed waistcoat. However, all making skills are not of a good standard.

140. At the end of Year 9, the inadequate coverage of the design process from Year 7 contributes to the low standards. For example, there are some sound product analyses, but little use of questionnaires to inform the design specification. Students investigate the variety of materials well and make to a clear specification. This was seen when students prepared new recipes that recognised how to maintain a healthy heart. Students making and finishing skills are not to an expected standard in all areas. This contributes to the low standards, although new skills are well taught and students attain an expected standard. This was seen when students used metal and wood to make a garden trowel. Evaluations are also not to an expected standard.
141. Students enjoy design and technology and waste no time in lessons. Their involvement was seen, for example, in a resistant materials lesson, when the class was totally unaware that adults had entered the room. They are prepared to work outside the lesson, and they ask to stay after school to continue their work. One student said that her mother had complained that she had taken over a table with her textiles. They are very ready to explain what they are doing, and are very keen to discuss the fine details of their work. This was seen when a student was very concerned about the type of fastenings that she could use. They readily help each other, being sufficiently concerned to notice when another is struggling.
142. The quality of teaching overall is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons well to ensure that all students learn and consolidate that knowledge. For example, in lessons on food labelling the high attainers were very well challenged. The lesson moved on at a cracking pace and there were high expectations that students listened intently and learnt. In the parallel class, the lower attainers used worksheets that matched their ability, the assistant was very well used, and the content of the lesson was carefully reinforced. All students understood the main features of food labelling by the end of the lesson. Time is never wasted, so that students attain well in lessons. When teachers see that a skill needs to be reinforced, the class is stopped in order that all learn, which is very good practice. Questioning is very good as it makes students think. For example, they were asked why there is so much information on a manufacturing specification. The teacher then asked them again and again until they realised the importance of the documentation. Relationships are very good, which results in students being ready to ask for help and therefore learn. This was seen, for example, in a graphics lesson, where students asked the teacher to explain simple procedures on the computer.
143. The school has a very recently appointed curriculum leader of design and technology. Prior to that, the head of food technology was acting head, which has given continuity to provision. The design element is not well developed throughout all years. The department does not have sufficient technical support in food and textiles and the use of teachers to do basic tasks is a remarkably inefficient use of their time. The inspection team has notified the school of health and safety issues which need to be addressed.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

### Strengths

- Standards in the GCSE examination in 2002 were above average.
- Teaching is good overall and particularly good in Years 10 and 11.
- An extensive fieldwork programme makes a positive contribution to students' learning.
- The department provides good support for students with special educational needs.

### Areas for improvement

- Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' attainment and progress are incomplete.
- Access to information and communication technology in lessons is limited.

144. Standards in geography at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average. Students build steadily on their geographical knowledge, making satisfactory progress to reach expected levels.
145. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were above the national average. Boys' results at grades A\*-C exceeded those for girls in this school and for boys nationally. The high standard of coursework makes a significant contribution to students' good achievement.
146. In Years 7 to 9, more capable students develop accurate map reading skills. They understand processes that shape the landscape and identify connections between people and their environments. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs have difficulty in remembering their previous work and in using geographical words accurately. Their understanding of basic spatial patterns, for example the shapes and names of the continents, is not secure. The good support that teachers provide, particularly when resources are adapted to the needs of these students, helps them to enjoy their work and to achieve satisfactorily. Students respond well to the varied resources provided in many lessons. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 9 the material provided enabled them to extract, understand and use detailed information on the rainforest ecosystem. Students are enthusiastic participants in fieldwork activities. First-hand data collection in National Park villages enabled students in Year 8 to produce maps and graphs that helped them to describe the impact of tourists in an environmentally sensitive area. Although most students show positive attitudes to their work, inappropriate behaviour and lack of concentration occasionally restrict their progress.
147. Students in Years 10 and 11 respond well to their teachers' high expectations, enjoy their lessons and are keen to succeed. More capable students can define geographical terms accurately and use them appropriately in their written answers. Very carefully designed fieldwork enables many to produce high quality work on urban deprivation and renewal, often using their information and communication technology skills. Students with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons, particularly when learning support assistants are available, enabling them to make good progress.
148. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11 and good overall. In Years 7 to 9, four out of five lessons observed were at least satisfactory and one was very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in which a lack of structure and the absence of clear instructions to students resulted in insufficient learning and deteriorating behaviour. Sustained pace, stimulating resources and the development of good relationships between teachers and students



characterise the best lessons. The department is forging strong links with the learning resource centre in the school so that students are becoming more independent learners. For example, in a good lesson in Year 9 there was careful grouping and preparation of the class, together with clear instructions on how to find information through reference books and computers. This enabled students to explore a variety of ecosystems and to share their knowledge successfully with each other. However, opportunities for access to information and communication technology for all students in lesson time are very limited. Students, therefore, cannot develop their computer skills sufficiently. Although teachers mark students' work regularly, sometimes with detailed, helpful comments and with targets for improvement, this good practice is not yet followed consistently. A clear system for using National Curriculum levels in order to assess students' work and track their progress rigorously across all year groups is at an early stage of development.

149. All the lessons observed in Years 10 and 11 were at least good and one was very good. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of their students, encouraging them to extend their understanding and to give detailed oral responses to questions. Several boys in a very good Year 10 lesson were able to use graphs and statistics to explain and predict changes in river discharge because of the very good discussion and preparatory work that had taken place. The teacher's encouragement of girls in Year 11 helped them to voice strong opinions on global warming issues and to understand some of the conflicting practices that exist. Teachers make sure that all students are aware of the standard that they have reached and how they can improve, thereby helping them to take responsibility for their work.
150. The leadership and management of the department are good. Despite the upheavals of reorganisation and continuous site changes, enthusiasm for geography and a vision for the future of the subject within the school have been sustained.

## HISTORY

Overall, provision for history is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and sometimes excellent.
- There is a commendable emphasis on raising standards of literacy.
- Students develop historical skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards.
- The very positive relationships in the classroom promote good learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Systems for assessing students' work are inconsistent, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Monitoring teaching to ensure that all lessons are of a high quality.
- Information and communication technology is underdeveloped as a learning resource.
- There are few opportunities to visit local sites of historical interest in Years 7 and 8.

151. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, students' work, as assessed by teachers, was above national expectations. The standards reached by girls are above those of boys. Students' progress and, therefore, rate of achievement are good. At the end of Year 11, the attainment of both boys and girls in the GCSE examination is well above the national average and this represents very good progress through Years 10 and 11 in terms of students' prior attainment.
152. Standards of work seen during the inspection were good. Standards by Year 9 are in line with the national average and by Year 11 they are above the national average. These standards are achieved because teaching is good overall and often better than

this. Students' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour also contribute to good learning in the subject. The standards of students' work in Year 7 on entry to the school are generally below average. Students' achievement is good throughout Years 7 to 9 and they make good progress as they move through the school, including those with special educational needs. Such ever improving standards are a product of high quality teaching which allows students to get involved in and enjoy their history lessons.

153. The quality of teaching is good overall and in Years 7 to 9, two out of three lessons seen were excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have a very sound and secure grasp of subject knowledge and use this very well to enthuse and motivate all students successfully. Where teaching is excellent it is characterised by teachers' high expectations, their skilful use of questions, a high degree of students' interest and engagement in the subject, as well as students not only valuing and enjoying the learning experience but also excellent relationships between teacher and students. However, there is not yet a fully developed common approach to all lesson planning and teacher expectations. The promotion of very good relationships within the classroom helps teachers and students to explore historical issues together very effectively. This was demonstrated to the full in an excellent Year 7 lesson, during which students showed commendable skill and commitment in discussing the reasons for how William gained control over Britain after the Battle of Hastings.
154. Many students acquire historical skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards and, as a result, they make good progress. They develop, for example, an understanding of how to use historical sources and, by the end of Year 9, higher attaining students write clearly and effectively using their historical knowledge and understanding. For example, some of the detailed and varied writing seen from Year 9 students on life in the trenches during World War 1 is interesting to read and of a high quality. However, many students find difficulty in writing clearly and in depth because of their low levels of literacy and this depresses standards. The department is making commendable efforts to address this issue through an emphasis on raising standards of literacy by providing students with tasks which require them, either individually or as part of a group, to make presentations to the rest of the class. As a result of this, students' speaking skills are improving. In addition, teachers are using writing frames to help students improve the way they think and write about history.
155. Teacher assessments in Year 9 are an accurate reflection of students' attainment. In Years 10 and 11, history is a popular option subject and students acquire a firmer grip on historical skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject well. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above the national average and students make good progress. Higher attaining students make very good progress and have ample opportunities to develop their learning skills in depth.
156. Classroom management is good and teachers' high expectations ensure that all students are included in all classroom activities through clear questions used to involve all students and the use of resources which shows that teachers have a thorough understanding of individual students' needs. Praise and encouragement are used to very good effect and there is a creditable emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. There is a sense of enjoyment in the pursuit of knowledge in lessons with the result that students are always eager to learn more. They show very keen attitudes towards their work and respect their teachers. Above all, there is a sense of shared purpose in lessons and this creates a very positive learning atmosphere.
157. The department is well managed and there is a clear commitment to raising standards, particularly through the use of literacy led lessons. The departmental development

plan and the audit for the foundation subjects strand accurately identifies areas for improvement. These include: the moderation and levelling of students' work in Years 7, 8 and 9 to provide all students with a clear idea on how to improve, and increasing the use of information and communication technology as a learning resource. There are visits to historical sites but this good practice needs to be extended to all year groups. Overall, this is a developing department with a strong and dedicated teaching team who have the ability to make it a very good department.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The overall provision in Information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Results in the GNVQ course are good.
- All 11 to 14 year old students have timetabled lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- Provision for 15 and 16 year old students not taking examinations is unsatisfactory, so statutory requirements are not met.
- Assessment and monitoring systems for 11 to 14 year olds and 15 to 16 year olds not taking examinations are unsatisfactory.
- The work for students aged 11 to 14 does not lead to attainment at higher levels.
- Provision for students to develop and apply their information and communication technology skills and knowledge in other subjects is unsatisfactory.

158. The 2002 GNVQ examination results were above average. The GCSE short course results were below average, with a significant proportion of students not achieving a pass grade. The standard of current work of students on the GNVQ course meets expectations at this stage. However, a significant proportion of 15 and 16 year old students do not follow this course and there is no system in place to ensure that these students receive their information and communication technology entitlement through other subjects, which makes the overall level of attainment below what is expected.

159. By the age of 14, students' standards of work are below expectations. This was also identified in teacher assessments for 2002. By the age of 14 most students are confident users of computers. They know how to access work with the use of passwords. The school's sound moral provision helps them understand the need for security when handling personal data. Students make good use of the Internet for research purposes. They can word process, use databases and set up and use new spreadsheets. They are familiar with the use of formulae to help with calculations within spreadsheets and produce graphs to help interpret data. Students use information and communication technology for presentations to particular audiences. Students make satisfactory progress in these areas from the age of 11 to 14. This leads to the majority of students working at expected levels for 14-year-olds, but there is no evidence of higher level attainment. Work using computers for controlling devices, such as an on-screen image, is at too low a level. This is also the case with the use of computers for measurement, for example, of temperature. Students do not have a well developed understanding of specialist vocabulary. Students are not using email for communication.

160. Fifteen and 16 year old students following the examination option are all very familiar with a range of commonly used office applications. For example, they use these applications to produce a range of documentation and databases likely to be used by a small company. Students use the Internet well as a research tool. They make good use of their literacy skills when drafting and redrafting work. Students can compare

and evaluate different computer based programs. They have good independent learning skills and most are well motivated. In a minority of cases, folder work is disorganised. There is no evidence of students not following the examination course working at appropriate levels. There is no significant difference between the work of boys and girls.

161. Overall, students with special educational needs achieve well as a result of effective support from learning support assistants and class teachers. However, where some of the course materials have not been adapted to their needs, as in a Year 9 lesson, their progress is unsatisfactory.
162. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory and in some lessons they are good. However, there is a small amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they employ very well when working with students on an individual basis, leading to the students making good progress. There is good provision of resources, including previously prepared materials available online. Insufficient learning takes place and students lose motivation where strategies for class management and control are not effective. Work does not always build on students' prior experience and is not planned at sufficiently high level for higher attainers.
163. Taking account of the early stage of development of this school, leadership within the department is good. There is a clear vision of many elements of what the school still needs to do, supported by detailed planning. There is good teamwork and effective delegation of responsibilities. Considerable recent developments have been well managed and implemented. Staffing is satisfactory but there is insufficient effective support for behaviour management in lessons where this is weak. The very good technical support provides fully functioning computer facilities, which have a positive impact on students' progress. Resources are now satisfactory, but limited access to these resources is a factor that is inhibiting the development of information and communication technology in other subjects.
164. The curriculum for students up to the age of 14 is satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory for 15 and 16 year olds as there is no system to ensure that students who do not follow an examination course receive their entitlement. The result is that statutory requirements are not met. Assessment and its use to help planning are unsatisfactory. For students up to the age of 14 there is no system in place, although this is planned. For 15 and 16 year olds following an examination course there is the basis of a good system, with students benefiting from having a clear understanding of how their work relates to the assessment system of the General National Vocational Qualification course. This gives them a clear indication of how they can improve their work. There is no system to collate assessments from other subjects for students not following the examination course. There is no annual report to parents of 15 and 16 year old students not following an examination course.
165. In most other subjects the use and development of information and communication technology skills and understanding are unsatisfactory. However, there is good use in music, business studies and by students on a design and technology Certificate of Achievement course. Students with special educational needs make good use of programs to improve their basic skills.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

### Strengths

- Most teaching is at least good and some is very good.
- French results at GCSE are above the national average.
- All teachers use resources well.
- Behaviour management in the department is generally good.
- A disparate group of teachers have been brought together well and form a very cohesive group who work very hard and have high aspirations.

### Areas for improvement

- Work is not sufficiently well matched to suit the needs and abilities of students within sets. Work for the most able in groups is insufficiently demanding.
- The work of the department is not monitored closely enough.
- Marking and assessment are not standardised across the department.

166. French is offered to all students when they enter the school at the age of 11. Most of these students have been learning French for two years already in their previous schools. In the second year at the school, two thirds of the students aged 12 begin to study German as well as French. The time allocated to each language then is half of what is allocated to French in Year 7 and half that which the lower attaining students, who only study French, continue to have. At age 14, students may opt to study either French or German to GCSE standard, or they may choose to study both. There are only seven students who study both languages in Year 11 and none in Year 10.
167. Teachers' assessments show that students aged 14 achieve standards below the national average and that boys achieve less well than girls, which is what also happens nationally. By GCSE, students aged 16 are achieving better than the national average in French, which demonstrates that the school has added considerable value. In German, attainment is well below the national average.
168. In lessons, standards are satisfactory or good in both languages in two thirds of lessons and the most able linguists in Years 10 and 11 generally achieve very well. This is particularly true of students who choose to study both languages as they were both confident and largely accurate when observed in a German lesson. Some of the problems that arise in standards in German can be put down to the short time students have been studying the language compared with French and to the small time allocation. In addition, the numbers opting for German at the end of Year 9 are smaller so that the range of ability in the classes is much wider and some teachers find this difficult to manage.
169. In lessons for students aged 11 to 16, teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one lesson and it was good or better in around 70 per cent of lessons. In the sixth form, teaching was good or better in all lessons, in over half it was very good and in one lesson teaching was excellent.
170. Where teaching was very good, there was a good use of resources, lessons contained a variety of activities and students practised a variety of skills. This was seen in a low ability Year 9 group where a range of activities encompassed listening, speaking, reading and writing. This enabled students to practise over and over the small amount of vocabulary they had learned. Lessons were well prepared and there was often a round up of what had been learned at the end of the lesson. Homework was frequently set and homework that had been completed and marked earlier was discussed.

171. Lessons that were not as well taught displayed less variety. Sometimes oral work went on too long with the result that students lost concentration, particularly towards the end of the hour-long lessons.
172. Teachers' command of the language they were teaching was at least good and often very good or excellent in almost all of the lessons seen. Teachers used the language to manage the classroom, which gave students more listening practice as in a Year 8 top ability group where the teacher's jokes and teasing were in French and were enjoyed by the students. In only one lesson was the teacher's command of her second language less than good and there it was satisfactory.
173. Some of the flashcards and resources for games that were produced by teachers were of very good quality, but some were not well drawn or clearly written. Sometimes resources used were imaginative. In one Year 7 lesson, a teacher had brought in baby clothes as a resource for learning the names of clothing and the agreement of French colour adjectives. Students were enchanted and tried very hard with the necessary language to describe these items.
174. Teachers managed student behaviour well and students were motivated to learn in almost all classes. Young students and less able students were well managed in lessons which were long and which occurred at the end of a busy day. Sometimes, the effort of keeping students on task detracted from the amount of teaching the teacher could do, but in only one class did this seriously affect opportunities for students.
175. The department offers good opportunities for students to choose from at age 14. Most students choose to study French or German to GCSE standard, but those whose attainment in French is not very good are able to study for a certificate in the language allied to the Youth Awards Scheme. Students, therefore, are able to achieve at their own level. The department has chosen up-to-date course books for students aged 11 to 14 but there are not nearly enough for all students to have one each and for homework to be set using them. This results in pages being photocopied, which is wasteful of resources and students have little from which to revise.
176. Languages make a significant contribution to literacy. The grammar of French and German is taught clearly as it is needed and most students know grammatical terms. Older students can make up their own grammatical rules after an explanation from the teacher and they record these in their books for revision purposes. A Year 7 boy was seen to give a clear explanation of how to make feminine adjectival forms in French. A clear contribution is made to numeracy in respect of the understanding and use of the 24-hour clock and euros are spoken of and used in exercises.
177. The team leader provides good leadership to the department. There is a cohesive group of teachers who, although they have come together from different backgrounds, work together well and support each other to develop their skills. Some monitoring takes place within the department, but insufficient monitoring of marking and teaching means that, in a few instances, some students are not receiving as good a deal as their peers. In all there is a shared commitment and a capacity to succeed within the department and this provides students with a coherent and consistent context in which to develop their language learning.

## MUSIC

The overall quality of provision in music is **good** with some outstanding features.

### Strengths

- The positive, outgoing ethos of the department driven by a team of capable and committed teachers.
- Accommodation and resources which facilitate development and the raising of standards.
- The range of opportunities for instrumental performance.

### Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning for 11 to 14 year olds.
- Choral singing in and out of class.

178. Teacher assessments for Year 9 students show standards above national expectations, but the quality of most of the work seen during the inspection is below this. GCSE examination results show a consistent upward trend – the most recent ones being well above the national average. All groups have access to the music curriculum with boys and girls responding and achieving equally well overall.

179. Work in Years 7 to 9 is based upon a range of units which are in line with National Curriculum requirements. In one Year 9 class, students worked in groups on a Blues project. In this, the most capable played the chord sequence, improvised a Blues style melody against it and combined this with a percussion backing which showed a good sense of ensemble. However, this level of attainment is not sufficiently widespread. The progressive build up of knowledge, skill and understanding across the first three years is not sufficient to enable the majority of students to attain higher standards. Information and communication technology and singing are underdeveloped at present. Assessment of students' work requires a more coherent, manageable approach which relates to the assessment levels in Year 9.

180. In Years 10 and 11 students show positive attitudes and make good progress. Composition work is well developed. All students are learning and achieving success in tasks at their level. One girl's piece for viola and piano was outstanding in grasp of idiom and standard of presentation. A number of students are using information and communication technology resources in their composition work.

181. The standard of teaching is good overall. Work is well prepared and the atmosphere in most lessons is positive. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory, though in some Years 8 and 9 classes, students do not work consistently or remain on task and this contributes to a measure of under achievement.

182. The leadership and management of the department are outstanding. The new accommodation and resources are used to good effect. A large number of students (196) of all ages and standards learn a range of instruments. They develop their skills further in the many ensembles which work at a high standard of performance. Their achievements are widely recognised through concerts of all kinds, not only in the school and local community, but further afield, including an exchange tour to Poland. Choral singing is not yet at the same high standard as instrumental work. There is a strong culture of innovation and development in the department. An initiative of considerable musical and educational importance involves formalised links with five feeder primary schools. Through these, curriculum progression, continuity in instrumental teaching and opportunities for combined performances have been established. All these factors indicate a bright musical future for the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Students' achievement at the end of Year 11 is good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Students have very good attitudes and behave responsibly.

### Areas for improvement

- The assessment of the students' performance and the tracking of their progress are unsatisfactory.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning.
- Current accommodation is limiting the variety of activities for students.

183. In the GCSE examinations the proportion of the students obtaining an A\* to C grade was just below the national average. From a sizeable entry of 45 students, only one student failed to obtain a pass grade. Although the students respond well to the demands of the course and make good progress, more needs to be done to set challenging targets and to monitor progress.
184. In 2002, the teacher assessment of the students' attainment at the end of Year 9 showed attainment to be broadly in line with that expected for students aged 14. The proportion achieving the higher level of attainment was well below the national average. These outcomes suggest that the restrictions imposed on the department with regard to available accommodation and a lack of effective assessment procedures restricted the achievement of the students.
185. In the lessons seen during this inspection the attainment of the students aged between 11 and 14 was in line with the national expectation. However, the present lack of any outdoor facilities is currently affecting the achievement of students at the end of Year 9. Although handled well by the teachers, the need to teach three groups at a time in the sports hall and two groups at the same time in the gymnasium is impeding the progress that can be made in developing and refining skills. There are occasions when very good teaching enables the students to learn quickly and to achieve good performances. For example, in a Year 7 basketball lesson the students make impressive progress in using the jump stop to link with the set shot. As they learn to impart spin to the ball, their success rate and accuracy improves. In a Year 9 volleyball lesson most students execute a volley pass with control and sustain a sequence of volleys. Higher attaining students perform a well-timed jump volley. The attainment of the students in Year 8 in netball is below that expected for their age.
186. Higher attaining students make a good contribution to maintaining an effective passage of play. However, too many students fail to apply sufficient discipline to the skill sequence of receiving the ball, pivoting and passing. For students aged 14 to 16, attainment in the non-examination lessons is variable. In badminton, the levels of skill are below those expected for their age, whereas, in aerobics and volleyball, standards are in line with expectations. Of particular note is the capacity of girls in Year 11 to devise and perform a vigorous exercise routine. The level of skill acquired by higher attaining students in a Year 10 volleyball lesson enabled them to use a variety of attacking and defensive shots to sustain a rally.
187. GCSE students are performing in line with the expectations of the course. Of particular note is the skill shown by the students in both Year 10 and Year 11 netball lessons



where they make very good progress in developing their passing, use of space and tactical awareness. Students in Years 10 and 11 understand the theoretical basis of fitness training and have a sound knowledge of the safety aspects required in physical education.

188. Throughout the school, students work hard and teachers trust them to work independently. The congestion in the sports hall does not deter students from concentrating on the task. They listen carefully to instructions and show an excellent awareness of the activity going on around them. The very good behaviour and very positive attitudes are the result of very positive and productive relationships between the students themselves and between the students and their teachers. Although the achievement of the students is good overall, more opportunities could be provided for the students to evaluate their performance and to focus on specific weaknesses. Of particular note is the very successful inclusion into lessons of students with significant physical, learning and behavioural disabilities.
189. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is better for students in Years 10 and 11. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection. In lessons, good teaching promotes a similar quality of learning. All teachers have good subject knowledge. They manage students very well, organise lessons very efficiently and make productive use of students taking the community sports leadership award. In the best lessons, such as those for GCSE students in netball and for Year 7 students in basketball, the teachers give precise descriptions of technique. They make effective use of demonstration by students. They review progress throughout the lesson and teachers' questioning enables the students to expand on their own ideas. In lessons, greater recognition needs to be given to the links between planning and assessment in order to set higher expectations and to provide heightened intellectual and physical challenge. There are occasions when very little reference is made during the lesson to prior learning and the learning objectives for lessons fail to make clear the knowledge, skills and understanding to be covered.
190. Good leadership and management are steering the department through a difficult period. There is good teamwork, a shared commitment to improvement and an eager anticipation of what can be achieved when all the proposed facilities are up and running. The department has done well to tailor its curriculum to the current accommodation. Immediate attention needs to be given to planning the curriculum developments that will need to be in place when the accommodation is complete.
191. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. There is a need to make clear the links between planning and assessment. There is insufficient recording and monitoring of the students' attainment and progress. As a result, the capacity of the department to target underachievement and specific areas of weakness is limited. Marking of examination coursework needs to give students a better picture of how they are performing and to highlight areas for improvement. At present, there is no formalised system of data collection and analysis or evidence of its use to raise standards. Students benefit from the use of information and communication technology in developing teaching and learning resources for examination courses. More needs to be done to use contemporary developments in information and communication technology to assist in the assessment of the students' performance and in the evaluation of their work during lessons. There is a need to ensure that professional development opportunities are planned in line with the stated priorities for the department and to meet the proposals for broadening of the curriculum.

## DANCE

192. Standards in dance are good. The performance of students aged between 11 and 14 is in line with expectations. Girls in Year 7 produce an effective ensemble piece and recognise the need to link constituent parts of their performance. Students in Year 8 produce sophisticated work and make effective use of the motif stimulus. In Years 10 and 11 attainment is beyond that expected. Students in Year 10 perform skilfully using a prop and demonstrate an extensive range of movement vocabulary. The expression they bring to their work is excellent. Students across the school are able to suggest a breadth of ideas, highlighting their enormous enthusiasm for the subject. They are willing to share and to reflect on the ideas they bring to their performance and give each other support and encouragement.
193. The quality of teaching in dance is good overall. It is very good in the examination courses at GCSE. Here, very good subject knowledge creates a dynamic learning environment. The excellent motivation of the students allows them to be adventurous in their ideas. Very good assessment and evaluation enables the students to improve and to achieve impressive personal and ensemble performances. Younger students need to be given more opportunities to reflect on their work.
194. Good curriculum planning brings enrichment to the students' experience and makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, social and cultural development. The developments currently in hand in dance for assessing students' attainment and progress could give a valuable steer as to how the physical education department should be using National Curriculum levels linked to specific units of work and key areas for assessment.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good
- Contributions towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students are very good
- Leadership and management are very good

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment data is not used well enough to guide curriculum planning.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning.

195. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below expectations in relation to the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus. At the end of Year 11, standards are in line with national requirements of the GCSE short course.
196. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 is below expected levels but improving. There are some good examples of students developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. In Year 7, through a well-directed question and answer session by the teacher, students make good gains in knowledge and understanding of the qualities needed for discipleship. They recognise why Jesus chose his disciples and apply the principles to their own lives. In Year 8, as a result of the use of a range of approaches by the teacher, students make very good gains in knowledge of the fundamental beliefs and duties in Islam. In Year 9, students make clear links between certain events in Jewish history

and their own life experiences. In group work they collaborate very well and work at a good pace, thus making good progress. The teacher's variety of approaches enables students to form their own views, whilst respecting the different attitudes of others. Students with special educational needs make good progress. The use of key words, technical language and good oral discussion work were useful aids to improve speaking and listening skills. Overall, learning is good.

197. In work seen in Year 10, attainment is in line with national expectations and students' achievement is good. They show a clear understanding of moral issues within a religious context. As a result of a well-planned lesson, students explore the issues of racism and form clear views and judgements about how to tackle racist behaviour and language. They make important links between Christian teaching and their own experiences as a result of a well organised discussion by the teacher. In Year 11, attainment is currently in line with the national average in the GCSE short course, but indications show that this should improve prior to the examination. As a result of a very well structured lesson on life after death, students explore their attitudes and feelings towards the views of different Christian views of the afterlife. They demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the range of views and produce balanced arguments. Their ability to analyse material in order to form judgements is developing. Overall, learning is very good.
198. There are no differences in the standards achieved by students of different gender or ethnic background. Students with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented make good progress.
199. Overall, students' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well, are well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and students is very good and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Students' behaviour makes a good contribution to their achievement and progress.
200. Teaching is very good with some excellent features. It has a significant impact on students' achievement. Lesson aims were shared well with students in all cases. Teachers make very good use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. They use a suitable range of styles such as discussion, video material, question and answer and worksheets that match the needs of individual students. This enables students to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion and assists them to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. Teachers manage students' behaviour well, contributing to a good climate for learning. Extension work and homework are used to good effect in allowing students to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have clear expectations of students and challenge them to succeed and these are effective in contributing to students' achievement. However, planning for and use of information and communication technology are underdeveloped.
201. Assessment of students' work is unsatisfactory, although improvements are being made. Helpful comments are made in exercise books. The current procedures do not provide a sound basis for assessing what students know and understand. Marking of students' work is variable. The department does not currently make use of levels of attainment and the setting of detailed targets in order for students to be clear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. Assessment information is not used to inform curriculum planning. This is recognised as an area for development.

202. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, so providing opportunities for students to explore world issues of justice, relationships and personal beliefs. In lessons, the teaching encourages students to explore their personal views about religious and moral issues, and work on the major world religions necessitates discussion about the cultures that support them, so preparing students for life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society.
203. Departmental management is very good. The head of department provides excellent leadership and approaches the task with great enthusiasm and deep commitment to the students. There is excellent support from other staff. The departmental development plan addresses current issues and forms a good basis for development. The monitoring of students' work is developing and will improve when assessment procedures are fully in place. This will enable the department to have a clear view of the development of its work. Students are provided with a rich programme of religious education. The quality of classroom display is very high and celebrates students' achievement well.

## CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**

### Strengths

- The contribution the programme makes to students' personal development is good.
- A wide range of learning activities engages the interests of the students.
- The quality of teaching is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Not all subjects make a good contribution to the teaching of citizenship.
- Assessment is not always used well to support learning.

204. Overall, students achieve standards that are consistent with expectations by the end of Years 9 and 11. They are enthusiastic and enjoy the content of the modules, particularly those concerned with relationships and the development of attitudes and values. Achievement is good across all year groups.
205. Students of all attainment levels make good progress due to careful thought and attention that the school pays to this aspect of students' personal development. Citizenship education is taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme and supported by related themes and topics covered in other subjects. The teaching of citizenship in subject departments is variable and requires monitoring in a systematic way. Students also have additional opportunities to develop an understanding of responsible citizenship and the democratic process through activities such as the school and year councils. Sixth form students are elected by their peers as observers on the school's governing body where they make a valuable contribution. The use of citizenship themes such as law, economic and industrial understanding, human rights and responsibilities enables students to discuss and develop a clear understanding of a range of issues. Overall, these activities provide a wide range of opportunities to enhance the development of citizenship and ensure that, by the end of Year 11, students have a good knowledge and understanding of what responsible citizenship entails.
206. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. Teachers prepare their lessons well and through the skilful use of questioning challenge students' thinking about social issues. Effective use is made of a range of resources to support teaching and learning. Teaching time is well used with time limits set for the completion of

learning activities. This helps to focus students' attention and ensures that lessons proceed at a good pace. Students' learning is underpinned by effective classroom management, which is based on the good relationships observed in all lessons. Personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons are at present taught by a strong dedicated team of staff.

207. The leadership and management of the subject are good and make a significant contribution to students' progress. The citizenship audit clearly indicates where other subjects can make a clear contribution. The teaching of citizenship is well supported by a comprehensive scheme of work. There are plans to provide well-focused training and this will help to promote higher standards. Citizenship makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students both in terms of the curriculum on offer and teaching styles that encourage students to develop attitudes and values. In one lesson students gained a good understanding of their rights as shoppers and the legal steps they can take in order to exercise them. They were enabled to develop clear attitudes and values and form important judgements. Satisfactory progress is being made in the development of citizenship and there is a firm base for further improvement.

## PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 12 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

### *GCE AS Level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	8	87.5		75		46.3	
Biology	23	82.6		26		31.7	
Business studies	43	95		51		42.0	
Chemistry	38	95		34		39.0	
Information technology	43	56		14		19.5	
Design and technology	9	89		33		34.4	
English language	6	100		33		36.6	
English literature	16	94		31		37.5	
French	11	100		36		42.7	
German	1	100		0		40.0	
General studies	96	73		18		26.6	
Geography	27	96		30		37.7	
History	24	87.5		17		29.1	
Law	1	100		0		30.0	
Mathematics	23	91		48		40.4	
Music	6	83		50		36.7	
Psychology	22	91		50		36.7	
Physical education	22	82		27		30.1	
Physics	13	69		38		31.5	
Sociology	10	70		30		29.0	
Food	10	100		30		40.0	
Electronics	6	100		67		43.3	

**GCE A Level and AVCE courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	7	100		71		97.1	
Biology	28	82		14		58.6	
Business studies	29	100		21		76.6	
Chemistry	22	86		36		72.7	
Design and technology	10	90		40		82.0	
English language	6	100		17		83.0	
English literature	10	100		40		84.0	
French	8	100		25		72.7	
Home economics	3	100		67		93.0	
German	2	100		50		90.0	
General studies	85	81		18		55.5	
Geography	16	100		44		86.3	
History	10	100		0		62.0	
Maths	10	90		70		92.0	
Music	14	100		36		80.0	
Psychology	5	80		20			
Physical education	7	100		14		66.0	
Physics	12	100		42		80.0	
Sociology	10	90		40		76.0	
Information technology	29	100		52		89.7	

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on mathematics, chemistry and biology, but physics was also sampled. In the one physics lesson observed, students' weaknesses were accurately diagnosed and the teaching deemed to be satisfactory. However, the students were not given the deeper insights that would have made learning really secure. Standards of work in students' files are satisfactory.

### MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**

#### Strengths

- Teaching overall is very good.
- Teachers are rigorous in their teaching of mathematical principles.
- Learning is rapid, leading to very good progress in lessons.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Experienced teachers who have very good subject knowledge.

#### Areas for improvement

- There too few opportunities for independent study.
- Assessment information is not used rigorously enough to inform planning or to set students' targets for improvement.
- There is too little use of information and communication technology to support students' learning.

208. In 2002 the standards achieved by students at GCE A Level in the A–B grade range were above the national average, with both male and female students achieved these higher grades. Only one student did not achieve a grade A–E. The overall standard was considerably above the national average.

209. Of the students who took AS level in 2002, just under a half achieved the higher grades and all but two students achieved grades A – E. This represents very good achievement in comparison with their predicted grades. The greater proportion of higher grades was achieved by male students. A number of international students successfully completed their AS examinations in 2002. Fourteen students have returned to complete the A Level course and two of them will study further modules to complete an AS or A-Level in further mathematics. It is expected that only a very small number of students will retake one or more of the AS modules alongside the A Level modules in 2003. A good number of students take the opportunity to re-sit GCSE mathematics in Year 12, to improve their grades and they do so with notable success.

210. Students currently studying A-Level mathematics are achieving very highly in lessons. Learning is rapid and secure. For example the students in Year 13 engaged in a concerted effort to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the differentiation. The teacher effectively ascertained students' ability to differentiate by inspection before proceeding to tackle the more complex expressions. By the end of the lesson students were able to find the solutions of other questions with confidence and accuracy.

211. Students in Year 12 have made a most encouraging beginning to their AS studies. This is because teachers in their planning are taking into account the breadth of students' ability and prior attainment, and plan activities that reinforce students'



knowledge and understanding. This very effective strategy ensures students are gaining confidence to tackle more advanced work. The teaching of mathematical methods is evident in students' work and is underpinned by the high quality of students' note taking and supporting examples.

212. Teaching is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and experience effectively in teaching the methods and principles needed to approach standard problems in each of the modules studied. For example, through approaching a problem from two different viewpoints students saw the value of both methods in rearranging a complex algebraic expression into two or more fractions. Teachers ensure students understand topics before moving on and in particular for those who may not have followed the higher level course at GCSE.
213. Where teachers challenge students about the various methods used to solve problems and why they work, students begin to evolve a greater insight into understanding how and why these methods do or do not work. Teachers regularly involve students in the discussion. Small white boards are used well during lessons to encourage students to display their ideas and their solutions to questions. This provides teachers with a clear indication of what students know and can do and where they are uncertain. Students are encouraged to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning and deepen their knowledge of particular topics. Currently, students do not have easy access to computers. In all lessons students receive effective individual support, praise and encouragement. This enables them to consolidate their learning and move on with greater confidence. However, teachers currently do not make enough use of open-ended tasks or encourage students in independent research.
214. Although students' work is marked and assessed, written comments do not always suggest ways for a student to improve. Assessment is not used well enough to make students more aware of how well they are performing and how to do better. However, discussion in class does much to dispel any major issues a student may have. The department has begun to analyse assessment information on each student and is able to set points score targets for them to reach in the forth-coming examinations. This enables students to set themselves targets to achieve.
215. The enthusiasm shown by all the teachers of the subject has a considerable impact on students and their attitude to learning, which is often excellent. Students are attentive, work well together, support and help each other. The atmosphere in lessons reflects the very positive relationship that has been forged between students and their teacher. Year 13 lessons are enriched by the inclusion of International students in the group. They contribute enthusiastically to discussion and this is impacting strongly on the learning of the group. Lessons are challenging with high expectation because teachers are very experienced and use their excellent subject knowledge effectively to create interesting and stimulating lessons. This motivates students to learn. Overall, students have very positive views about their mathematical studies in the sixth form.
216. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers share their expertise and seek opportunities to improve their own knowledge and understanding of the subject. Although the guidance for teaching and learning at this level is slim, teachers are experienced practitioners and manage well. Resources for the teaching of AS and A-Level are good and used well. Apart from more opportunities for independent study and the better use of assessment information, there are no significant areas for improvement.

## CHEMISTRY

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Lesson planning is very good, leading to clear focus and pace of learning.
- Emphasis on practical investigations deepens understanding and develops problem-solving skills.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to ask the probing questions that assist learning.
- Very good teacher/student working relationships give students the confidence to express opinions.
- Students are being well prepared as independent learners.

### Areas for improvement

- Information and communication technology is not used enough to enhance teaching and learning
- The marking of students' files does not always give helpful guidance.

217. The GCE A Level results in 2002 were above the national average. The proportion gaining the highest grades, A and B, was well above average. Male and female students did equally well. All students make at least good progress, when compared to their prior results at GCSE. Chemistry is a popular subject choice and almost all students complete the two year A Level course.

218. Standards seen in lessons and in the analysis of students' files and coursework are very good. This is mainly due to well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers teaching well planned lessons that have focus and a lively pace of learning. Students get very involved in practical investigations and the frequent discussions and consequently become enthusiastic learners. Year 13 carry out sophisticated investigations and demonstrate high standards of independent learning. They show very good depth of learning by being able to apply their understanding to new situations. For example, in a lesson observed, they accurately predicted the colours and chemical species that would be present in certain solutions. Year 12 students have extended their understanding well beyond GCSE level and are making good progress towards their predicted grades.

219. Teaching is very good overall. Lessons are well planned to give structure, pace and a variety of learning methods. There is very little passive taking of notes and students are frequently required to explain their understanding in discussions and in writing. This approach ensures that students fully consolidate their learning. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and understanding of how students learn to ask the probing questions that give insight and assist learning. Practical exercises are very well structured as problem-solving exercises to aid understanding of difficult concepts. Information and communication technology is not widely used to enhance teaching and learning. Frequent tests, homework and individual help in the classroom work well to provide students with an accurate assessment of their progress and weaknesses. However, work in students' files is not sufficiently checked or annotated to give help and guidance. Students for whom English is not their first language receive individual help and also make good progress.

220. Analysis of students' work shows a high level of application to independent research and study. Students carry out independent research and self-learning using computers, the Internet and resource books. There is very little copied material and students themselves generate most of the writing. They form very good working

relationships with each other and their teachers. This gives them the confidence to ask or answer questions as well as contribute fully to discussions. Students enjoy their chemistry, they are willing learners and show maturity in their approach to their studies. They are being fully prepared for the next step in their education.

221. Very good leadership ensures a clear educational direction for the subject. The chemistry course is carefully planned and timed with a strong emphasis on learning methods. There is a very good system for monitoring and assessing the progress of students.

## BIOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision is **very good**.

### Strengths

- The very good teaching results in very good achievement by students.
- The very good leadership and management give a clear direction to the subject, and teamwork is strong.
- Relationships are very good, and consequently, students strive to do well.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped
- Resources are inadequate to teach the full range of the curriculum.
- Some classes are too large to allow students to be supported effectively.
- There is not always enough emphasis on practical work.

222. The provision in biology caters for 67 students who take the AS and A2 examinations. Almost all students stay to the end of the course. The average points score in the 2002 A2 examinations was less than other subjects and this was due to the number of students who gained a U grade. These students continued with the A2 course after improving grades in the AS examinations. They had previously experienced changes of staffing and had been in an exceptionally large class, which considerably affected their achievements.

223. Lessons seen and scrutiny of work show that Year 13 students have standards that are above those expected at this stage of their course and are better than the results in the 2002 examinations. Both AS and A2 students have made a very good start to their courses. In Year 12, students extend their earlier understanding of genetics to include mutations that lead to Down's Syndrome and sickle cell anaemia. They also gain a full understanding of the three types of mutations and their effects. In their detailed study of the kidney, they accurately describe how the length of the limbs of the loop of Herle affects the salt concentration. This is to a good level. Students use statistical techniques appropriately, and this was seen in their fieldwork exercises. Essay plans are effectively used to help students organise their ideas. All students achieve very well, including those who gained high grades at GCSE, those who gained a C in the Foundation paper and those who come from other schools. Also, students who have English as an additional language make great strides in this subject, with the focused support of teachers and fellow students. A student who has special educational needs has also made very good progress with the support of teachers and his assistant.

224. All students are totally engaged in learning, and this shows in their questions. For example, one student asked if we were affecting the theory of natural selection when saving species that were near extinction. They are highly motivated to succeed and stated that they worked hardest on those areas that they found most difficult. They

work very well together and this was seen when they made presentations. In the best, students talked through their findings to the class and answered questions, showing that they had read around the subject. Their folders show a good level of note taking and they respond positively to written comments made to show how to improve.

225. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with one excellent lesson. All teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan effectively to build on students' knowledge and extend their understanding. The logical development of the subject, followed by a focused question, leads to students thoroughly understanding the subject. Questioning is very good to make students think and therefore learn. This was seen when a student conjectured that we 'played God' when involved in human cloning, to which the teacher asked if we were not doing that with transplants. Teachers put great emphasis on students' individual learning and this was seen when groups made presentations on aspects of cloning. Marking is meticulous, and work is also talked through to ensure that students understand the topic fully.
226. Leadership and management are excellent and the teachers co-operate well with one another. The development plan identifies areas that need improvement and how and when these needs will be met. For example, careful analysis of recent examinations showed poor results in the synoptic paper and, to remedy that, these questions are now given regularly. Students' prior results have been used well to provide target grades and their progress is carefully tracked. Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning. Other resources are also inadequate and practical work is underdeveloped.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

The focus of the inspection was on design and technology.

### **Design and technology**

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths**

- Most students achieve good standards of work in relation to their prior attainment.
- Drawing skills for communicating ideas.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- There is not enough emphasis on designing skills so that students can use a range of approaches when designing, modelling and evaluating.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough, especially for imaging and research.

227. Overall, standards are satisfactory. Results on the GCE A-level courses are in line with national averages both in the numbers gaining a pass grade and in terms of those gaining higher grades.

228. From the small quantity of work seen, standards are below what is expected at this stage of the course. AS level students show that they can use the skills of analysis and investigation. They know how to obtain information, but from a narrow range of sources. To take their work forward, they are quite dependent on the teachers for advice and direction. Students develop appropriate vocabulary and technical knowledge of the materials with which they work. One A Level student spoke of the good support students get from local industries especially in the supplying of specialist

materials. Drawing skills are satisfactory but generally lack the designing aspects in finished drawings.

229. Achievement is satisfactory and work in folders is well presented, but there is insufficient use of information and communication technology. Progress is well monitored through students' work. They see the content of the AS course as very challenging, different from their previous GCSE course. They do not see the frequent changes in staffing as an issue, but they did find the different styles took some getting used to and four students had to re-sit their AS level examination.
230. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers expect students to work hard and monitor shortfalls in learning closely, taking action when required. Students are set work that is challenging but they are slow to think of new ideas, present solutions and to draw attention to potential problems. Teachers have to intervene frequently to advance the students' learning especially at AS level. They are aware that students' designing skills are underdeveloped. They show students a great depth of understanding and present meaningful work to encourage them to take more responsibility for their own work. They use a wide range of contexts to promote students' interests and help them to learn. Students work well on their own and together sharing and learning from one another. Teachers thoroughly monitor the work in progress. Assessments are very much a partnership with individual students. Students receive regular support and feedback on their progress and are aware of how well they are doing. Students speak highly of the support and guidance they receive.
231. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has been in post for a few weeks and students are already benefiting from his enthusiasm and commitment. He is very well aware of the strengths and areas for improvement.

## **BUSINESS**

### **BUSINESS STUDIES**

Overall, the quality of the provision is **very good**.

#### **Strengths**

- Attainment standards and levels of achievement in lessons are very good.
- There is very good leadership of the department.
- Students have a very positive attitude to their learning.
- Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons very well.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- There is not enough use made of information from assessment to set students' targets and monitor progress.
- The large number of students in one Year12 class has an adverse effect on learning.

232. Standards are very good. Business studies is a very popular subject with the highest number of AS level candidates in the school in 2002. More than half of the 43 students achieved A/B grades. The average points achieved per candidate were significantly higher than the average for the other subjects in the school and students achieved approximately one grade more in business studies than in their other subjects. Boys and girls are equally successful. The standards of work observed in lessons in Years 12 and 13 are consistent with this high level of attainment. The students have a very

good understanding of business concepts such as 'economies of scale', 'fixed and variable costs' and 'retrenchment'. They are very competent in using their knowledge for evaluating and analysing business problems. Year 13 students, for example, were able to identify the reasons for spare capacity in the car industry and reflect intelligently on the impact on management policy. In Year 12, one class showed a good understanding of the 'recruitment cycle' and were able to discuss successfully the relative merits of recruiting from within and externally for a company.

233. The students' written work is impressive with evidence of detailed knowledge and good use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. There were some excellent assignments considering the financial and operational problems associated with company growth.
234. Teaching was very good in all observed lessons and the students learn very well as a result. The teachers have very secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons meticulously. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and are focused on clearly stated and understood objectives. Students were given challenging tasks in every lesson observed and responded accordingly. There is very good rapport between teachers and their classes and considerable evidence that the teachers have an excellent appreciation of individual needs. The development of key skills is inherent in the planning and teaching of the curriculum. Teachers have high expectations and use appropriate methods in order to enhance the learning of students of different ability levels, including those who are especially gifted. As a result, the level of achievement in all observed lessons was consistently very good.
235. Boys and girls successfully acquire new knowledge and develop their skills and understanding. Students of different ethnic backgrounds enjoy the same level of achievement. In one Year 12 class, learning is adversely affected by the large size of the group and in the same class there is insufficient support for four students who have English as an additional language. Meaningful, challenging homework assignments are set on a regular basis and constructively marked. The frequent use of case studies enhances the acquisition of analytical and evaluative skills as well as providing an insight to the business world. Good assessment procedures are in place and the students are well informed of their standard and what is required for them to improve further. However, more use of value-added analysis in setting and monitoring individual targets will assist the students further in raising their levels of attainment.
236. Students are attentive, work hard and show genuine interest in the subject. They are keen to maximise their opportunity and there were impressive examples of students working very effectively in pairs and small groups in all lessons observed. This was especially apparent in a Year 13 class when they were considering alternative strategies available to a firm in order to meet its growth objective. This strong work ethic is also evident in the students' mature approach to independent study.
237. There is very strong and committed leadership by the head of department. It is a reflective department in which the teachers give freely of their time, work effectively together and employ their individual strengths to best advantage. There is a clear commitment to getting the very best for the students and, as a result they quickly accept a shared responsibility for their learning. Schemes of work are in place and the teachers regularly observe each other teaching. This, plus annual teacher appraisal, has a positive effect on teaching standards and subsequent learning.
238. Good accommodation and easy access to information and communication technology also enhance learning. Other resources are satisfactory. Good learning opportunities are provided outside the classroom through the Young Enterprise Scheme, annual

European business studies tours and contacts with Mansfield District Council. Establishing more links with local businesses will enhance this programme. The high number of students who plan to proceed to higher education in order to study business related courses is a further indication of the department's all round success.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The General Certificate in Education Advanced Supplementary and Advanced Level 2 and Key Skills courses in information and communication technology were inspected. Six lessons were observed, two of the A2, two of the AS and two of the Key Skills courses. Teaching and learning in the A Level lessons are very good. In the Key Skills lessons they are good. The three courses are reported under one heading: 'information and communication technology'.

Overall, the quality of provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths**

- Students following the A2 GCE course are very well taught, leading to very good levels of learning.
- Good quality teaching resources and effective technical support enable students to make good progress.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well, due to effective support.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The Key Skills course offers insufficient challenge to some students.

239. Students' results in the 2002 A2 examinations were well above average and much better than their results for other subjects. The AS examination results were below average and were lower than the results for the students' other subjects. A significant proportion of students entered for this examination were ungraded, but included a number of overseas students for whom English is not their first language. Students' current work in both courses is in line with their prior attainment and what might be expected at this stage.

240. Students' previous work shows good coverage of content of the course. As result of skilled teaching they have a good understanding of the Data Protection Act. Most students know how to design and construct databases that interlink separate areas of data and know the different kinds of database that might be employed. They are well motivated when working on real life projects which require an information and communication technology solution. Students can create a detailed specification for a proposed system, employing their good literacy skills. They understand the importance of constant dialogue with the user of such a system. Students have a good knowledge of how queries can be formulated to extract information from a database when creating such a system. Some do not file their work on the computer in the most efficient way. Students for whom English is not their first language make satisfactory progress, but their lower level English skills affect the level of work they produce. Male and female students attain at similar levels.

241. Key Skills work is below what might be expected at this age, but a significant proportion of students have very low levels of previous experience of information and communication technology. The course is inclusive, enabling a number of students who have special educational needs to achieve well, as a result of skilled support and

resources suited to their needs. Students can construct simple databases and spreadsheets and know how they might be used in a real life context. Most use the Internet as a research tool, for example, to find current prices of articles in a supermarket web site, although some lower attaining students require much help with this. Students do not have a good understanding of how formulae might be used to simplify calculations in a spreadsheet. This course provides a good link with a neighbouring school.

242. Teaching and learning in the A2 and AS lessons are very good. In the Key Skills lessons they are good, but the work does not take account of the higher level work previously carried out by a small number of students. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject, which they use effectively when working with individual students. Questioning techniques are used well to probe and extend students' understanding. Lessons are well organised and draw on high-level resources, with some course materials that are easily accessible on line. Very good relationships in all of the classes lead to high levels of student motivation. However, in lessons, students have too few opportunities to discuss their work with each other.

243. Leadership and management of the courses are good. These result, for example, in high quality technical support, which ensures that students have access to good quality learning resources. The curriculum is satisfactory although there are no vocational courses currently on offer. There is the basis of a good assessment system in place, with good use made of email for communication between teachers and students. This, combined with good verbal assessment, makes students fully aware of how they can improve their work.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

No subject was inspected in this area.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

No subject was inspected in this area.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The focus of the inspection was on art

### **ART**

Overall, the quality of provision in art is **very good**.

#### **Strengths**

- Standards in A2 and AS examinations are above average.
- Students' achievement in painting and drawing is very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- Students' attitudes to their learning are very good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Accommodation requires improvement to enable a broader range of teaching methods and to meet the growing numbers opting for art.
- Resources, including those for information and communication technology, do not meet current demands



244. By the end of Year 13 standards in art are high. In the 2002 A Level A2 examination six students entered and all achieved a C grade or above, five being grade B and above. This gave an above average points score and represents very good achievement based upon their GCSE examination results. In the AS examination achievement was also very good with seven of the eight students achieving a C grade or above, three of these at grade A. Ten students currently studying for A2 who were only entered for one unit at AS all achieved a grade A.
245. Current Year 13 students are building upon this achievement and have made very good progress to date. They have very well developed drawing and painting skills that enable them confidently to experiment and develop their compositions. Students make reference to the work of artists and use this imaginatively in the development of their own imagery. They draw upon research information gathered from books, the Internet and visits to galleries, using this alongside their own observational drawings in the development of their work. One student for example was developing portrait work using textiles and mixed media inspired by her visit to a gallery. Sketchbooks are used effectively as journals to record ideas and responses. Students make very good progress because teaching focuses on the individual and gives regular and challenging comments that make students think about their work and how it may be improved. Students have well developed independent learning skills. Levels of personal commitment are very good and students respect and trust the judgement of their teachers, all of which supports very good learning.
246. Year 12 students developing large-scale paintings based upon observational studies of mechanical scrap made very good progress as a result of individual advice and discussion by teachers. Drawing and painting skills show good development from Year 11. They had all researched and made links to artists such as Jasper Johns and other abstract Expressionists. All teachers in the department share the sixth form teaching and this helps students gain different perspectives on their work. Students handle a range of media with growing skill and imagination and show very good levels of independence in the development of their work. Currently, around 27 students in one class are studying the course and this places pressure on the accommodation with students required to work in three separate studio areas. In spite of this they work very well and have mature and responsible attitudes to their studies.
247. Teaching is very good and gives well targeted advice and support to individuals regularly. Students receive written and oral advice that is challenging and they respond very well to this, making good progress. Guidance on the criteria for the examination is clear. The display of students' completed work and work in progress enhances the learning environment and does enable some learning from each other through the sharing of ideas and techniques. The strong emphasis upon individual advice and the current constraints of accommodation sometimes result in opportunities being missed for whole class presentation, discussion and sharing of the high quality work taking place in studios.
248. Leadership and management of art are good and have been instrumental in securing improvements in standards. There is a flexible entry policy for art which also enables the school's international students to follow a one year course leading to an AS qualification. Students who have not studied art previously are not precluded from joining courses.
249. Whilst students do make good use of books and other resources, those in the school learning resource centre lack breadth in terms of the range of artistic genres and cultures they represent. Funding for art is low and students are required to provide much of the materials they use. The lack of computers and associated equipment

inhibits the use of information and communication technology within lessons either for research or to develop artwork. Art is an increasingly popular and successful course and the challenge in the current rebuilding programme is to ensure that accommodation and resources for learning can meet this growing demand.

## **MUSIC**

The overall quality of provision in music is **very good**.

### **Strengths**

- Good teaching is based upon committed and supportive student/teacher relationships.
- There is increased provision available through Specialist College status.
- The department provides the students with a stimulating musical world.

### **Areas for development**

- The supply of library books and private study facilities to meet the specific needs of A Level music students are not good enough.

250. Recent examination results show a standard of attainment which is above the national average. At both AS and A2 level, more than half the students achieved A/B grades. The grades in music technology are generally lower but are average overall.

251. Students follow appropriate programmes of study and make good progress in the various strands of the course. They acquire a good knowledge of harmonic procedures and handle technical terminology confidently. They are a little less secure in applying this in their own exercises. In historical and stylistic studies, students develop appropriate analytical skills and some are able to make insightful links between different musical genres. Practical skills are generally strong and students benefit from the range of performance opportunities available. Four of the AS students are also taking the separate course in music technology. This is taught in twilight sessions both in and out of school and involves a collaboration with a local recording studio.

252. All teaching at this level is good or better. It is characterised by excellent student/teacher relationships and careful preparation. Students are also inducted into the skills of independent study.

253. The leadership and vision which has taken the department forward has generated resources and provided an infrastructure which facilitate learning for students at this level and greatly enrich their musical experience.

## HUMANITIES

The inspection focused on geography and psychology.

### GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision is **very good**.

#### Strengths

- Results in the A2 examination are above average
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The development of very good relationships between teachers and students encourages high achievement and promotes independent learning.
- Fieldwork makes a very positive contribution to students' enjoyment of the subject.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students who are new to the school in Year 12 or who have no GCSE qualification in geography sometimes have difficulty working to expected standards.

254. Results in the A2 examination in 2002 were well above average, particularly at the higher grades. The percentage of students awarded grades A or B was slightly higher for boys than for girls. A significant proportion of students earned full marks in their fieldwork paper. Students' average score in geography was above the average achieved in their other subjects.
255. In the 2002 AS examination in Year 12, standards reached expected levels, with boys performing slightly better than girls. Again, students' average score achieved in geography was above the average achieved in their other subjects. Most students in Year 12 last year have continued their studies into Year 13.
256. The department welcomes students with a wide range of prior attainment in geography, including a small number either from other schools or with no prior GCSE qualification. Some of these students have experienced initial difficulties, for example, in answering specific examination questions that require both acute observation and the use of background knowledge. Although teachers give their time to students very generously both in and outside lessons, a lack of self-confidence prevents one or two students from asking for help at an early stage.
257. The standard of work seen during the inspection is in line with expectations in Year 12, above average in Year 13 and above average overall. Achievement is good. Students in the current Year 12 are making satisfactory progress as they come to terms with the amount of individual work required and the depth of understanding needed in order to be successful. The department's decision to take these students to the Holderness coast at an early stage in the autumn term gave them an excellent introduction to A Level fieldwork and to the realities of coastal management. As a result, many produced high quality evaluations of the major issues which they encountered. Their subsequent work and progress has benefited from these insights.
258. Students in Year 13 make good progress and achieve well as they build up increasingly mature study skills. Discussions with them show that they enjoy most aspects of the subject and appreciate the different approaches and styles of their teachers. Several are planning to continue their geographical studies after they leave school. Analysis of their work reveals that most students take a pride in their work and make good use of marked assignments in order to correct errors and deepen understanding. They enjoy the chance to pursue their individual interests through personal investigations based on

fieldwork. Within these studies they use statistical techniques successfully as they collect, transform and analyse data.

259. Teaching and learning are very good. Very good relationships develop between teachers and their students throughout the two years of this course. As a result, students not only benefit from their teachers' high expectations but also from the extensive individual support that they receive. Teachers are experienced, have very good subject knowledge and keep up with new research, often through the use of information and communication technology, which they share readily with students. Work is marked frequently and in detail to A Level standards. The modular course allows teachers and students to work together in order to track progress, to see where improvements are needed and to predict likely final grades. Teachers plan individual lessons and sequences of lessons in detail, ensuring that links are made with other parts of the syllabus so that the wholeness of the subject is preserved. This was seen in a very good lesson on earthquake activity in which students were encouraged to reflect upon factors affecting the recovery from earthquake impacts and to discuss the connections between a range of natural hazards.
260. Students' very positive attitudes in lessons enable them to make the most of the very good teaching they experience. In an excellent lesson in Year 13, for instance, they displayed very good learning as they synthesised information and ideas on issues relating to oil extraction in an area of high landscape value. Extensive, high quality resources stimulated some animated discussion on the resolution of conflicts.
261. Good leadership and management of the subject combine to maintain high standards. Specialist rooms contain stimulating illustrations of current issues and examples of students' work, providing favourable working conditions. Appropriate textbooks in good condition are available for all students and encourage independent study. Geography is a popular choice at A Level, appealing to students who study a wide range of other subjects.

## PSYCHOLOGY

Overall, provision in psychology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Information provided to students at the end of Year 11 is of a high quality and indicates the range and challenges of the psychology courses on offer so that students make well informed option choices
- Year 12 students following the GCSE programme of study and those AS students who attend lessons regularly make good progress.
- Detailed written comments provided for GCSE and AS students provide effective advice on the standards achieved.

### Areas for improvement

- Poor use of data and ineffective liaison limits the ability of the partner institutions to respond effectively to information on the attendance and progress of students.
- The quality of teaching in Year 13 lacks rigour and structure and does not provide a sufficient level of challenge for higher attaining students.
- Leadership and management of the subject have not resolved the differences between college and school tutoring styles so that students do not feel adequately supported.

262. Students following the AS and A2 courses do so at a local college as part of the school's post-16 partnership arrangements. A small group of Year 12 students follows a one-year GCSE course taught in the school.
263. Psychology is a completely new subject for all students in Year 12 and the progress made by the GCSE students is good. Standards achieved on the AS course are more variable but are satisfactory for the majority of those students who attend lessons regularly. Overall, the standards achieved by Year 13 students are unsatisfactory. This is because the higher attaining students have not developed the range of analytical skills necessary to achieve higher pass grades.
264. Well-designed pre-course information provides students with helpful information about the work expected from them and psychology is a popular choice for those wanting to increase the breadth of their studies. The Year 12 GCSE course relies upon tutored independent learning. Teaching is good and the students are highly motivated so that they attain grades very much in line with their Year 11 GCSE passes. Because they achieve this in just one year, the level of achievement is good. Students value the tutorial advice and support they receive. The provision of extra texts in the school's learning resource centre is limited in number and range. Some students subscribe to quarterly journals and talk enthusiastically about articles that particularly interest them.
265. A Level students state that they enjoy psychology, but a number do not attend regularly and homework is not always completed on time or in sufficient depth. Students use contract buses but these get them to the college several minutes late. This creates problems for the college teachers who try hard to use the variable 'waiting time' in a way that does not exclude Brunts' students. This is not always successful and students miss more course time when buses do not run or when school study leave clashes with the college's timetable. Teachers are available to provide extra advice at the end of lessons and there is an email system that allows students to request extra help without going into the college.
266. Most students do not read widely enough. This results in limited subject knowledge that reduces the effectiveness of written reviews and evaluations. Students are fairly confident when answering questions or describing situations but are less sure when asked to discuss comparisons or provide evaluations. Teachers respond by making some lessons over reliant on factual content, with too few opportunities to develop techniques of debate and hypotheses. This is particularly inappropriate in Year 13 and reduces the grades earned. Course folders are well maintained but lack evidence of independent study or evaluations.
267. Overall, teaching in psychology is unsatisfactory. The best lessons have objectives that are shared with students and are used to check the level of learning. However, too much of the teaching is unchallenging and students fail to build on their preparatory reading. Homework is not set consistently across the groups. Marking is variable in quality but, in the better examples in Year 12, teachers provides detailed written advice as well as clear assessments. In these examples, grades are clear and students understand how well they are performing. These good features of marking do not extend to A2 work nor to providing written guidance on the most effective ways of preparing and maintaining study files. Many students are unable to analyse their performance and are unsure about what they need to do to improve further.
268. The management of the subject is poor. There is ineffective communication between the school and the college with an e-mail system that is often sporadic. The electronic contact system does not provide sufficiently regular exchanges of information about the standards achieved by students. Because checks on the progress made are not

systematic, neither the school nor the college effectively monitors or supports those students with a less mature approach to their studies. There is little use made of information and communication technology in the teaching of psychology. Although students are users of word processing in selected pieces of work, they only occasionally access the Internet from home and do not process data electronically. The limited monitoring of teaching and learning, both within and between partner institutions, is failing to reduce unacceptable variations in the quality of teaching. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory, but students report limited access to specialist books from the college.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English, languages and communication

The focus of the inspection was language and literature but literature was also sampled. In literature there were only ten candidates in 2002. All students gained grades between A and D and four gained A or B. In the one literature lesson observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory.

#### Language and literature

Overall, the quality of provision in language and literature is **good**.

#### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Students' written and oral work is detailed and perceptive.

#### Areas for improvement

- The department needs to maintain and improve student uptake of AS language and literature and encourage retention on the Year 13 course.
- Accommodation for language and literature teaching is unsuitable and needs to be improved.

269. In the 2002 GCE A-level examinations in language and literature students attained average results. The standard of work by Year 13 language and literature students is average and achievement is good. Students write analytically about a range of language texts, identifying different features of language, commenting on their effect and making succinct use of terminology. This good understanding is reflected in the writing of their own texts, which show a confident grasp of features at word, sentence and whole text level. As a result they have the intended impact on the reader. Students' written evaluations of such work reveal a good grasp of the reasoning behind the decisions they have made about language. When writing about literature the work of more able students is detailed and well structured. Perceptive and fluent analysis is supported by apt quotation, as demonstrated in a very cogent essay about *Othello*. Other students also write thoroughly and thoughtfully but with less grasp of the nuances of language and a less confident style. In lessons, students' spoken contributions are confident and show a good understanding of the techniques used in challenging texts.

270. Year 12 students, half way through their AS course, are also achieving well. Their written work is well organised and their methodical analysis of texts shows insight into the writer's purpose and the techniques used. They are beginning to find their own critical voice but are sometimes less assured in their written expression. During class discussions, students contribute articulately, supporting comments through close reference to the text and making confident use of complex terminology. One to one

discussion with students confirmed their good understanding of terminology and the impact of techniques used by writers and speakers.

271. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are very well structured so that learning proceeds step by step and students' understanding is consolidated. The pace of lessons is usually well judged and there is a good balance between whole class teaching and working in pairs. Teachers pitch their questions carefully and seek elaboration. In the best lessons, the tasks set ensure students' learning is both active and reflective. In a Year 12 lesson about the non-verbal features of conversation, students performed scenes in pairs to demonstrate these features and skilful questioning drew out key points. Later in the lesson, pairs of students read out scripted dialogues and then repeated their performance, explaining features they had deliberately included. Expectations are high and good links are made with previous learning. In another Year 12 lesson about a radio script, for example, students were encouraged to refer back to earlier work on Grice's maxims and apply them to the work in progress.
272. As a result of the good quality of teaching, students' learning is good. They develop a clear understanding of complex ideas about language and literature, and learn how to communicate their ideas effectively in writing. They are made explicitly aware of the assessment objectives through constructive marking and teachers' explanation. In a Year 13 lesson, for example, a lesson began purposefully with the teacher asking the class to highlight key words in an examination question. Student feedback led naturally into the teacher's summary of the examination board's comments about students' performance in last year's examinations. Students engage seriously with their work and most are very keen to contribute ideas in whole class discussion.
273. This good teaching and learning results from good leadership and management. There is a strong commitment to improving sixth form standards, which is clearly reflected in the department's action plan. A start has been made on encouraging greater uptake of AS courses and this needs to be sustained. Likewise, there needs to be a continued effort to encourage AS students to complete a full GCE A-level course. There is already some informal observation of sixth form teaching but this needs to be developed further into a more rigorous system of monitoring so that good teaching strategies are observed and discussed and, as a result, are introduced into all lessons and across different sixth form English courses. Current accommodation for literature and language, in science laboratories and huts, is unsuitable for the teaching of this subject and this problem needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

## FRENCH

Overall, provision is **very good**.

### Strengths

- The students are taught very well through stimulating lessons.
- The students show excellent attitudes, independence and hard work.
- The students are eager to use French in lessons.
- The students are encouraged to gather information and to make very good presentations to their peers.

### Areas for improvement

- Students do not always use the language as accurately as they should.
- Not all of the opportunities created for using information and communication technology are used well.
- Opportunities for sustained reading in Year 12 are very limited.

274. Numbers studying French in the sixth form are small. The Year 12 group has eight students but only one of them intends to continue to study the language at A Level and there are only three students in Year 13. Last year, numbers too were small. In the light of this, the standards of attainment last year were not statistically significant but at AS Level attainment was above the national average whilst at A Level it was slightly below.

275. There was some variation in standards in the Year 12 group. Some students were confident and expressed themselves well, if not always accurately. They understood spoken French quite well and noted down new vocabulary as they encountered it. Amongst the group was a student from Italy who was there on a one-year programme. The three students in the Year 13 group understood French well and communicated readily, although they too were not always accurate. Their knowledge of vocabulary was generally very good if a little anglicised on occasions. All students were able to follow and make notes of grammatical explanations.

276. Teaching in French in the sixth form was very good and was invariably conducted in French. Teachers gave students the opportunity to develop their own thoughts and to support one another. In the Year 13 class, two students were asked to prepare to role play a situation relating to racism. This enabled them to express their own views as well as to demonstrate their grasp of the subject and the language with which to discuss it. On another day, with a different teacher, the students had prepared computer-aided presentations on different subjects relating to racism which demonstrated well their interest, the extent of their research and their willingness to work very hard. Grammar is taught clearly and students are required to make their own notes.

277. Teachers are assiduous in seeking out a range of materials that can be used to support and to stimulate students. Students are encouraged to visit French web sites as well as to use books for research. However, opportunities for e-mail and video conferencing are missed and there is little opportunity for sustained reading. There is no French language assistant in the school, which means that students have no exposure to a foreign national at school and that their opportunities to become proficient in up-to-date language are limited. The work done in the curriculum that is followed provides excellent opportunities to explore moral, social and cultural issues. Several different teachers teach the sixth form groups, but planning and liaison is very good so that the variety is of benefit to students.



## GERMAN

Overall, provision is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent.
- There are many opportunities for students to demonstrate independence in learning.
- Students use a wide range of vocabulary.
- The subject makes a strong contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of the students.

### Areas for improvement

- There is no foreign language assistant.
- Students do not always use the language as accurately as they should.
- Not all of the opportunities created by information and communications technology are used.
- Opportunities for sustained reading in Year 12 are very limited.

278. Numbers studying German in the sixth form are small. The Year 12 group has five students but three of them are students from abroad who are only here for one year. Of the other two, only one thinks she might study German next year. There is only one student in Year 13. Last year, numbers too were small. Last year at AS Level and at A Level, attainment was above the national average although this involved a total of only three students.

279. In the Year 12 group standards in class varied considerably. One of the foreign students is a German national, one is a Hungarian student and one is from Czechoslovakia. There are two English students. Attainment in lessons observed varied from excellent to unsatisfactory. Standards in the Year 13 lessons were good. Here the one student was able to discuss the problems of smoking. Her vocabulary range was good, although she sometimes used incorrect language structures.

280. Teaching is very good and in one lesson it was excellent. Relationships were very good in all lessons seen and all lessons were very well planned. In the lesson in which teaching was excellent, much active learning took place where students themselves found and presented examples of the passive voice and made their own grammatical notes. The teacher concerned is an excellent enabler and even the students who had shown themselves to be very reticent in other lessons were confident and outgoing here. There was a disappointment in another lesson in that the German student was not able to present material to the rest of the group as time was short. In view of the fact that there is no German language assistant, the school should take all opportunities for students to hear German spoken by natives.

281. The teachers provide very useful materials but students too seek out materials from the internet, from books and from articles in order to be fully informed and to discuss issues as widely as possible. However, opportunities for e-mail and video conferencing are missed and students do not usually undertake extended reading. The work done in the curriculum that is followed provides excellent opportunities for students to explore moral, social and cultural issues.

282. Two different teachers teach the sixth form groups, but planning and liaison are very good so that the variety is of benefit to students rather than being a difficulty.