

INSPECTION REPORT

SETTLE HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Settle, North Yorkshire, BD12 0AU.

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121689

Headteacher: Trevor Wear

Reporting inspector: Michael Miller
17556

Dates of inspection: 14th to 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 249865

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: | 13 to 18 |
| Gender of students: | Mixed |
| School address: | Settle High School and Community College, Settle, North Yorkshire, BD24 0AU. |
| Postcode: | |
| Telephone number: | 01729 822451 |
| Fax number: | 01729 823830 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Barbara Fiorato |
| Date of previous inspection: | 27 th to 31 st January 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 17556 | Michael Miller | Registered inspector | | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the students taught? How well is the school led and managed? School improvement and effectiveness. |
| 10173 | Catherine Hinds | Lay inspector | | Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Attendance. The students' personal development. How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 15606 | Christine Hill | Team inspector | Art and design Special educational needs English as an additional language | Co-ordinator: sixth form |
| 2893 | John Manning | Team inspector | English | |
| 31441 | Maggie King | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
| 24453 | Gordon Jackson | Team inspector | Science Physics in the sixth form | |
| 3555 | Carol Emery | Team inspector | Design and technology | |
| 1578 | Maureen Sinclair | Team inspector | Information and communication technology Religious education Business education in the sixth form | |
| 8070 | Joe Haves | Team inspector | History Citizenship | How good are the curricular and other opportunities? |
| 4317 | Ken Madrell | Team inspector | Geography | |
| 15396 | Ron Bulman | Team inspector | Modern languages French in the sixth form | |
| 4697 | Robert Black | Team inspector | Music Educational inclusion | |
| 14446 | Barry Simmons | Team inspector | Physical education | |

The inspection contractor was:

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Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Settle High School and Community College is a co-educational school for students aged 13 to 18. It has 594 students on roll, of whom 131 are sixth-form students. There are 290 boys and 304 girls. It is smaller than most other secondary schools. Numbers on roll over the past five years have varied between 556 to 600 students. The school takes its students from a widespread area of the Yorkshire Dales, covering nearly 200 square miles. Many students have to travel considerable distances to school, making use of public transport. The school is popular with its parents. Through its work within the community it plays an important role in the life and work of the area, and of its students. The general attainment of students on entry to the school in Year 9 is broadly average. The majority of students are from white ethnic backgrounds and there are currently no students for whom English is an additional language. Unemployment in the area is low locally, but there are few large employers. Employment is based on agriculture and small businesses serving tourism. Farming locally was severely affected by the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 and its repercussions are still being felt in the area. Many students go into family businesses or leave the area for further or higher education. At just under 3 per cent, the proportion of students registered for free school meals is low. There are nearly 14 per cent of students on the register of special educational needs, which is below average. However, at 2.5 per cent, the number with full statements of special educational need is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Standards by the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 are above average. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The overall effectiveness of the school is good and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent working relationships between teachers and the students support learning.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of students support their personal development.
- The good teaching supported by teachers' very good subject knowledge.
- The very good provision for students with special educational needs, and the progress they make.
- The way in which the school works to ensure equality of opportunity for all its students.
- The quality of the school's whole environment for learning, which enables students to achieve well.

What could be improved

- Systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance, which are more consistently applied.
- The unsatisfactory provision for the leadership, management and teaching in music.
- The school's implementation of the English, mathematics and information and communication technology strands of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- Provision to enable the preparation of its students to live in a contemporary, multi-cultural society.
- The requirements for the teaching of religious education are not met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since then, there has been satisfactory improvement overall on the main key issues. Health and safety issues have been resolved, although the policy and procedures for health and safety are still not continuously monitored. The school has improved the quality of teaching and learning. Strategic, whole-school planning is now in place. Assessment procedures are now good, but the use of challenging targets to raise standards requires further improvement. Provision for students with special educational needs is now very good. The national curriculum requirements for information and communication technology are now met, but the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not in Years 9 to 11. Information to parents has improved, but reports to parents require further development. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all students are still not met.

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 |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| GCSE examinations | B | B | B | D |
| A-levels/AS-levels | B | B | B | |

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

In 2001, the results of the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well above average compared with all schools nationally, but well below average compared with similar schools. However, there are relatively few such Year 9 to 13 schools in England. The school's best results were in English where they were well above average nationally and above compared with similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were above average nationally but well below compared with similar schools. The school's trend for improvement over the past five years has been broadly in line with the national trend. In 2002, the percentage of students gaining Level 5 and above in tests and teacher assessments overall was above average for all three core subjects. In the current Year 9, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, modern languages and physical education. Attainment is average in history, art and citizenship. It is below average in music and below expectations in religious education. Students' achievement is good in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, modern languages and physical education. It is satisfactory in mathematics, art and citizenship but unsatisfactory in music and religious education.

The school's total points score for GCSE/GNVQ examinations in 2001 was above average compared with all schools nationally, but below compared with similar schools. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C was above the national average. However, results were average compared with similar schools on students' prior attainment in Year 9. Overall, the school's trend for improvement over the past five years has been below the national trend. It was above the national trend from 1998 to 2000 but fell in 2001. The effects on the local community of the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak played a part in this. Consequently, the overall statistics for the school were affected. Standards of attainment in the current Year 11 are above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, art and physical education. They are average in history, music, citizenship and modern languages. Standards are below expectations in religious education. Achievement is very good in design and technology. It is good in English, science, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern languages, art and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, science, music and citizenship. It is unsatisfactory in religious education.

The average points score for GCE A2 and AS level results in 2001 was above average compared with all schools nationally. When compared with all post-16 providers, the performance of all A and AS level students was above average; when vocational courses are taken into account it was well above. Overall, standards in key skills are above average. Standards of work and lessons seen during the inspection broadly confirm the standards reached in examinations.

Standards in literacy and numeracy are above average. Students with special educational needs in Years 9 to 11 make good progress and in the sixth form they make very good progress. Students who are gifted or talented make good progress. There were no students for whom English is an additional language. The school has set and met realistic targets for improvements in standards. However, because of a lack of consistency in the monitoring of the school's performance by senior management, targets do not always contain a sufficient element of challenge.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Students enjoy their time at school, working hard in lessons and relishing the additional activities on offer. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Students behave very properly in class, and particularly well when they move around the school informally. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Students relate exceptionally well to each other. Everyone is included in the life of the school. They become mature, responsible individuals. |
| Attendance | Good. Students attend regularly and are keen to learn. |

The way in which the school encourages and enables the personal development of its students is one of its key strengths. This is reflected in the excellent overall relationships between staff and students. Parents particularly highlighted these characteristics in the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of students: | Year 9 | Years 10 – 11 | Years 12 – 13 |
|-----------------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good | 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 and learning are good overall, with nearly two-thirds of the lessons seen being good or better. Nearly one-fifth of lessons were very good or excellent. Teaching and learning were good in over half the Year 9 lessons. In Years 10 and 11, they were good or better in just under three-quarters of lessons seen and very good or excellent in just over one-quarter. Most of the small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and learning took place in music, but one unsatisfactory lesson was seen in Year 11 science and another in a Year 9 citizenship class.

In Year 9, teaching and learning are good in English, science, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern languages, art and physical education. They are satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, citizenship and religious education, but unsatisfactory in music. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are very good in art and physical education. They are good in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography and modern languages. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in mathematics, music, citizenship and religious education.

There are some common strengths in the best teaching. They include: high expectations of students; teachers' overall very good management of lessons; the establishment and development of excellent working relationships with students; teachers' very good professional knowledge and understanding of their subject, which demand respect and motivate students to learn; good questioning techniques, which are used to involve students in the lessons.

The teaching of literacy skills, particularly reading and writing, is good in most subjects. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. However, there is no formal monitoring of the literacy policy, and the policies for numeracy and information and communication technology strands of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy have yet to be properly developed. Overall, teachers ensure that work is well matched to the abilities of students with special educational needs and, consequently, they make good progress. The school has begun to identify its gifted or talented students and staff are increasingly adapting and adjusting work to their needs, but not all teachers take sufficient account of these students' rapid development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good overall. However, provision for religious education is unsatisfactory because the school does not fully meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in Years 9 to 11. |
| Provision for students with special educational needs | Very good. The planning and provision to meet the needs of all students with special educational needs are strengths of the school. There is very good use of individual education plans. |
| Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. This is a civilized school where students are respectful and courteous. Their social and moral development is very good and a strength of the school. Cultural understanding is good, but multi-cultural development to prepare students for a contemporary British society requires improvement. |
| How well the school cares | Good. The school takes good care of its students. It successfully promotes |

| | |
|---|--|
| for its students | exceptionally high quality relationships so that students feel secure and included in school life. |
| The school's procedures for the assessment of its students. | Good. Many subject co-ordinators use the available performance data well to plan their work. Teachers and students are aware of predicted grades and targets. However, the effective use of data to support improvement is inconsistent. |
| How well the school works in partnership with parents. | Good. Parents are very supportive of the school. The school works hard to involve and inform all parents. It provides particularly good information for parents of students with special educational needs. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is good. Management systems for holding the school to account for its performance are not consistently applied and require some improvement. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory overall. Governors show good levels of commitment and active involvement in the life of the school. Some statutory requirements are not met. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Unsatisfactory. The governing body does not at the moment ensure that the headteacher has sufficient non-teaching time to carry out his management responsibilities. They do not, therefore, fulfil part of their important role in shaping the direction of the school. |
| The strategic use of resources | Resources are used well to support the students in their learning. Financial management is good and the principles of best value are well applied. |
| The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources | There is a good match of teaching and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation is used effectively to meet teaching and learning needs. Resources are good, but some improvement is required in design and technology, modern languages and music. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school because the school has high expectations of its students • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible • Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems • Teaching is good and their children make good progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which the school works with parents • The information provided by the school about their children's progress • The range of activities outside lessons |

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. The team also agrees that some reports lack sufficient detail. The lack of an obvious reception area or entrance can inhibit parents' confidence and ease of access. However, for a school of its size it makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities, apart from a lack of such provision in music.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

SETTLE HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this slightly smaller than average 13 to 18 comprehensive school has 131 students. It provides a satisfactory range of subjects and vocational courses. Most of the students from Year 11 continue into the sixth form. Attainment on entry in Year 12 is above average. At just under 2 per cent, the proportion of sixth form registered for a free school meal is low. The percentage of sixth

form students with statements of special educational need, at fewer than 2 per cent, is below average. Most students stay until the end of Year 13, following which many go to university or some other form of further or higher education.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an effective sixth form because consistently good teaching results in above average standards and a very high numbers of students complete their courses. The good leadership provides students with clear regular advice and guidance relating to their careers and studies and provides effective additional support through their studies. The sixth form is very successful in meeting the needs of the students.

Strengths

- The standards in mathematics, art, business education, geography, physical education physics and chemistry, which support students' above average levels of attainment in these subjects.
- The good leadership of the post-16 coordinator, which is supportive of staff and students.
- The broad curriculum provides students with a good range of opportunities to meet individual needs.
- The students' attitudes to learning are very good and relationships are excellent.
- The school responds well to local circumstances and the aspirations of its students.
- The provision for students with special educational needs enables them to make very good progress.

What could be improved

- The average standards of attainment in English, design and technology, and French.
- The school's strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of the sixth form performance.

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 | Satisfactory. Students enjoy mathematics and develop as independent learners. Experienced teachers ensure that students achieve in line with their prior attainment. |
| English | Good. Good teaching has helped students to come to terms with the demands of a new course. Standards are average, but achievement is good. |
| Physics | Good. Teaching is well planned. All abilities are adequately challenged. Students' practical work contributes to good progress and attainment, in line with abilities. |
| Design and technology | Satisfactory. Standards are improving and achievement reflects the good teaching. Many students achieve at or above their predicted grades. Attitudes to the subject are very good. |
| History | Good. Teaching, progress and achievement are good. Students have positive attitudes and respond well to a carefully planned and stimulating curriculum. |
| French | Good. Teaching and learning are good. Students achieve well in French and German. Attitudes are positive and productive. Teachers monitor work closely. Improved teaching in German has raised standards significantly. |
| Business | Good. Teaching is good and students respond positively to a curriculum that relates to real life. |
| Geography | Good. Good subject knowledge, good teaching of geographical skills and of physical and human processes. Good relationships with students, good range of resources and effective teaching and learning methods. |
| Physical education | Very good. Very good teaching and learning, and highly committed students. Results and achievements that are better than average. |

German was sampled and the teacher provided an excellent, fluent, authentic use of the language. Students responded with intensive hard work to achieve above average standards. Art in the sixth form is very good because of the expertise of the teachers; the broad range of experiences enables students to develop well as artists. Good teacher knowledge in music offers students a satisfactory experience in composing and performing. Chemistry is good; students are well taught and challenged through enthusiastic teaching. Biology is sound because experienced teaching ensures students make appropriate progress and are well supported. Information and communication technology standards are good because of the good teaching and organisation. Drama is good and students are well involved. Students achieve well in religious education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| How well students are guided and supported | Well. Tutors remain with the students through the two years. Progress is regularly and systematically reviewed. Excellent relationships ensure students are confident with adults who support them very well. |
| Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form | Good. Leadership ensures that students are properly provided with advice and guidance relating to their careers and their studies. Management is less effective in monitoring and evaluating sixth form performance. |

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

| What students like about the sixth form | What they feel could be improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are well taught and challenged • Teachers are accessible to help them • They enjoy being in the sixth form and would recommend it • The school helps them to settle well into the sixth form • They are helped and encouraged to study independently • They are treated as responsible young adults • Course choices are suited to their talents and aspirations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice from the school and careers advisers about their future options • Information from the school about their progress • Helpful and constructive advice from the school about their course choices • The range of activities and curriculum enrichments provided • How the school responds and listens to the views of the sixth form • The level of support and help if they experience personal problems |

The inspection team endorses the students' positive views. The concerns expressed by some students were explored during the inspection and very little evidence was found to support them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Settle High School and Community College is unique as it is the only age 13 to 18 secondary school in the North Yorkshire local authority area. It is one of relatively few such schools in England. The school's official catchment area covers nearly 200 square miles and students come to the school from a widespread rural area of the Yorkshire Dales. For such reasons, care is therefore required when interpreting direct comparisons with similar schools¹. For example, the school is only just over half the size of the average secondary school. Consequently, the performance of a relatively small percentage of its students can affect whether it is statistically above or below average on a similar schools' comparison. Further, when comparing recent trends in performance over time, the school's latest annual performance and national data comparison report² recognises that the school was affected by the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. As a focus for the life and work of its students the school plays a very important and vital role within its local community.
2. At the time of the inspection, in October 2002, there was no national comparative data available for GCSE and Advanced Level examinations for 2002. Neither were the overall national benchmarks for the Year 9 tests and teacher assessments. The reporting of the school's performance compared to national averages in these tests and examinations is, therefore, made with the 2001 results, the latest year for which such information is published. However, the national results for the *individual* subject tests and teacher assessments, taken by students at the end of Year 9 in 2002, had recently been provided. Where possible, these 2002 results have been used for comparison throughout the report.

Main School: Year 9

3. When students arrive at the school, at the start of Year 9, their overall standards are broadly average, although standards are better in mathematics. Results for the national tests of students at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well above average overall when compared with all schools nationally. However, when compared with similar schools they were well below average. The best results were gained in English where, based on points scores³, they were well above average nationally and also above average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were above average nationally, but well below average compared with similar schools. The percentage of students gaining the expected Level 5⁴ and above was well above average for English and close to the average for mathematics and science. The numbers of students attaining the higher Level 6 or above was well above average in English and above for mathematics and science. In 2002, the percentage of students gaining Level 5 and above in tests and teacher assessments overall was above average for all three core⁵ subjects. Teacher assessments in 2002 for the foundation

¹ Results are also compared not only nationally but with those obtained by students in similar schools; this includes those with a similar uptake of free school meals.

² This is an annual report produced by Ofsted, the Department for Education and Skills, and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. It is known as a PANDA report and functions as a management tool for the school and as an aid to preparations for inspection.

³ Average points scores are also calculated for Year 9 tests. Level 5 is worth 33 points. A pupil achieving Level 5 in all three subjects would therefore have an average points score of 33.0.

⁴ By the end of Year 9: students are expected to reach at least National Curriculum Level 5 in English, mathematics and science national tests. Level 6 and above are referred to as higher levels. In 2002 the national percentage of students reaching Level 5 and above (with Level 6 and above shown in brackets) was 66 per cent (31) in English, 67 (45) in mathematics and 66 (33) in science.

⁵ The National Curriculum core subjects are: English, mathematics and science.

subjects⁶ show levels of attainment for students achieving Level 5 or above which are above average in all subjects except history, where they are just above average. Teacher assessments were submitted for music, which show above average performance, but no teacher records were made available during the inspection to substantiate this judgement.

4. Over the five years, from 1997 to 2001, the school's trend for improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend. Year 9 students' performance has exceeded the national average for their age group in all core subjects. However, over the three years from 1999 to 2001, whilst the performance of girls exceeded the national average in all three subjects, those for boys fell below average for English and mathematics but exceeded the average in science.
5. Standards in work and lessons seen during the inspection show that levels of attainment⁷ for students in Year 9 are above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, modern languages and physical education. Attainment is average in history, art and citizenship. It is below average in music and below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Students' achievement⁸ and the progress they make are good in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, modern languages and in physical education. They are satisfactory in mathematics, art and citizenship, but unsatisfactory in music and religious education.

Main School: Years 10 and 11

6. In 2001, the school's total points score⁹ for GCSE/GNVQ examination courses was above average when compared with all schools nationally, but below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C was above the national average. The numbers gaining five or more A* to G passes was close to average. However, when the students' prior attainment in Year 9 is taken into account, results for A* to C were average, but those for A* to G well below average compared with similar schools. Boys' results were close to the national average and those for girls above.
7. GCSE results in English language in 2001 were well above average and those for English literature above. In 2002, the language results dropped slightly but the literature results remained high. In mathematics in 2001, GCSE results were above the national average and the 2002 results remain very similar. In science, the students' results at GCSE were overall above average and the 2002 results show an improvement on the previous year.
8. Overall, the school's trend for improvement over the past five years has been below the national trend. It was above the national trend from 1998 to 2000 but fell in 2001. The effects on the students, and the local agricultural community, of the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak played a part in this. Consequently, the overall statistics for the school were affected.

⁶ The National Curriculum foundation subjects are: art; design and technology; geography; history; information and communication technology; modern languages; music; physical education. In addition, religious education is taught to the requirements of a locally agreed syllabus.

⁷ Attainment refers to the standards students achieve compared to national averages.

⁸ Achievement refers to the progress students make in terms of where they started when they entered the school. Thus, good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that students do well and make better than expected progress.

⁹ GCSE results: In 2001 nationally, 48 per cent of students attained five or more grades A* to C, 91 per cent attained five or more grades A* to G and 96 per cent attained one or more grades A* to G. The average total points score was 39.0 (calculated by eight points for A*, seven for A, etc).

9. The school is starting to make increasing use of performance data on students to set targets. Overall, it has set realistic targets for improvement and has been successful in meeting these. However, because of weaknesses in the school's systems for monitoring performance and making subject departments more accountable, the targets have not always included a sufficient element of challenge. This is part of a key issue for improvement, which is dealt with later in this report under the section entitled 'How well is the school led and managed?'
10. Standards in work and lessons seen during the inspection show that levels of attainment for students in Year 11 are above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, art and physical education. They are average in history, music, citizenship, and overall in modern languages. Standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. The overall achievements of students are very good in design and technology. Achievement is good, and students make good progress, in English, science, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern languages, art and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, science, music, and in citizenship. It is unsatisfactory overall in religious education.

Standards in literacy: Main school

11. Standards in literacy are above average. Overall, the school's approach to the development of students' literacy skills is good. Most teachers encourage reading aloud in class, such as in drama, modern languages, history and geography. Written work is also good; for example, in geography students construct clearly argued essays for GCSE. In information and communication technology, students are tested on key words before they use the computers. In science, mathematics and music standards are average but are not yet high enough.

Standards in numeracy: Main school

12. Standards of numeracy are above average. Students' standards are above average on entry and are maintained throughout the school. For example, even the lowest attaining students know all their multiplication tables up to ten times ten, and measure length and angles accurately. A small minority of students are working at standards below those expected for their age in Year 9. However, students' standards in handling data are particularly good and they apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding successfully in other subjects of the curriculum.

Special educational needs

13. Students with special educational needs in Years 9 to 11 make good progress and in the sixth form they make very good progress to achieve their targets. They make good progress in literacy skills through the basic skills support programme. Some students attain standards in GCSE and A-level examinations in Years 12 and 13 that compare very well with mainstream students. At the time of the inspection there were no students attending the school for whom English is an additional language.

Sixth Form: Years 12 and 13

14. The attainment of students when they enter the sixth form is overall above average. It is a slightly smaller than average sixth form with a satisfactory range of subjects and vocational courses. Retention rates are good and it is an effective sixth form because results in Years 12 and 13 are above average overall. The sixth form is popular with its students and is very successful in meeting their needs, and the majority make good progress on the basis of their examination results at the end of Year 11. Most remain in full-time study until the end of Year 13, when many have achieved the necessary standards to go on to university or some other form of further or higher education.
15. The average points score for GCE A2 and AS level results in 2001 was above the national average overall for all students. It was close to the average for male students and above for female students. When compared with all schools nationally¹⁰ in the 2001 Advanced level examinations, students achieved well above the national average in chemistry, geography, physics and in physical education. The interpretation of their results shows above average performance, on the basis of points' scores, in art and design, biology, French and mathematics. It was average in English literature and general studies. In the post-16 vocational courses it was well above average in the business education course and average in art and design. When compared with all post-16 providers,¹¹ the performance of all A and AS level students was above average; when vocational courses are taken into account it was well above average.
16. Standards of work and lessons seen during the inspection broadly confirm the standards reached in examinations. Overall, standards in key skills are good. In the subjects specifically inspected, standards are above average in mathematics, physics, geography, physical education and in business education. Standards are average in English literature, design and technology, history and French. Achievement is good in all these target subjects, except mathematics where it is satisfactory.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

Main School: Years 9 to 11

17. As at the time of the previous inspection, students have very good attitudes to school. This is a characteristic recognised and applauded by parents. Students say they enjoy their time at school and quite evidently relish their lessons and other activities. Throughout the week students were competing in house rugby and netball competitions. They were completely undeterred by fierce wind and gales. These lunchtime events continued with no lessening of enthusiasm.
18. Students' attitudes to lessons are equally good and make significant contribution to the good progress made. The calm focused atmosphere in classrooms is palpable. Students have a purposeful approach to learning. One of the older students was overheard commenting that he is at this school because he wants to learn. Boys and girls show keen interest and commendable commitment, as instanced by a group of mathematicians continuing to work after the bell for break.
19. Attitudes are always at least satisfactory. Year 9 students are sometimes a little unsettled in lessons. They are not yet completely comfortable with the mature approach expected of them. Occasionally, a few of the older boys are inattentive when teachers fail to catch their imagination and attention. These negative attitudes seldom affect the progress of the whole class.

¹⁰ Sixth form institutions cover comprehensive schools with sixth forms, city technology colleges, and other secondary, grammar and modern schools.

¹¹ In addition to the above, this sample includes further education colleges, sixth form colleges and some independent schools.

20. Students behave very well in lessons and around the school. In class, they respond to the very clear expectations of the teacher. This response stimulates their desire to try hard and leaves little time for inappropriate behaviour. Students move carefully around the school eager to be punctual for their lessons but genuinely aware of the needs of others. Behaviour during break times is very civilised. Students respect the privilege of using classrooms during lunchtime. The lack of litter and graffiti illustrates their understanding of the school's moral code.
21. Parents and students report that bullying seldom occurs. A few students, mainly boys, have difficulty conforming to the school's expected code. The school manages these students very well and does not allow their behaviour to affect the learning or well being of others.
22. Settle High School and Community College continues to be an exceptionally harmonious community. Relationships throughout the main school and sixth form remain excellent. All students, boys and girls, older and younger, enjoy being with one another whether in the classrooms or around the school. They offer each other very good support in lessons and modestly and automatically help each other. Year 9 English students carefully guided classmates to the relevant passages in the book they were studying.
23. A significant feature of these excellent relationships is the ease with which all students are included in school life. Students are considerate of the needs of others who have particular challenges because of their individual circumstances. They accept that some students have problems always behaving well and make allowances for them. They also accept that some students have particular disabilities. They make no fuss about the implications of these situations and tenderly help them feel part of the social or working group.
24. Students relate equally well with adults. These charming citizens smile eagerly at visiting adults and confidently share their experiences, impressions and opinions. Students enjoy chatting and light-hearted banter characterises many of the interactions between adults and students. Adults supervising or visiting the Youth Centre at lunchtimes are immediately welcomed and entertained by stories of school life. The students show high levels of interest in, and compassion for, the lives and needs of others. They are currently collecting toothbrushes and toothpaste to send to Belarus.
25. The school acknowledges the importance of each student's personality and ensures that each makes very good gains in their personal development. Students, including those who have additional challenges due to their special educational needs, take very good levels of responsibility for their lives in school and college. They gain in poise and composure as they progress from Year 9 to the sixth form. Younger students are happy, relaxed and friendly. By the time they are in their final year students have made substantial gains and are self-confident, self-disciplined and self-assured.
26. All students carry out any tasks they are given with pride and authority. School committee members enjoy their additional responsibilities and commit their time very willingly. Students eagerly offer help both in the school and local community. They loved preparing the school for the Environmental and Science Fairs. Settle students acted as guides for students as young as five from local schools. Youngsters enjoyed the workshops prepared by the Settle students, who had transformed parts of the school building into the parts of a plant. The youngsters relished the journey through the plant and shared in the fun as they crawled together through the roots!

27. Attendance at the school is good. Students arrive in good time for registrations and individual lessons. These features of school life demonstrate students' positive attitudes and contribute to the very purposeful atmosphere evident in the school and college.

Special educational needs

28. Students with special educational needs, including those who are gifted or talented, show initiative and are willing to take responsibility. They form constructive relationships with one another, and with teachers and other adults. They reflect on, and understand, the effect of what they do on others. Students respect individuals' feelings and values, and work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour. The attendance of students with special educational needs is good.

Sixth form: Years 12 and 13

29. All students have very good and positive attitudes to the school. They come to school to study, take their work seriously and value the school and the opportunities it offers to them. Their behaviour is very good. They work hard and listen carefully to advice their teachers offer in order to raise their attainment. Relationships are excellent. Levels of attendance are good and they are punctual to lessons. As a result, they take full advantage of the teaching time that is available to them and this helps to ensure that they learn and make progress. It is the combination of the good teaching and the very good attitudes students have to their work that enables them to take full advantage of what their teachers offer. This is the key to the success of the sixth form.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Main school: Years 9 to 11

30. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with nearly two-thirds of the lessons seen being good or better. Nearly one-fifth of lessons were very good or excellent. However, there are some differences between Year 9 and Years 10 and 11. After only half a term in school, a number of the Year 9 students are still getting used to the demands made upon them. Whilst teaching and learning were good in over half the Year 9 lessons, there is as yet more of an emphasis on the establishment and setting of those high expectations of the students, which are so evident in other year groups. Consequently there were fewer very good lessons in Year 9. However, in Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning were good or better in just under three-quarters of lessons seen and very good or excellent in just over one-quarter.
31. Most of the small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and learning was in music. This was mainly due to a lack of challenge and the fact that schemes of work have not been specifically adapted to the needs of the students at the school. Consequently, the planning of activities to develop skills and musicianship is weak. However, there was one lesson involving unsatisfactory teaching in Year 11 science. Here, the lack of planning for gifted or talented students, or those with other special educational needs, restricted learning. In a Year 9 citizenship lesson students did not learn enough because the teacher talked at them too much, did not involve them sufficiently in the lesson, or question in ways that checked their understanding and learning.
32. Although teachers' assessment of students' learning in lessons is good overall, assessment is not yet sufficiently well linked to longer-term challenge and targeting for improvements in standards. Not all subject coordinators make enough use of the data the school collects on students' performance. Senior management, in their roles as

line managers, are not rigorous enough in challenging middle management to ensure that this information is used sufficiently well as a teaching tool, in contributing to raising standards and achievement. This is a further factor relating to a key issue for school improvement, dealt with under the section entitled 'How well is the school led and managed?'

33. In Year 9, teaching and learning are good overall in English, science, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern languages, art and physical education. They are satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, citizenship and in religious education. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in music.
34. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are very good overall in art and physical education. They are good in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography and modern languages. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in mathematics, music, citizenship and in religious education.

Teaching of literacy: Years 9 to 11

35. The teaching of literacy skills, particularly reading and writing, is good in most subjects. Occasional errors in spelling and punctuation occur, usually in the work of lower attaining students. Teachers' marking helps the students to think more carefully about their work. There is good use of writing guidelines to help students to plan their written work.

Teaching of numeracy: Years 9 to 11

36. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Mathematics lessons are taught in broad ability sets from entry in Year 9. Most lessons have an introduction followed by an activity from a worksheet. As this teaching approach is common to groups of all levels of prior attainment, the work is not always closely matched to students' needs. However, only a minority of lessons make use of the national numeracy strategy starter activities and there are rarely any reviews of learning at the end of lessons. Learning activities generally involve completing exercises from textbooks. Some mathematics teachers, but not all, use whole-class interactive teaching very successfully. The teaching of numeracy is not specifically planned into subjects other than mathematics, although students successfully apply the skills acquired from mathematics lessons across a broad range of other subjects.

Special educational needs

37. Teachers' plans ensure that work is matched to students' needs and shows they are making progress. There is very effective liaison between class teachers, special educational needs assistants, outside agency support staff and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, particularly when students are withdrawn from lessons for additional support work. Individual education plans contain clear targets that are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. Special educational needs assistants are very effective with the right blend of support and challenge. The school has begun to identify its gifted or talented students and a list of such students, including their criteria for selection, is available to all teachers. Staff are becoming increasingly aware of these students and are willing to adapt and adjust but not always to take account of their rapid development. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very successful in drawing on a range of support for students, including the use of outside agencies. Students respond well in class, answering questions and making positive suggestions in discussion. They learn well in

small groups and in one-to-one teaching where they are given work to meet their needs and of which they are capable.

Sixth Form: Years 12 and 13

38. The quality of teaching throughout Years 12 and 13 is good overall. Teaching and learning were good or better in four out of five lessons seen. They were very good or excellent in a quarter of the lessons. Teaching and learning in the subjects which were inspected in depth are very good overall in history and physical education. They are good in English literature, physics, design and technology, geography, French and in business education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in mathematics. The teaching of key skills, whilst not centrally co-ordinated, is good overall across the range of subjects and courses. In the other sixth form subjects and courses sampled, teaching was very good in chemistry, information and communication technology, and in German. They were good in the art and design courses, and in religious education. Teaching and learning were satisfactory overall in biology, music and in drama. Overall, learning in the sixth form is further supported by the provision of a very good sixth form study centre where students work and undertake private study. Students were also appreciative of the facilities afforded them through the school library and the use of computers for Internet research. This particularly assists students in their homework and longer-term research projects. Evidence from the scrutiny of sixth form students' work files shows that research projects are a good element of their work.

Teaching and learning: summary for Years 9 to 13

39. There are a significant number of key strengths which characterise the good or better teaching throughout Years 9 to 13, and which were seen across a range of subjects. These factors contribute well to the support of students' learning. They include, for example, teachers' high expectations of students and, overall, very good management of lessons. This is achieved because of the establishment and development of excellent working relationships with students and the consequent ethos¹² for learning. Through lessons seen and discussions with teachers, students and their parents it is clear that teachers have a very good professional knowledge and understanding of their subject, which demands respect and motivates students to learn. They consistently use good questioning techniques, which involve students in the lessons.
40. Overall, it is very clear that the school's teaching and teaching support staff have worked hard to establish a climate for learning throughout the school that encourages students to achieve well. A direct consequence of this is the overall excellence of the working relationships that have developed between students and their teachers. This is additionally supported by the approach of other non-teaching staff. This results in the very good behaviour seen in lessons and the very positive attitudes of students towards the school and their approach to learning.

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

Main School: Years 9 to 11

41. The quality and range of the curriculum are good overall, being stronger in Years 10 and 11 where drama is fully established and where there is guided provision in science for lower attaining students. However, the provision for religious education is unsatisfactory throughout Years 9 to 11 because it does not meet the requirements of

¹² In this context 'ethos' refers to the characteristic spirit or attitudes of the school as a community.

the locally agreed syllabus. Otherwise, there is a sufficient range and balance of subjects for all students in Years 9 to 11. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and in addition the personal and social education programme of study includes citizenship.

42. There are a number of significant strengths to the curriculum. The provision for extra-curricular activities provides students with a wide range of opportunities to develop specific skills and further learning. Students participate in good numbers and this is facilitated by the length of the lunch hour, which provides ample time for many of these activities. There are a wide range of sports clubs, which include soccer, rugby, netball, hockey and GCSE swimming. In addition, there is an art workshop, French enrichment classes and a singing group. However, there is no school choir.
43. The work related curriculum provides very good opportunities for all students and is closely linked to careers advice, which is of good quality. It provides a very good match between educational need and provision. All students take part in work experience and they are given considerable opportunities to be involved in their choice of placement. In addition, a small number of students in Years 10 and 11 benefit from extended work-related activities.
44. The curriculum is carefully matched to the needs of individuals and groups of students. There is good access to GCSE courses for all students moving into Year 10. A wide range of courses is available for students from which to choose. There is a balanced prescribed curriculum in Years 10 and 11, which includes personal and social development, information and communication technology, and physical education. In addition, all students select a science course, a foreign language and a technology course. Two further options are available, which include history, business studies, music or a second language. Overall, this provides students with a good range of choice upon which to base further decisions for their post-16 education or career choices.
45. There are a number of specific strengths within curricular areas. For example, there is a very broad art curriculum, a wide range of activities in physical education and a good range of choice in design and technology. Most subjects have sufficient time allocated to them; however, it is insufficient in religious education.
46. The curriculum promotes literacy well. There is good policy guidance and this helps raise standards in reading and writing in different subjects. However, the monitoring of this policy is less thorough and little attention is paid to accurate writing in some subjects, such as science and mathematics. The strategies for promoting numeracy across the curriculum are adequate, but the provision for promoting information and communication technology across the curriculum is too inconsistent.
47. The provision for personal and social education is satisfactory. It includes appropriate modules of study on health education and complies with the school governing body's policy for sex education. However, the inclusion of religious education here restricts the amount of time available for this compulsory element of the curriculum. From September 2002, elements of the new citizenship curriculum have been incorporated within personal and social education. This has built well upon prior good practice, but is still at an early stage of development.
48. The community makes an effective contribution to students' learning. There are good links with the Settle Festival and a local art gallery. Students have the opportunity to be involved in local charitable initiatives and fundraising for the benefit of their school. Students maintain a Traidcraft charity shop in school and further opportunities involve

students in conservation work within the Dales National Park. Appropriate links exist with the two middle schools. There are a number of individual subject liaison meetings and a joint staff training day is held each year. Overall, this is an effective curriculum, which ensures that all students in Years 9 to 11 have good access to a wide range of subjects and to opportunities that further their personal development. It ensures that all students benefit from good learning opportunities that contribute positively to the standards achieved and rates of progress gained.

Special educational needs

49. The curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is very good. Arrangements for using individual education plans are very effective in ensuring needs are met, whilst enabling students to have full access to the curriculum. Arrangements for withdrawal do not impinge on their equality of opportunity. Withdrawal from normal classes and lessons is kept to an absolute minimum. Provision in statements is being fully met and all students benefit according to need from what the school provides. All staff are alert to the needs of some students who are not doing as well as others and use the new Code of Practice¹³ procedures to address needs.

Sixth form: Years 12 and 13

50. The school offers a good range of courses in the sixth form that meets students' individual needs, interests and aspirations. The school uses consultations with students and parents to analyse the range of needs of all students. Careful consideration is given to the grouping of subjects to satisfy the needs of each new group of students. They are expected to have an appropriate academic record in the GCSE examinations and be highly motivated to succeed, and take responsibility for their own learning. They are encouraged to continue with their successful GCSE subjects. It is possible to take some subjects not previously studied, and to improve on their grades in GCSE examinations. The school is socially inclusive ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all students. The prospectus successfully stresses the importance of choices being linked to career aspirations. The governors make a satisfactory contribution, especially to the work-related education and careers. The curriculum meets the needs of students, including those with special educational needs, and includes provision for religious education.
51. The core programme offers opportunities to study physical education, drama, music, community studies or a computer literacy course and general studies. The curriculum is dedicated primarily to academic studies, but also successfully offers a small range of vocational courses. Although there is not a co-ordinated programme for the delivery of key skills, the school is successful in teaching them through individual subject areas. General studies and the careers programme make a significant contribution to teaching key skills. The school is successful in developing responsibility through the post-16 committee and in encouraging students to play a part in the wider life of the community.
52. The school gives a high priority to preparing students for the sixth form. Very good attention is given to the transition period through consultation evenings, one-to-one interviews and sampler courses. There is a good response to local circumstances through 'Settle Together'. This brings people of all ages together and provides good opportunities for moral development and citizenship. Other initiatives include 'Business Dynamics', a two-day event that makes best use of local industries, business and other agencies. The 'Rural Regeneration Project', launched at the school, gave the students

¹³ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that students who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

opportunities to discuss local issues with the Member of Parliament. Responding to local circumstances also gives students opportunities for managing and organising fund-raising and entertainments. The school has successfully developed very good links with the community.

53. The majority of Year 11 students choose to continue their studies into the sixth form and in response to their needs the school has, over the last two years, introduced new courses. Such courses include psychology and sociology, which are provided through the community education programme. The curriculum is designed and regularly reviewed to reflect the students' immediate needs and future career plans. The development of more vocational based courses is planned to extend opportunities to allow for a wider range of student abilities and career aspirations.
54. Careers guidance is very good, relevant and supportive. Students pursue work experience as part of their studies. With very good support from the careers service, the school is successful in stressing the importance of work experience and its value to continuing education. Students receive a very good overview of the many career opportunities different subjects will open to them. They develop very good independent learning skills, reflecting a primary aim of study in the sixth form. They are encouraged to undertake private study and have access to a good range of resources in the school library. Students respond by working effectively and maintain a high level of trust in using study time constructively. The school undertakes extensive monitoring of achievements and destinations of students by gender.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

55. The school's provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good throughout the main school and in the sixth form.
56. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. Senior staff and visitors conduct high quality assemblies. They give students the opportunity to consider and reflect on the important things in their lives. For example, in a Year 11 assembly students were asked to consider how responsible they are for the actions and the lives of others. Although there are regular assemblies, the school does not meet the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students. The planning for students' spiritual development is evident in some subjects, in others however, it is not so prominent. In English, when the students were studying the poem *Death of a naturalist*, students were asked to reflect on the beauty of natural objects, and in a personal development and social education lesson the recent bombing outrage in Bali provoked a very sober discussion about terrorism.
57. The opportunities provided for the students' moral development are very good. Staff are good role models. They make their expectations of high standards of behaviour in all aspects of school life very clear, promoting them consistently, vigorously and sensibly. Students show tolerance and respect for each other and their opinions. In drama students are given opportunities to think about the effect of a range of topics, including bullying and the plight of refugees. In physical education teachers emphasise the importance of fair play and 'playing by the rules'. The school has clear expectations of students in terms of their knowing right from wrong. Students discuss wider moral issues in religious education, including the effect of wealth and poverty. In a Year 12 drama lesson a very powerful representation of the moral issues surrounding the horrors of child abuse was observed.
58. The school's approach to the students' social development is very good. In lessons there are many opportunities for students to work collaboratively, and there is a wide

variety of competition between houses in which students may participate. There are many sports teams when students co-operate with each other and also during expeditions based around the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Many students co-operate very enthusiastically in the school's regular drama productions. Considerable sums of money are regularly raised for well-established charities. An active school council has representatives from each tutor group. The school is a highly civilised institution. Students and staff treat each other and visitors with courtesy and respect. The school is a safe and secure environment.

59. A most significant feature of the school's support for the students' moral and social development is the outstanding relationships that are fostered throughout the community. From the time that young children come to visit the school, often as young as five, potential students are helped to view the school as a happy, secure and grown-up community. This means that new students quickly feel part of a civilised and structured environment. Staff know students well. They carefully nurture individual need and, therefore, successfully help students to become mature and sensible young citizens. However, students do not have such positive attitudes to the formal programme for personal development and social education as might be expected. This programme covers the required elements but has limited time allocated to it. Staff cannot explore some of the issues fully with the students. At the time of the previous inspection an experienced team of tutors taught the programme. This is no longer the case and whilst the formal arrangements are satisfactory they make unusually little contribution to the students' personal development.
60. The very good personal development of students continues in the sixth form. The college treats students as mature and responsible young adults. It expects them to play their part in the life of the school and the community. Students manage, for instance, the house sporting events. They have been very involved with the community suggesting, for example, the environmental improvements they would like for Settle. In lessons staff encourage students to consider moral issues. A group of Year 12 students competently and confidently shared their feelings and opinions about the recent bombing in Bali.
61. The school's approach to the students' cultural education is good and there are many opportunities for cultural enrichment. Theatre visits, drama productions, residential trips, fieldwork, and visits to France and Germany, all contribute to students' knowledge of other cultures. In the design and technology department there is a module of work that covers multi-cultural foods. In a rehearsal of *Top Girl* by sixth form female students, attitudes that exist between women from a variety of cultures were being explored. However, there is only limited preparation by the school to equip their students to take their place in our contemporary, multi-cultural, and multi-faith, British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Main school: *Advice, support and guidance*

62. Parents recognise that the school takes good care of its students. Some of the arrangements for the care of students have improved and none have deteriorated. The school and college foster excellent relationships throughout the community. This ensures that students feel safe and secure and always have someone to turn to for help and support. Parents and staff say that all staff know the students very well and are instantly prepared to attend to individual needs as they emerge. Staff provide comfort to troubled or worried students and help or consolation to any who are sick and

injured. The school is alert to child protection issues and carefully ensures that staff are confident in their approach.

63. The condition of the building is good and general maintenance is high. Coupled with routine checks and inspections, this good quality maintenance successfully reduces the risk to the health and safety of students and staff. Specific issues identified in the previous inspection report have been resolved. Departments complete regular risk assessments. Students are taught about Internet safety and the school's information and communication technology systems are protected through security arrangements run by the local education authority. However, the school is still creating a framework and procedure for ensuring that all departments are held accountable for regular risk assessments. This requires securing as a matter of urgency.
64. Attendance at the school is good. Staff are vigilant about recording attendance and following up absence. Whilst carefully monitoring the absence of individual students, the school does not monitor the attendance of different groups of students systematically. This restricts the school's ability to target specific groups to promote improvement and to ensure equal opportunity.
65. Staff expect students to behave well. They assume that students will take responsibility for their own behaviour in lessons and around the school. This approach is successful with almost all the students. Staff manage those few students who find it difficult to behave properly particularly well. Staff react very promptly to deteriorating or poor behaviour. A raised eyebrow is often enough to arrest the disturbance. Staff plan and provide the support needed to improve behaviour, ensuring that the learning of others is seldom disturbed and that students are safe in school. The school rarely excludes any students permanently and makes very good use of fixed term exclusions as the penultimate sanction. Parents and students recognise that the school promotes a secure environment where bullying seldom occurs. They comment that the school deals promptly and efficiently with any form of harassment or bullying.
66. The school keeps records of the rewards it gives to students, and any sanctions it imposes. Students themselves record and collect their personal rewards. Whilst the school records such helpful information, it does not yet monitor its use of rewards and sanctions for any particular groups of students. This prevents the school ensuring parity of treatment for all groups of students. This was a point raised by some parents.
67. The school helps students learn well by providing good support for their academic and personal development. Staff know their students well and carefully encourage them to try harder in areas of weakness. Departments monitor progress well and some analyse results to identify targets for improvement. The school assesses students' overall progress termly and expects students to contribute their own evaluation of their progress. Annual reports contain clear descriptions of what students can do and where improvements are required in some subjects, but not in all.
68. Staff carefully nurture students' personal development. The excellent relationships enable staff to work closely and effectively with individual students, encouraging, for instance, improvement in attitudes or behaviour. The school rightly attaches significant importance to the role of the tutor, who remains with the students for their three years in the main school. This system successfully supports the development of individual relationships. The morning registration period is, however, not always used to set a purposeful tone for the day.
69. The school has a good understanding of students' individual academic and personal development. It does not, however, systematically review and analyse this

development by groups such as boys and girls, or more and less able students. This prevents the school ensuring that all students make the very best possible progress.

Special educational needs: *Advice, support and guidance*

70. The provision set down in students' statements of special educational need is fully implemented. The school liaises very well with external agencies to meet additional identified support needs. Teachers know their students very well and support them very effectively.

Sixth form: *Advice, support and guidance*

71. The school provides very effective educational support and guidance for students from the time they enter the sixth form until they leave the school. Arrangements for their health and safety are secure. These students recognise the importance of signing in and out and commit to this system. Tutors remain with the students through their career in the sixth form and very supportive partnerships emerge. Subject staff also support students very well even, on occasions, allowing students to e-mail them at home.
72. Tutors and sixth form leadership monitor attendance carefully. They identify trends and patterns and seek to arrest any deterioration very quickly. This ensures not only the good attendance levels in the sixth form but the remarkably high course completion rates.
73. The school gives potential sixth form students very good guidance about subject choices. It then continues to support the students as they progress through their chosen subjects. The college reviews students' performance regularly, carefully identifying progress towards anticipated grades. Students are fully involved in these reviews.
74. The college provides very good guidance about future courses, study and career opportunities. The careers library is extensive and the college arranges many opportunities for students to explore what is available to them. Students recognise the future career paths which should, and could, be open to them. Discussions indicated that students feel they are very well guided and are both realistic and aspirational in their plans for the future. A number of students, for instance, attended a three-day event at Cambridge sampling the university experience. The inspection team finds little evidence to substantiate the concerns of some students reflected in the questionnaires about the quality of guidance for future careers and study.

Main school: *Assessment*

75. Overall, the monitoring of academic performance is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Policies and procedures are in place, which give adequate guidance to teachers to use the available data effectively to support the improvement and progress of students. The majority of subject co-ordinators use the data to set targets and to analyse overall performance. This information is then used when reviewing and modifying the existing curriculum. Overall, assessment procedures are good with many subjects involving students in the assessment and setting of their targets for improvement. This involvement of students is particularly good in English, art and for students with special educational needs. However, the monitoring of the consistent use of assessment across all subjects to set suitable levels of challenge for the students is inconsistent and inadequate. The use of data and assessment to support students' improvement and progress in religious education and music is poor.

Special educational needs: Assessment

76. The school's procedures are very effective and consistent for assessing and identifying students with special educational needs. The school complies fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Statements and reviews are up to date and all requirements of statements met. Through the very effective monitoring process all key staff are aware of requirements. Strengths and weaknesses are discussed with students themselves especially at the time of progress reviews using the individual education plans.
77. The school does not systematically assess and monitor the achievements of the gifted or talented students. However, the school is beginning to acknowledge students' achievements, particularly when great strides are made. Although there is some good practice in some departments, it is inconsistent across all subjects. The school's practice in discussing strengths and weaknesses with students themselves is also inconsistent, as is the setting of individual targets for this group of students.

Sixth form: Assessment

78. Arrangements for assessing students' attainments and progress are very effective because information is used well to guide planning and support and the school is continuously developing and refining these. The post-16 co-ordinator monitors closely students' personal progress, attitudes and career aspirations through a planned programme of reviews. The sixth form tutors successfully provide additional support for students through events like the 'Futures Programme', and by working with the co-ordinator to provide guidance, support and counselling. Teachers assess and monitor students in individual subjects. Assessments are formalized twice a year and used to good effect to keep parents and students well informed. The review process, from the initial induction meeting through to students leaving the sixth form, is very good; providing accurate information on attainment and progress, it is used to inform planning. After the initial review meeting students take responsibility for informing parents of future meetings and this procedure is less reliable for some parents. The school sees parental support as crucial to the personal support and guidance offered to students. Students are clearly informed about assessment procedures in the subject information. Students use records of achievement very effectively for recording assessments and references. Updated annually with tutors, they provide a very reliable record.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

79. Parents are very supportive and recognise that this is a good school. They comment that their children like the school and applaud the high expectations that it promotes. Most applaud the good teaching and recognise the good progress made by students. The inspection team endorses these parental views.
80. The school works hard to include parents in the education of their children. It provides a good range of general information, including lively and interesting newsletters. These give particularly good insights into the busy lives and diverse opportunities that the students enjoy at and through the school. Arts, business, sport and community responsibilities are amongst regular features. Parents help with particular curriculum initiatives. Students enjoyed, for instance, the chemistry workshop organised by a parent who is a firework manufacturer.

81. The school welcomes its parents and encourages their involvement in school life. The school presents well. Lively and original displays around the school demonstrate its success in stimulating the students, the only obvious omission being in the highlighting of multi-cultural display material to heighten students' awareness. The school is always pleased to see visiting parents and quickly deals with their needs or enquiries. These features help parents feel comfortable in approaching or contacting school. However, the school does not have an obvious entrance hall and reception office. It is difficult, therefore, for new parents and visitors to feel immediately welcomed and supported.
82. The inspection team understands and appreciates the uncertain comments from a number of new parents whose children have only attended the school for a few weeks. The school has a good system for reporting to parents. It provides termly reports either in writing or through consultation. Almost all parents attend consultations and the school ensures at least a phone call with any absent parents. Some parents expressed concerns about the changes to the Year 9 consultation interviews being with the tutor and not subject teachers. The school is rightly consulting parents and keeping these arrangements under review.
83. However, there is some justification for the concerns expressed by a few parents about the quality of information received about their individual child's progress. The quality of report writing has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory, but inconsistent. Some departments and teachers, for instance in English and art, give clear descriptions of exactly how students have progressed in their studies during the year or term and how to secure further improvement. Some departments, however, give sparse description and little specific guidance for future improvement. This inhibits parents' understanding of the exact progress their children have made and how to support their children in the forthcoming year.
84. Sixth form parents are initially encouraged to attend consultations with students and most avail themselves of the opportunity. During the course of Years 12 and 13 the school aims to move responsibility for managing progress and future direction to the students themselves. Most parents, but not all, understand and support this approach.
85. The school makes suitable use of homework to involve parents in students' learning at home. Planners are checked in Year 9 where the school promotes regular parental involvement. The school rightly expects most Year 11 students to manage their own planners and organisation of homework. This expectation contributes to the very good personal development of the students.

Special educational needs

86. The school keeps in touch with and communicates very well with parents. The school is also careful to alert and involve parents in specific situations or changes in a student's demeanour or performance. Links with parents are well established, from the feeder middle schools. Parents are involved in the review process and are kept informed by the special educational needs co-ordinator through regular contact that includes the diary and programmed reviews and reports.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

87. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. There are significant strengths in its leadership, but some important areas concerning the management of the school that require improvement.

88. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and form an effective team. The leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the deputy headteacher, has been particularly good and instrumental in encouraging and fostering the school's approach to students, and the way in which staff and students work together. This has resulted in the excellent relationships which exist within the school, and which has led to the good learning and achievements of the students. In this they have been well supported by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, the governing body, and parents. There is a good commitment to a 'teamwork' approach throughout the school community. Consequently, the aims and values of the school are very well reflected in its life and work. The effects of this approach are to be seen in the key strengths of the school, as identified by the inspection: the excellent working relationships between the teachers and their students which supports learning; the very good attitudes and behaviour of the students, which support their personal development; the good teaching supported by teachers' very good subject knowledge; the very good provision for students with special educational needs, and the progress they make; the way in which the school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all its students; the quality of the school's whole environment and approach to learning, which enables students to achieve well.
89. However, a major weakness lies in the fact that the headteacher does not have sufficient time to carry out his management roles. In recent years he has taught for upwards of a quarter of the working week. He currently teaches a one-third timetable. There is a major benefit in this for the students, because otherwise an important area of the curriculum, physics, could not be taught properly. The cost is in the time available for the headteacher to monitor and hold the school to account. Consequently, he delegates some of his monitoring work through his senior management team. Whilst they are very supportive and willing to take on such additional responsibilities, this sometimes adds a disproportional weight to their workload. The outcome is that line management is seriously stretched and that the school's monitoring and accountability processes are not rigorous enough. The effect of this has resulted in, for example, an insufficient element of challenge being added to the school's realistic targets for improvements in standards. The direct accountability of subject co-ordinators to the headteacher in order to achieve the required improvements is not effective enough. A further example involves music. Although there are good overall records of lesson observation and support provided for the department, the process failed to pick up the weaknesses in assessment identified during the inspection. This was a serious omission. In addition, although a member of the senior management team was appointed to oversee the introduction of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy¹⁴ as from September 2002, proper co-ordination has yet to be established. The roles of literacy, numeracy and information technology co-ordinators have yet to be properly developed to ensure all subjects make their required contribution, and that liaison with the middle schools ensures full continuity from Years 7 and 8 into Year 9. An agreed policy for performance management is in place which meets statutory requirements, but its implementation has been uneven and some elements require completion, for example in Geography.
90. There is no doubt that the school's senior and middle management teams work hard and show good levels of commitment to further school improvement. The professional capacity to succeed in this is also good. However, the governing body has not ensured that the headteacher has sufficient time to carry out his management responsibilities. This is part of the governors' important role in helping to shape the direction of the

¹⁴ The National Key Stage 3 Strategy aims to raise the standards achieved by 11 to 14-year-olds by transforming approaches to teaching and learning. It supports five curricular strands: English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and teaching and learning in the foundation subjects. In its first year, the English and mathematics strands, with literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, were introduced. The other strands are to follow during 2002 and 2003.

school. This is a weakness in the effectiveness of the school's priorities for development. In other respects, the governing body fulfils its role well. The chair of the governing body holds regular, weekly consultation and briefing meetings with the headteacher. Governors are active in their involvement with the school and take a keen and personal interest in its progress and development. They receive regular information from the headteacher, which enables them to make informed decisions. Proper information concerning their activities is maintained in governing body and committee meeting minutes. Governors' committees carry out their work conscientiously. However, statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all students are not met. The governors' annual report to parents reports on standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 9 in the core subjects, but does not report on the teacher assessments for the foundation subjects. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not met. Because of these factors, the overall effectiveness of the governors in fulfilling their statutory duties is only satisfactory.

Sixth form: *Leadership and management*

91. The staff who have responsibility for the sixth form carry out their roles and responsibilities very well. They provide very good guidance to teachers and students arising from their thorough monitoring and evaluation of students' work. The school aims are very well reflected in the planning and work of the sixth form. The post-16 co-ordinator and the assistant co-ordinator share roles and responsibilities. They have complementary skills and delegate the management tasks to each other, according to individual areas of expertise and interest. The level of co-operation between them is high. They work well in the strategic planning of sixth form development and in the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of sixth form teaching and courses. All sixth form staff are involved in supporting students and this support, based on the review system of target setting and tracking of students' progress, is of high quality. This is a considerable strength in the provision for sixth formers; it enhances the good levels of achievement, the confidence in the advice and very good support students receive as well as their enjoyment of their time at school.
92. Significantly, retention figures for sixth form courses are high. The governing body is involved in some aspects of the sixth form, but is not fulfilling its responsibilities sufficiently well in relation to curriculum development at post-16. Students have significant management responsibilities as organisers of events such as fundraising, managing meetings and entertainments. They carry these responsibilities very well. Consequently, their personal development benefits, as does the school from the responsible ways in which they lead and manage. Financial management of the sixth form and its cost effectiveness are good. Costs in the sixth form are carefully balanced with those of the rest of the school. Monitoring of the work of the sixth form by the staff responsible is good, but the overall monitoring of the sixth form by the governors and senior management is less effective.

Special educational needs: *Leadership, management and resources*

93. The special educational needs co-ordinator makes a very effective contribution to the management of the school. Regular monitoring of students' provision ensures staff are effectively deployed and outside agency support used to meet the range of needs the students present.
94. The department benefits from the active support of a very well informed governor. The staff who work with special educational needs students are sufficient to meet the needs of students and properly qualified, in some cases very well so, and very effective in

providing the right balance of support and challenge for students. Teachers who work with special educational needs students are most effective when they work with the learning support assistants and use a range of techniques to support and challenge learning.

95. Accommodation is good, especially the improved access for students with disabilities in the new buildings, and there are sufficient resources to meet present needs. However, the sheer physical layout of the school, on a hillside with many steps between levels, causes problems for the school in fully complying with the access requirements of the new 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
96. At the time of the previous inspection provision for students with special educational needs was satisfactory. It is now very good. The school now focuses very effectively on the provision for special educational needs of all students.

The school's resources: Staffing

97. The school has sufficient teaching staff and is well supported by a strong team of non-teaching staff. There are sufficient specialist teachers in all subjects except in religious education. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff are good overall. Teachers are well matched to the demands of the curriculum in both the main school and the sixth form. A good feature of the staffing is the use of teacher assistants to support those students with special educational needs.
98. The school has gained Investors in People status. This is proving to be effective in terms of the development of the teaching staff and there are plans to extend this to cover the development of the support staff. The school's strategies for appraisal and performance management are satisfactory overall. There is an agreed policy for performance management, but its implementation is uneven. The monitoring of the policy through line management lacks rigor. The evaluation of the effectiveness of performance management in terms of its impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupil progress has been inconsistent.
99. The staff handbook contains a copy of induction arrangements for new staff. However, its implementation with new staff has been inconsistent and there is no specific guidance for newly qualified teachers. The inappropriate provision of support staff in science and the narrowness of the post of library resources manager were issues identified at the previous inspection. These have now been successfully resolved.

The school's resources: Accommodation

100. The school's accommodation is good and makes a positive contribution to standards achieved by all students. It meets the needs of students of all ages well and is more than sufficient for the numbers of students on roll. The strengths include the large classrooms in most curricular areas, including mathematics and English. The school has a number of dedicated curricular areas, which include three information and communication technology suites, a good size library and careers library, and a designated sixth form area. The local community swimming pool provides a good off-site facility and there is a large sports field and hard surface for sport. Areas for improvement include indoor facilities for physical education, and design and technology facilities require upgrading. Overall, and with some new building, satisfactory improvement has been achieved since the previous inspection.

The school's resources: Learning resources

101. Overall the provision of resources for learning is good. In most subjects there is evidence of good financial planning for resources, particularly so in mathematics and physical education. However, the availability of equipment and relevant software for information and communication technology to support the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is less than adequate in science, modern languages and music. There are some shortages of software for effective teaching in Years 10 and 11. For example, in design technology the difficulty of access to computer aided design and manufacture restricts the quality of learning. In most subjects the provision of textbooks is good, but in modern languages the ageing German books require replacement, as do the books used in rural science.
102. Since the previous inspection a new librarian has been appointed and has been effective in ensuring that the library is developing well as a resource for learning. The stock of fiction has been considerably revised and supplemented with more mature books, some of which are specifically targeted at encouraging boys to read. The numbers of reference books are adequate to support independent research. Students are also able to research materials to support their learning through supervised access to the Internet, several computers being available within the immediate library area. In a number of subject areas, such as English, drama and physical education, the library provides a good resource support. It is particularly effective in providing comprehensive support for careers education.

The efficiency of the school

103. Financial planning is good. The governor's finance committee meets regularly and is well informed. The senior management team implements an annual planning cycle for the school improvement plan. Subject development plans and those of other budget holders, such as the special educational needs co-ordinator, are linked to the school plan and monitored by senior staff. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs, and the register of special educational needs is efficiently organised and up to date.
104. The budget is managed well and, apart from the current year, has balanced. Because of a change in local authority financing, and a slight fall in student numbers, due to the effect of the foot and mouth epidemic, there is currently a slight deficit budget for the present financial year. Governors are aware of this and they have sanctioned an action plan that is aimed at erasing this deficit during the next financial year. The financial manager is very efficient in administering the budget and keeping track of spending. Routine management and administration are efficient and good records of all ancillary accounts are kept. New technology is used effectively in support of the school's administration. The most recent audit, which was carried out almost two years ago, was very satisfactory and included only four minor recommendations. There is good understanding of the principles by which the school ensures that it obtains the best value for all its spending. Specific grants for students with special educational needs are used correctly and efficiently. The strategic use of resources includes grants by central government and the local education authority, which are having a positive effect on students' learning.

Value for money

105. Overall, in spite of the difficulties arising from the management of the school, it shows good levels of effectiveness in the main school and in the sixth form. The principles of best value are well applied. The inspection team finds that the school gives good value for money, taking into account:-
- The good achievements of the students.

- The very good attitudes and behaviour of the students.
- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- The good leadership but overall satisfactory management of the school.
- The sound improvement since the previous inspection.
- The value of the role played by the school within its local community.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

106. In order to further enhance the value of the school within its local community, the good reputation it enjoys with students and parents, and to further enhance the good achievements of its students the headteacher and governors should:-

(1) **Management:** Review, redefine and improve the monitoring and support roles and responsibilities of the governing body, the headteacher, and senior and middle management in order to enable them to have more direct impact and involvement in the monitoring and accountability processes by:-

- ensuring the headteacher has sufficient time to carry out his management roles;
- ensuring a more equitable distribution of responsibilities and delegation within the senior management team;
- improving senior management's systems for the rigorous monitoring and holding of the school to account for its performance;
- enabling senior management to have more direct impact and involvement in the monitoring and accountability processes;
- holding middle management and subject co-ordinators more rigorously to account for the school's performance;
- making greater use of the good practice which exists within some areas of the school;
- providing in-service training and opportunities for professional development which ensures that all departments are enabled to effectively analyse and use performance data to set challenging targets for all students;
- ensuring that the realistic targets for improvements in standards which are currently set are suitably enhanced by a measure of challenge;
- monitoring, with greater rigour, the implementation of the policy for performance management to ensure consistency across the school;
- evaluating more effectively the impact of performance management on the quality of the school's good teaching and student progress;
- linking this evaluation to a more consistent approach to the day-to-day assessment of work to build on the improvements in target setting for individual students;
- ensuring the more effective monitoring and implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

[See paragraph(s): 9, 32, 36, 46, 69, 75, 77, 89, 90, 98, 118, 132, 135, 139, 145, 159, 165, 166, 172, 180, 182, 213 and 269]

(2) **Music:** Take immediate steps to improve the overall unsatisfactory provision in this subject by:

- improved monitoring of the subject;
- ensuring that proper systems are put in place for the assessment and recording of student attainment, achievement and progress;
- raising the quality of teaching and learning in all year groups;
- providing further support to improve the leadership and management skills of the subject co-ordinator;
- providing an effective scheme of work for all year groups, which is properly matched to the specific needs of the school's students;
- providing improved opportunities for students to become involved in music outside of lessons.

[See paragraph(s): 3, 5, 31, 42; 75, 190 to 197]

- (3) **Personal development:** provide improved opportunities and experiences for the students in order that they may better prepare themselves for living and working in a multi-cultural and multi-faith, contemporary British society.
[See paragraph(s): 61; 81; 141; 165; 196; 210]
- (4) **Religious education:** ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the full requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education to be taught throughout the school.
[See paragraph(s): 5, 10, 41, 47, 90, 207 to 213]

107. In addition, specifically relating to the sixth form:-

- (5) **Standards:** Build on the good achievement of students in English, design and technology, history and French by continuing to raise the average standards in these subjects, particularly through increasingly challenging individual student targets.
[See paragraph(s): 15, 16, 61, 240, 271, 277; 281; 284; 289 and 290]
- (6) **Monitoring:** The overall monitoring of sixth form work by governors and senior management, in line with the strategies outlined in (1) above.
[See paragraph(s): 92 and references for issue (1) above]

108. In addition to the main areas for improvement, governors and senior management should consider the following subsidiary issues:-

- (7) **Reporting:** Ensure that the results of the teacher assessments in foundation subjects at the end of Year 9 are recorded and reported to parents in the governors' annual report.
[See paragraph(s): 90]
- (8) **Collective Worship:** Ensure that the statutory requirement for the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all students is met.
[See paragraph(s): 56 and 90]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | | |
|--|---------------|-----|
| Number of lessons observed | Years 9 to 11 | 106 |
| | Sixth form | 44 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students | | 68 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Years 9 to 11 | | | | | | | |
| Number | 2 | 19 | 47 | 34 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 18 | 44 | 32 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sixth form | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1 | 11 | 24 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 25 | 55 | 18 | 0 | 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 as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's students

| Students on the school's roll | Y9 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of students on the school's roll | 463 | 131 |
| Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals | 17 | 0 |

| Special educational needs | Y9 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of students with statements of special educational needs | 15 | 1 |
| Number of students on the school's special educational needs register | 79 | 1 |

| English as an additional language | No of students |
|---|----------------|
| Number of students with English as an additional language | 0 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of students |
|--|----------------|
| Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 11 |
| Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 15 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| School data | 9.0 *** ¹⁵ |
| National comparative data | 8.1 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| 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): 2002

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | 2002 | 82 | 69 | 151 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of students at NC Level 5 and above | Boys | 60 | 62 | 64 |
| | Girls | 57 | 52 | 51 |
| | Total | 117 | 114 | 115 |
| Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above | School | 81 (83) | 78 (69) | 82 (70) |
| | National | 66 (64) | 67 (66) | 66 (66) |
| Percentage of students at NC Level 6 or above | School | 45 (56) | 61 (45) | 48 (39) |
| | National | 32 (31) | 45 (43) | 33 (34) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Numbers of students at NC Level 5 and above | Boys | 59 | 64 | 64 |
| | Girls | 58 | 57 | 57 |
| | Total | 117 | 121 | 121 |
| Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above | School | 75 (71) | 82 (83) | 82 (80) |
| | National | 67 (65) | 70 (68) | 67 (64) |
| Percentage of students at NC Level 6 or above | School | 48 (37) | 57 (47) | 47 (43) |
| | National | 32 (31) | 44 (42) | 34 (33) |

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

¹⁵ *** The high figure for absences in 2001 was caused by the Foot and Mouth outbreak in the area.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11): 2001

| Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 75 | 85 | 160 |

| 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 | 41 | 63 | 68 |
| | Girls | 54 | 82 | 83 |
| | Total | 95 | 145 | 151 |
| Percentage of students achieving the standard specified | School | 59 (59) | 91 (99) | 94 (99) |
| | National | 48 (47) | 91 (91) | 96 (96) |

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

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 41.4 (43.0) |
| | National | 39.0 (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 | 0 |
| | National | N/a. |

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13): 2001

| | | For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| | | Male | Female | All |
| School | Number of candidates | 29 | 33 | 62 |
| | Average point score per candidate | 14.0 (17.8) | 19.0 (18.2) | 16.7 (18.0) |
| National | Average point score per candidate | 16.9 (17.1) | 17.7 (18.0) | 17.4 (17.6) |

| | | For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations | | | For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|--------|------|---|--------|------|
| | | Male | Female | All | Male | Female | All |
| School | Number of candidates | 30 | 33 | 63 | 10 | 5 | 15 |
| | Average point score per candidate | 16.9 | 21.8 | 19.4 | 10.2 | 18.0 | 12.8 |
| National | Average point score per candidate | 16.9 | 18.0 | 17.5 | 9.8 | 11.4 | 10.6 |

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

| International Baccalaureate | | Number | % success rate |
|---|----------|--------|----------------|
| Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those students who achieved all they studied | School | 0 | N/a. |
| | National | | 81.0 |

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 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 590 | 30 | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| 2 | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| 1 | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | 2 | |
| 1 | | |
| | | |
| | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y9 – Y13

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 38.8 |
| Number of students per qualified teacher | 15.3 |

Education support staff: Y9 – Y13

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 13 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 168 |

Deployment of teachers: Y9 – Y13

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 81.4 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y9 – Y11

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Key Stage 3 | 23.14 |
| Key Stage 4 | 21.24 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 2001/02 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 2,010,398 |
| Total expenditure | 1,992,929 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,584 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 15,962 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 33,431 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 6 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 4 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 593 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 228 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 32 | 60 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 24 | 63 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 20 | 60 | 4 | 1 | 15 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 18 | 60 | 13 | 4 | 5 |
| The teaching is good. | 19 | 64 | 5 | 0 | 12 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 13 | 52 | 19 | 1 | 15 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 37 | 50 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 38 | 56 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 16 | 46 | 17 | 4 | 17 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 22 | 55 | 6 | 1 | 16 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 25 | 61 | 3 | 1 | 10 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 18 | 44 | 13 | 2 | 23 |

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

ENGLISH

109. Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Lively and imaginative teaching gives students an enthusiasm for the subject.
- Many students write well and achieve high standards in English tests and examinations.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress in English lessons.
- Assessment and marking are good.

Areas for improvement

- Year 9 boys do not have a sufficiently clear focus on what is expected of them in some lessons.
- Students have insufficient practice in adopting more formal spoken language in circumstances where it is relevant

110. Standards seen during the inspection are just above the national average in Year 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11. Students' achievement is good and they make good progress as they move through the school. Boys' standards of attainment in Year 9 lag behind the girls but by Year 11, as their attitude to work improves, the gap closes and is not significant when compared with national figures. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups. Students with special educational needs achieve well in lessons with very good guidance from teachers and support assistants. They make noticeable progress in Year 10 where the carefully structured lessons give them the confidence to write at length and with interest. Improvements in overall standards and teaching have been good since the previous inspection.

111. Results in the national tests at the age of 13 were above average in 2002 and well above average the previous year. These results were better than those of similar schools. Most students arrive at the school with average levels at the age of 12, so this represents at least good progress. GCSE results in English were well above the national average in 2001. In English literature the proportion of students recording A* to C grades was above average. In 2002, results in English language dropped slightly but in English literature they remained higher because lower attaining students were not entered for the examination. Attainment in English has been above average overall in recent years with most students making good progress.

112. Attainment in speaking and listening is above average by Years 9 and 11. Teachers provide students with many chances to develop their ideas through class discussions and in groups. In Year 9 several boys gave lively presentations about their hobbies to others in their class. Not all students find it easy to use Standard English confidently but they correct their errors when the teacher reminds them. This use of English is also a weakness in older year groups. Some boys in Year 9 are easily distracted and work better when the teacher gives them a more formal structure such as suggested by the literacy strategy. Older students enjoy the challenge of taking part in animated discussions about poetry. There was some very perceptive analysis of the key themes in Andrew Marvell's 17th century poem *To a Coy Mistress* by both boys and girls in Year 11, who were skilfully led through the work by excellent questioning from the teacher. A feature of the teaching is the good use of open-ended questions to allow students the time to consider their replies. Students with special educational needs also have a good understanding of the difference between questions that lead to debate and those that lead to single word answers.

113. Standards in reading are above average. Opportunities for reading aloud occur in most lessons. Students read out their own work in clear and confident tones, and talk about their reasons for choosing particular words in sentences. They understand terms such as propaganda and “*being economical with the truth*” when composing discussion essays. In Year 10 there was a very clever reading of a Seamus Heaney poem, *Death of a Naturalist*, inspired by the teacher persuading the whole class to take different lines. This involved them all and gave a good introduction as to how the poem was constructed. Students with special educational needs achieve well in reading, with guidance from support assistants. The homework assignments show that students are good at employing a range of research skills. They use the Internet and different reference books when planning essays for their literature course. The supply of books of fiction in the library is better than it was at the previous inspection and students have a wide range of styles of literature from which to select.
114. Standards in writing in Year 9 are above average. Teachers provide good guidelines for writing, which suggest different tasks for students of different abilities. This means that nobody is limited in the scope of his or her own ideas. Many students are keen to use information and communication technology to improve the quality of their work. An excellent example of this was the beautifully designed ‘gossip pages’ produced with digitally captured pictures and inserts after students of all abilities had interviewed their friends. Older students write well, especially when following up their reading of works of literature. Weaknesses do occur in some of the spelling of lower attaining students, and even more able revert to slang if not corrected by their teachers. There were some cleverly written play scripts in the style of *Educating Rita*, and comparisons of Alan Bennett’s monologues showed perceptive understanding of the genre. More able students used very sophisticated arguments in their essays on *Jane Eyre* and *A Handmaid’s Tale*.
115. The consistently good teaching leads to good standards of work in most classes. The most notable feature is the very good subject knowledge that all teachers have. This results in many lively lessons where a large proportion of the students engage in thoughtful discussions generated by demanding questions from the teacher. Students with special educational needs are well taught and the work set is carefully matched to their interests. This results in many having the confidence to write extensively. They follow the themes of novels, supported by helpful worksheets. Teachers use resources effectively, such as video to give students fresh ideas about the staging of scenes from Shakespeare.
116. The department has started to introduce the literacy strand of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy in some Year 9 lessons, after discussions with the nearby middle schools. Where this happens the response of students is good, but the ideas are not used enough in all classes and in the less effective lessons the progress of boys is less marked.
117. The leadership and management of English are good. The very experienced teachers work well as a team. Assessment procedures are good. All teachers mark work well, giving suggestions to students to help them develop their ideas. The department now makes better use of the information gathered from students’ past performance to set them clear targets for improvement. Students themselves have a good understanding of how well they are achieving.

National Key Stage 3 Strategy: Literacy across the curriculum

118. There is a good, whole-school policy for literacy development across all subjects of the curriculum. However, the monitoring of the implementation of this policy is not rigorous enough. Across the subjects students' standards in reading and writing are good overall. Most students read clearly and apart from some careless spelling and punctuation, much of the writing is full of life and energy. In history, there are some imaginative letters describing ailments suffered by Ancient Greeks and the remedies they used. The geography department encourages extended writing and supplies good guidelines to students. There are good written evaluations in design and technology and art. Teachers reinforce good habits in reading, for example in drama warm-up exercises. Reading aloud is encouraged in many subjects and backed up by the display of key words and technical phrases. In science, mathematics and music, however, there is less emphasis on the importance of literacy.

DRAMA

119. Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **good**.

Strengths

- The recent results in GCSE drama have been outstanding.
- More able students achieve very well in performance and in written work.
- Relationships are very positive and students develop a good understanding of moral and cultural issues.

Areas for improvement

- The provision of opportunities for drama in Year 9, to encourage more boys to consider the option at GCSE.
- The improvement of resources for the subject in order to support learning.

120. Drama is not taught as a separate subject to Year 9. It is an option for GCSE that is taken up by many more girls than boys. This leads to some imbalance in the groups and occasionally restricts the range of discussion in lessons. However, standards are above average and GCSE results in 2002 were high, although there were no comparative figures against national averages available at the time of the inspection. Nearly all students gained at least grade C and a large proportion gained an A*. Students show extra commitment to the subject by attending at lunch times and after school to rehearse.

121. Standards are average in the current Year 10. Students are still in the early stages of learning dramatic conventions. The teacher provides very good warm-up exercises, which test students' knowledge of technical terms. The activity also helps them to learn to spell key words. Special educational needs students achieve well because they work in supportive groups. The teacher is careful to give them roles to encourage their participation as the lesson progresses. In discussion, more able students show that they understand techniques such as dramatic pauses and 'thought-tracking'.

122. In Year 11 students have progressed well and most are attaining levels above national expectations. Students start slowly but build up their confidence during lessons. The small number of boys is fully involved and the teacher supports them well. Students quickly enter into role and they develop ideas at a rapid rate. The more able students lead others in their groups by suggesting relevant stage directions. Most students have a good knowledge of how to stage a short scene. They take notice of the audience's perspective and experiment with different movements and positions to create more striking set arrangements. Performances are still in the early stages of preparation but show good potential.

123. The quality of the teaching is good. Students respond well to the written demands set for homework. Most use technical terminology accurately to clarify their evaluations of plays they have seen, having been prompted by teachers' comments in the marking. Students explore interesting moral dilemmas when looking at Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* and comment on how cultural issues influence the play. Students show a high degree of enjoyment of the subject and this shows both in their written work and in the very good relationships in the lessons.
124. The management and leadership of the subject are good. The temporary co-ordinator is an experienced teacher and has inherited a clear programme for taking the department forward. The new accommodation gives students a good space for working, but the availability of resources to support the development of drama, such as props and stage equipment, is inadequate.

MATHEMATICS

125. Overall the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Relationships within the department and between staff and students are very good.
- Students' responsibility for their own learning is very good.
- Students' attitudes to the subject, particularly their motivation and concentration, are very good.
- Test and examination results are consistently above national averages.

Areas for improvement

- The development of a greater variety of learning activities and teaching styles which more closely match work to students' prior attainment and their capability.
- The enhancement of schemes of work to identify more explicit opportunities to develop literacy, use information and communication technology, and promote students' personal development.
- The systems for monitoring students' attainment and progress in order to further raise achievement for students of all levels of prior attainment.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department to inform departmental priorities and actions.

126. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average in all years. These standards are maintained because standards on entry in Year 9 are above average and teaching is satisfactory. Students' achievements, and the progress they make, are therefore satisfactory. There are very good working relationships between students and their teachers. Consequently, students have very positive attitudes, which contribute to the development of good independent learning. Students make consistently satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Students with special educational needs make good progress with well-planned support from teaching assistants. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
127. Students' standards in mathematics are above average when they enter the school. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the national average. In 2001, the latest year for which comparative figures are available for similar schools, they were below average. However, the proportion of students attaining higher levels was well above the national average, and in line with similar schools. There is no significant difference in results for boys and girls. Value added analyses provided by the school show that results are in line with expectations and represent satisfactory achievement for students of all prior attainment. Although there has been some fluctuation, results have been relatively consistent over the last five years with a significant improvement from 2001 to 2002.

128. GCSE examination results in 2001 were above the national average on all measures and in line with similar schools. Based on their prior attainment two years earlier at the end of Year 9, this represents satisfactory achievement. Again, there has been some fluctuation, especially in the proportion of students attaining higher grades, and there has been no significant difference between girls' and boys' results. The 2002 results are very similar to those of 2001.
129. The standards of work seen during the inspection are above average throughout the school. A small minority of students are working at standards below those expected for their age in Year 9. By the end of Year 9, the most able students confidently use Pythagoras and some simple trigonometry, and solve simultaneous linear equations algebraically and graphically. Many of the students of lower prior attainment use simple formulae and linear equations. By the end of Year 11 the most able students can link complex concepts from work in different sections of the syllabus, including some work more typically covered in Years 12 and 13. Middle attaining students complete cumulative frequency graphs and solve simultaneous equation. The lowest attaining students extend sequences and describe them algebraically, although they cannot always reproduce this in examinations. Standards in handling data are particularly good as all students design questionnaires, collect data in frequency tables and use the idea of correlation. There is less evidence of students' skills in using and applying mathematics apart from their formal coursework. This weakness was also mentioned in the previous inspection report. Boys and girls of all prior attainment make satisfactory progress from standards on entry to the school and those with special educational needs make good progress with well-planned support from teaching assistants.
130. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and teaching is satisfactory overall, representing good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and syllabuses is good and there are good resources to support examination demands. There are very good relationships and students' attitudes to learning are also very good. They are well motivated and attentive, persevering even with difficult problems. Teachers encourage students to correct their own work and to seek help if they still have difficulty with understanding. Students are encouraged to choose more challenging activities if they find the work straightforward. All teachers provide good individual support for students. This leads to students taking increasing responsibility for their own learning. In the best lessons, activities are carefully chosen to match students' prior attainment and to provide variety. For example, in a lesson with higher attaining Year 11 students, the teacher reviewed their knowledge of graphs by asking them to sketch in the air with their fingers, providing both students and teacher with a quick check of their recall of previous learning. An excellent whole-class discussion stimulated their thinking about graphs, and their subsequent use, which led to very good learning. In a lesson with lower attainers from Year 10, an excellent introduction to negative numbers used local examples of depths of caves and heights of mountains to support an activity based on this theme. Students made very good progress in understanding the principle of subtraction of negative numbers.
131. Most lessons are satisfactory rather than good. In these lessons, teachers rely heavily on textbooks and commercial resources. These then come to dictate the learning activities and lead to lack of variety and work that is poorly matched to students' needs and capabilities. For example, in a lesson with middle attaining Year 11 students, they were asked to work through an exercise from their textbook completing tables and graphs of cubic equations. This followed previous lessons working on similar exercises with different types of equations. The lack of variety led to some boredom and

although the set tasks were completed, students' understanding was limited. Occasionally, teachers' introductions take up to half the lesson, which contributes to a lack of pace. There is limited use of information and communication technology, such as graphic calculators, but the use of technology as a tool to support learning in mathematics is not well developed.

132. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Accommodation is good and the department is well resourced with textbooks, practical equipment and library resources, though there is limited access to computers. The small team of teachers is knowledgeable and well qualified in mathematics, but not all have a sufficiently wide range of teaching styles. This leads to a limited repertoire of learning styles and activities and developing greater variety is not given sufficient attention. There are good relationships and informal co-operation between staff. However, documentation and systems are underdeveloped. For example, in Years 10 and 11, schemes of work are primarily a reference to the appropriate chapter in textbooks covering the section of the examination syllabus. There is less guidance on other appropriate learning activities to address the objectives leading to a lack of variety in many lessons. Schemes do not include references to literacy and personal development. Individual teachers mark and assess work and common half-termly tests are used across the department. However, the information from these is not collected or analysed to monitor students' progress in mathematics, plan future teaching or to set targets. Although information on standardised national tests is collated from the feeder middle schools, there is limited liaison with them about curriculum continuity. This was also a weakness in the previous inspection report and is now even more important for the implementation of the mathematics strand of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. The policy of informing students of their target grades, and their progress in achieving them, is inconsistently implemented.
133. In 2000 to 2001 there was turbulence in staffing and recruitment problems in the department. This had a significant effect on standards in 2001, especially at the end of Year 9. There is now a full complement of qualified teachers. Some informal monitoring of the quality of teaching takes place, especially of new staff. No systematic monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department takes place, and there are no clear priorities and actions to improve its work. This was also a weakness in the previous inspection report and this means that the quality of teaching, achievement of students and improvement since the last inspection are all satisfactory rather than good or better. However, the stable staffing and good co-operation within the department provide a sound basis for improvement.

National Key Stage 3 Strategy: Numeracy across the curriculum

134. The effectiveness of the school's strategy for developing numeracy skills is satisfactory. There has been limited liaison with the students' previous schools about the implementation of the strategy. There is a broad agreement that Years 7 and 8 of the framework will be covered in those schools, while Year 9 is covered in this school. However students are not engaged in any projects linking work in middle school with working in this school, nor do they bring any of their mathematics work with them. There is some repetition of the work students covered in their previous schools. Students' standards are above average on entry and are maintained throughout the school. For example, even the lowest attaining students know all their multiplication tables up to ten times ten and measure length and angles accurately. Their standards in handling data are particularly good and all students design sheets to collect data, plot different kinds of chart and use ideas about correlation in other lessons, such as geography and science.

135. A partial audit of use of mathematics across the curriculum has been conducted, identifying, for example, the use of formulae in spreadsheets in information and communication technology, scale drawings and enlargements in design and technology and surveying and data handling in geography. In a number of lessons, students' above average skills in numeracy enhance their subject learning. For example, in a Year 9 design and technology lesson where students were making a box, their good estimation and accurate measurement led to a better product. In a science lesson, students used data collected in an experiment to plot a graph, which enabled them to draw conclusions. However, the use and development of number skills in lessons other than mathematics are not planned across the school, or between the school and its contributing schools and there is no overall strategy for the mathematics strand of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy.

SCIENCE

136. Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- The very good relationships established between students and their teachers.
- The good teaching across all year groups.
- The good subject knowledge shown by experienced science teachers.
- The dedicated way in which staff work for the best interests of the students.

Areas for improvement

- The outcomes of links with middle schools, relating to curriculum taught, teaching methods and the transfer of students' work records and notebooks.
- The increased use of performance data for monitoring and guiding students.
- The examination performance of students in GCSE examinations.
- The development of lesson observations and the evaluation of teaching strategies.
- The provision of departmental documentation and policies.

137. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in all year groups. The good quality of teaching and the students' willingness to be involved in their learning process, together with good relationships, are particular strengths of the department. These factors ensure that students' achievement is good in Year 9. Progress and achievement in the subject are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Throughout Years 9 to 11 students with special educational needs, and those who are academically gifted, make satisfactory progress. Since the previous inspection, satisfactory improvement has occurred on some of the issues for the department, but much still needs to be done under the guidance of the new science co-ordinator.

138. Results from the 2002 National Curriculum tests of students in Year 9 show that standards in science are above average. These results indicate a steady improvement in attainment, both at Level 5 and Level 6 and above. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001. In 2001, science results were well below average compared with similar schools. In 2002, the percentage of boys attaining Level 5 or above was higher than that of girls, and comparable at Level 6 or better. These results easily exceeded the targets set. The outcomes of teachers' assessments were comparable to the actual results of tests.

139. GCSE results for students in Year 11 in 2001 were slightly above the national average points score. Results were above average for students gaining A* to C and A* to G grades. Results showed a slight decrease compared to 2000, but no clear trend in recent years is evident. However, compared with other subjects in the school, the results indicate a degree of underachievement, particularly for girls. One reason for this is the inadequate use the department makes of information about students' performance. In these examinations, analysis shows that boys achieved better than

girls at A* to C and A* to G. This indicates that even more needs to be done to improve the performance of girls overall, even though for the higher A* to B grades girls achieved better than boys. The 2002 results show an improvement on 2001.

140. Standards of work seen during the inspection show that students' progress is satisfactory overall. A particular strength is the quality of notes made by the students in all years and across the ability range. The students' practical work is of a good standard. They handle apparatus and set up equipment confidently. Good examples of this were seen in a Year 9 class, who were preparing salts, and also with a lower ability Year 10 group investigating pH values of solutions. Students read scales accurately, tabulate results, draw well-constructed graphs and conduct experiments fully. The more able students also evaluate results and produce theories. An example of this was seen in Year 10 where students explored the relationship between mass and weight.
141. The department's general contribution to the life of the school is satisfactory, but there are areas ripe for improvement, as identified by the new subject co-ordinator. The department contributes to the areas of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology through its normal science activities. However, it does not emphasise the importance of literacy skills enough, and it has not recognised the importance of the new Key Stage 3 Strategy for teaching and learning in science. Although it tries to include the use of technology, the equipment available, based on BBC computers, has limited the development of information and communication technology in science. The recent provision of new computers in the department is intended to put this right, especially when funds for data logging and networking become available. There was no evidence of any deliberate policy in science to contribute to areas of the students' personal development, such as spiritual, moral, social, cultural and multi-cultural. Policies relating to the needs of the more able and also for students with special educational needs are not properly thought through or implemented.
142. Overall, teaching and learning are mainly good. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory, as a result of poor preparation and inadequate classroom management. Teaching in Year 9 is reasonably paced and generally good. However, although most students make good progress, the reactions and comments made by students indicate that at times the work is not totally new because it often repeats work they did before they came to the school. The department does not build on what the students already know and understand by planning jointly with the schools students come from. The department's planning therefore lacks the rigour that would adequately challenge all students, particularly the more able.
143. The teaching in Years 10 and 11 is mainly good. Students are taught by experienced, specialist teachers, who are fully aware of the examination requirements and standards expected at each level. This contributes greatly to the quality of teaching. The setting arrangements used during these years enable the teachers to pace the lessons and to teach at levels that match the abilities of the students. The work seen was aimed at the average ability range of the students in each class. However, work was only planned to cover students of all abilities in a few lessons. Consequently, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is only satisfactory overall, though there is the potential for it to be much better. An example of good practice was in Year 11 where students were working in mixed ability groups to prepare a talk on allocated different environmental issues. More able students contributed well by undertaking higher-level research, using the web and library facilities, while others contributed by preparing display material. Although teachers are aware of students with special educational needs, there is little planned

special provision, apart from additional attention given in class. Where teacher assistants are provided, students cope well with lesson activities.

144. A pleasant and co-operative relationship exists between students, and between students and their teachers. Students' good behaviour, and their willingness to learn, were particular features in the department. They contribute to a relaxed teaching and supportive environment in which learning flourishes, enabling students to progress according to their ability. Teachers are also very willing to provide additional assistance and learning support to students during lunchtimes.
145. Accommodation just meets existing needs, although the teaching areas show their age. The appearance of the laboratories requires enhancement through suitable wall displays, including samples of students' work. The entrance to the rural science is particularly unappealing. The fact that the food technology room has to be used for a science lesson disadvantages students, as this limits the availability of suitable practical topics to be taught at such times. Since the previous report, some areas requiring attention have been addressed. These include attending to cases of unsatisfactory teaching, meeting health and safety concerns and providing adequate technician support. However, there has been insufficient improvement particularly relating to the variety of teaching methods, the use of performance data on students, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. Although they are in place, schemes of work require further development. Since September, however, the leadership and management of the department have received new impetus and direction with the appointment of a new science co-ordinator. The new leadership of the department shows a sound awareness of and commitment to resolving those issues still requiring attention.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of art have enabled very good progress in the subject since the previous inspection.
- Students make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- The learning opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, are of very good quality and range.
- The very good knowledge and expertise of the teaching staff, which supports learning.
- The very good monitoring of the subject's performance by the subject co-ordinator.

Areas for improvement

- The standards of boys' attainment in GCSE examinations.
- Standards and achievement for students in Year 9.

147. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average for students in Year 9 and above average for students by Year 11. These standards are achieved because the quality of teaching and learning are good in Year 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students' achievements in relation to standards on entry to the school in Year 9 are sound and good for students by Year 11. Students' attitudes to art are very good, as is their behaviour in lessons, and these contribute to the quality of their learning overall being good. All students, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented in the subject, make good progress as they move through Years 9 to 11. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning.

148. Standards in GCSE art and design are above average compared with results nationally for grades A* to C and A* to G grades. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when results were below average nationally and for similar schools. The number of entries has stayed the same, but the percentage of students gaining A* to C grades has nearly doubled. There is a difference between the attainment of boys and girls, but it is not significant. Standards of work seen in the current Years 10 and 11 are above average with some examples of work that is well above average being achieved. Students of all abilities make good progress in meeting the criteria for their chosen themes. Working with increased independence, they use their knowledge to generate ideas for compositions and investigate materials. They produce a range of support work in sketchbooks that is well presented with supporting annotation. Students work confidently in two and three dimensions, and in different scales. The most able have developed their own style and way of working, showing flair and imagination.
149. When students enter the school their standards are average. They are still average at the end of Year 9, but across a wider range of materials and topics that progressively increase their knowledge and understanding of art and investigating and making. At the time of the previous report standards were below average and achievement was limited by activities that were basic; knowledge and understanding of art were at low levels. In Year 9 students now use grids to scale up their drawings and show knowledge of portraits when using proportion and scale. They understand how colour is used in Fauvism and use tones of colour for shades and highlights in their work. Planned work is broad and varied and provides opportunities to develop drawing skills through direct observations. Across all years students are given opportunities to use and develop literacy skills, especially specialist art vocabulary. Numeracy skills are developed through, for example, the scaling of work. The use of information and communication technology has improved greatly since the previous inspection.
150. In the previous report, teaching was unsatisfactory overall and the planning affected the continuity and progress of learning. Teaching is now good overall because teachers, especially of older students, have very good subject knowledge, make good use of art vocabulary and plan to meet the wide range of learning needs of all students. Teachers know their students very well and set high standards for learning and behaviour. Literacy is supported through the good use of key words and vocabulary. Questioning and the study of works of major artists stimulate and extend students' ideas. Planning includes clear targets and methods for all students to learn. However, unsatisfactory drawing skills for younger students are not always corrected, which affects standards in those lessons. Very good support is given for students with special educational needs, who make good progress. Displays of students' and teachers' work are frequently referred to in lessons to provide practical examples and to help students understand the standards required. Homework builds on and supports class work. Planning of lessons, especially for older students, shows thoughtful integration of previous lessons, homework and class work. For younger students, good standards are set for teaching basic skills, but there are insufficient opportunities to revise and practice these skills. The rate that students achieve is monitored by teachers and adjustments made include extension work for the more able and alternative accreditation for lower ability students.
151. Attitudes to art are very good and students say how much they enjoy the subject. There is good use of initiative in the evidence gathering, especially by older students who have very positive attitudes to their work and take a great deal of pride in presentation. Teachers sustain students' interest, especially with boys who have lower levels of concentration, and most work is completed, which shows perseverance. Students have good levels of learning skills, are attentive and appreciate the help and

information they get from all staff. They enjoy learning something new and using resources, especially when the effects are surprising, combining and using different techniques and materials.

152. Leadership and management in art and design are very good. The many changes required to the curriculum after the previous report have been very well implemented so that students now receive their entitlement. Links with the middle schools students come from are developing. The use of assessment to develop planning is very good, results are analysed, and necessary changes made to the curriculum and teachers' planning. For example, analysing Year 9 results identified lower levels of concentration for some boys. More emphasis was subsequently made on three-dimensional work and different teaching approaches have been used to good effect with these students. This is an example of the very good way in which the department plans ahead to meet curriculum and students' needs. The subject co-ordinator has been very successful in raising the profile of art and design in the school by displaying students' work around the school, where it is very much admired and appreciated by staff, students and visitors. New technology is used to good effect, as part of the department's commitment to improve access to information for all students, but some proposed developments are limited because there is not enough relevant software. Monitoring of the work of the department by the subject co-ordinator is established and the results are used to evaluate the development of teaching, learning and students' attainment in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

153. Overall, the quality of provision in design technology is **good**, with examples of very good provision in food technology.

Strengths

- The high standards of attainment by students in food technology.
- The very good working relationships between students and teachers, which supports learning.
- The good management of the individual material areas within the subject.
- The hardworking teachers who are committed to improvement and the raising of standards.
- The good support teachers give to students with special educational needs.

Areas for improvement

- There is no overall leadership and co-ordination of design and technology.
- The use of information and communication technology in Year 9 and particularly computer aided design and computer aided manufacture in Years 10 and 11.
- The further development of the assessment of students' work so that targets for students are planned into the tasks and activities taught in lessons.

154. Standards of work seen during the inspection are good with students achieving above the national average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Students' standards of work and their design and technology experiences when they first come to the school range from below average to above average. Students' achievement and progress as they move through the school are good, particularly lower attaining students and those with special educational needs. This is due in part to the quality of teaching, the very good relationships and the positive attitudes of students towards their learning in this subject.

155. Teachers' assessments of standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the national averages. The work seen during the inspection is also above average. However, students have had variable experiences and show differences in their knowledge and understanding of the design process when they arrive at the

school at the start of Year 9. The department does not take enough account of students' previous learning during Year 9 as students move from one material area to another. The department is aware of this and the need to develop assessment procedures further to provide closer links to the National Curriculum levels.

156. In Year 9 students develop a good range of practical skills and use small and large equipment confidently and competently. They develop good knowledge and understanding about material properties and functions. For example, in a resistant materials lesson students were able to identify different hard and soft woods and their appropriate use for different products. By the end of Year 9 they work effectively from a design brief, develop a specification and make quality products. This is particularly evident in food technology, with students producing well-organised and planned coursework folders and applying the design and technology process well to produce quality outcomes. The use of a range of information and communication technology is developing, but the difficulty the department has in accessing the necessary hardware and software restricts students' skills and application within the subject.
157. The GCSE results of Year 11 students in 2001 were above average. Results in food technology were better than in other material areas. In 2002, results show continuing improvement for results in food technology. The work seen in Years 10 and 11 shows further development and application of practical skills. Students have a good understanding of how to develop their designs using a range of graphics techniques. Observation and investigative skills are developed well. For example, in a Year 11 food technology lesson students used a range of preparation and storing techniques to investigate the best outcome. Overall, students develop, apply and consolidate their learning very well, using technical language effectively to record and analyse findings in their coursework. The use of computer-aided design and manufacture is weak.
158. Learning is good and directly related to the quality of teaching. Students with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported by teachers and teacher assistants. Relationships are very good between teachers and students. This promotes mutual respect and a positive learning environment within which students respond confidently to teachers' questions and generate their own questions and opportunities for extended discussion. Teachers plan their lessons well and share their very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Consequently, students become motivated and encouraged to develop independent approaches to their work.
159. Management of the individual design subjects is good, with teachers having a clear view of the strengths and aspects for development within their own area. Teachers endeavour to meet together and look at areas for development for the department. However leadership is weak with no overall strategic co-ordination of design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The good quality of the teaching, which supports students' learning in the subject.
- Students' good standards of achievement, especially those of girls.
- Students' knowledge and understanding of key geographical skills and processes.
- The good range of resources for the subject, which supports learning well.

Areas for improvement

- Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- The completion of arrangements for performance management within the subject.
- Development planning which clearly defines priorities, actions and costs.
- The analysis and use of performance data on students.
- Teachers' lesson planning and the identification of learning objectives.
- Planned opportunities for spiritual and cultural development.

161. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above the national average. These standards are achieved because teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and the quality of teaching is good. Overall, the attitudes and behaviour of students are good and contribute to good learning in the subject. The standard of students' work when they first come to the school in Year 9 is average. Students make good progress as they move through the school and they achieve well, especially the girls. The achievement of students with special educational needs and those who are designated as gifted and talented is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

162. The standards students attain in geography are above the level expected nationally for students in Year 9. Teachers' assessments for geography in 2002 showed that 76 per cent of students gained a Level 5 or above and 39 per cent gained a Level 6 or above. The attainment of girls is well above the average, with 85 per cent gaining Level 5 or better and 44 per cent gaining Level 6 or better. GCSE results are above average. In 2001, all students gained passes at A* to G and 20 per cent gained the top grades of A* or A. Again the achievement of girls was very good with one in four securing a grade A* or A. Provisional result for 2002 show these standards continuing, with 78 per cent of students gaining passes at grades A* to C and all secured passes at grades A* to G.

163. The evidence from inspection is that at the end of Year 9 standards of work reach above average levels. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of physical and human processes. Their knowledge of location and place is well developed. Students have acquired a good range of geographical skills and undertake geographical enquiries with confidence and accuracy. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are above average and there are increasing opportunities for students to develop the use and application of information and communication technology. In Year 9 lessons, students presented and analysed data they had collected during a recent fieldwork assignment on traffic. They successfully demonstrated a range of map and graph skills to illustrate their findings. Students also provided evidence and analysis to solve key questions on traffic movement. Students demonstrate good attitudes to their work and make good progress with their learning. They show a good understanding of the topic through class discussion and well presented written work.

164. Students in Years 10 and 11 successfully build on this good start and the work seen was again above average. By the end of Year 11 students have a good knowledge of the inter-relationships of the physical and human environments. Their enquiry skills are well developed and they successfully use and apply a wide range of mapping, recording and analytical skills. They have a well-developed sense of place and use technical language with accuracy. In Year 10 students were studying flooding in Bangladesh. They showed an understanding of the physical process that produced the

floods and could evaluate different approaches to flood prevention schemes. In Year 11 lessons students were studying urbanisation. They showed a good knowledge of the causes and effects of rural to urban migration. They analyse photographic evidence and use technical language to describe the processes at work. Overall, students in Years 10 and 11 display good attitudes to their work and make good progress with their learning. However, a minority of students, especially boys, lack concentration and demonstrate poor listening skills. As such their progress is only satisfactory.

165. Teaching and learning are good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Three-quarters of all lessons seen were good or better. Teachers have good professional knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject. They use a good range of approaches in the classroom and students are supported with high quality resources. In several lessons effective support for students with special educational needs is provided through the use of teaching assistants. Relationships with students are good. In a very good lesson in Year 9 the teacher engaged the students in a high level discussion about the quality of evidence. Good quality explanations and effective questioning successfully promoted good understanding of data collection. Teachers make good use of a range of resources including maps, photographs and videos. When videos are used, probing questions focuses students' attention to specific subject content. This is followed by quality discussions supported by very good teacher produced resources. Students' work is marked regularly, often with helpful comments for improvement. Assessment and recording of students work are good, but the analysis of performance data to improve curriculum planning is not well enough developed. Although lesson and longer-term planning is broadly satisfactory, the quality, use and sharing of learning objectives with students is underdeveloped. Provision for students' social and moral development is good; for example, the use of case study material encourages students to consider issues affecting local communities. However, students' spiritual and cultural development, especially in respect of multi-cultural education, requires improvement.
166. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but there are aspects requiring improvement. For example, there is no written departmental development plan. Arrangements for performance management have not yet been fully completed. However, the quality of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good.

HISTORY

167. Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching, which supports good learning by students in the subject.
- The good quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the history curriculum.
- The good attitudes shown by students towards their history studies.
- The good support given by teachers to students of all abilities within the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The limited extension work for gifted or talented students in the subject.
- The use and development of information and communication technology to support learning.

168. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average, with a number of higher attaining students in Years 10 and 11 achieving above average standards in some of their work. These standards are a result of good teaching in many lessons. Most students achieve well lessons. They work hard and meet their individual targets successfully. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good and have a positive effect upon their progress, which is consistently good as they move through Years 9 to 11. Students with special educational needs make good progress and gifted and talented students achieve sound progress. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

169. In the 2002 teacher assessments for Year 9, students achieved very slightly above the national average. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, students achieved average standards in comparison with all schools nationally. However, the percentage of higher grades achieved was below average. In 2002, standards appear to be higher, with a greater percentage of students achieving higher grades. However, national data is not yet available to make a thorough comparison. Comparisons with similar schools are difficult to make, because there are no other schools in the local authority's area where students enter at the age of 13.

170. In Year 9, most teaching is good. Class teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject and, therefore, ask challenging questions and use resources effectively. There is a strong emphasis on using primary evidence and students are given good opportunities to explore the evidence. For example, they read and discuss the 19th century parliamentary report into child labour in factories. Through this activity they gain valuable insights into working conditions and differing attitudes held which help them understand how bias changes the interpretation of reported events. Good, on-going assessment ensures students understand less familiar terminology, for example 'leading questions'. This approach to literacy and comprehension helps students, for example, to recognise how language influences opinion. Students with special educational needs are well supported, sometimes by learning assistants or through specific tasks. On occasion, classes become too noisy and this slows overall progress. However, most students work hard and achieve well.

171. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching taking place. Class teachers' very secure subject knowledge helps inform planning extremely well. The open access for all students into GCSE courses ensures that all groups contain a wide range of ability. The good achievement of most students is a result of careful planning of specific tasks and effective strategies of support. Where teaching is particularly good the sensitive use of dramatic images helps students explore controversial issues in a mature and thoughtful manner. This ensures that students recognise why important medical advances in anatomy originated with the Ancient Greeks. In contrasting studies, students explore the means by which school children were indoctrinated in Nazi Germany. Using a range of primary source evidence, students assess the levels of support and opposition to Hitler amongst young people. Over time, the quality of teaching and learning helps raise standards. A

number of students consistently achieve above average standards, as their detailed written work and well-judged comments in lessons demonstrate. For example, in Year 10, these students make valid comparisons between Greek and Roman medicine, commenting on how scientific advances influence religious thought.

172. History offers students a good overall curriculum, which is enriched by educational visits and the opportunity to hear guest speakers. The department is particularly successful in implementing the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for literacy. This is because of the careful emphasis on language in lessons and the use of extensive documentary material that focuses students upon the use of language to influence opinion. There is evidence of numeracy skills being developed appropriately, for example, in relation to chronology. The use of information and communication technology is developing adequately as facilities become more available. The department is effectively managed and there is a thorough monitoring of standards through assessment procedures that provide good information upon the progress of differing groups of students. The subject makes a good contribution to students' personal development, by promoting an understanding of moral and social issues. Support for students with special educational needs is good. However, the planning of extension work for gifted and talented students is underdeveloped. The department promotes equal opportunities well and is sensitive to needs of all students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

173. Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Students attain above average standards throughout Years 9 to 11.
- The good quality of the teaching in all year groups.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Schemes of work and individual lessons are well structured and organised.
- The contribution and effectiveness of the technical support staff in support of teachers.

Areas for improvement

- The focus by all information and communication technology teachers on refining assessment for Year 9 students.
- The enhancement of students' higher-level skills in monitoring, control and measuring work.
- Enabling students to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of information and communication technology on society.

174. Overall standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. These standards are achieved because the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good and students' progress reflects these strengths. Students' achievements in Years 9 to 11 are good and their positive attitudes are a contributory factor. Students with special educational needs, and those who are gifted or talented in the subject, make good progress. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

175. Students' results in the statutory teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 have improved steadily and in 2002, standards were well above average. Year 9 students enter school with a varying range of previous information and communication technology skills and knowledge, or access to home computers. However, the work seen during the inspection was mainly above average.

176. All Year 11 students are entered for the GCSE short course examination. Results have steadily improved over the past few years. In 2001, the number of students obtaining

the higher grades A* to C. were above the national average. The results for 2002 were not so good and the school has appealed to the examination board regarding the marking of some coursework. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average.

177. Year 9 students have made good progress since entering the school in September. They are well advanced in their work on a project that is successfully teaching the basics of desktop publishing. They apply their skills well to word processing, importing images, and modifying text and fonts in order to produce a tourist leaflet for a destination of their choice. They benefit from specialist lessons and a highly structured approach to the teaching of the subject. Teachers work hard and successfully ensure that students who have entered the school with less developed information and communication technology skills catch up with their classmates. Students are helped by supportive and well-prepared worksheets, which provide them with relevant information. Students learn easily because of the teachers' ability to effectively communicate their good subject knowledge. Tests and continuous questioning in lessons extend students' understanding. These activities enable the more able students to offer some well thought out answers about, for example, the nature of the audience for which their work is being prepared.
178. A discussion with Year 10 students about their Year 9 work, maintained in files on their user space, confirms the good basis for learning provided by the department. This is further supported through the subject's good schemes of work. The current Year 10 students have begun their GCSE course with a very good grounding in word processing, desktop publishing and the use of spreadsheets and databases. By the end of Year 11, students have extended and refined this knowledge and learnt to apply them in new situations. Progress and attainment are good. Enhanced features of word-processing and publishing programs are used to good effect; for example, shading, tables, headers and footers. Presentation software is used well. Carefully prepared assignments reflect the students' interests and makes learning easier. Students were engaged by the task of preparing a leaflet, on a disease of their choice, which might be used by the local community nurses. Effective teaching results in the good use of the Internet for research, with many students able to refine an enquiry to pinpoint specific information. Students have undertaken some work on how movement can be controlled and computers monitor and measure, but not in any great depth. Year 11 students do not yet have the opportunity to greatly extend their knowledge of the impact of information and communication technology on society.
179. Teaching was good or better in more than four-fifths of the lessons seen. Subject knowledge and vocabulary is assiduously taught in well-planned lessons. Technical aspects such as why a printer was not working are well explained. Teachers' introductions are clear and they are good at helping students to clarify their thought patterns. Enthusiasm and mutual understanding promote good relationships between staff and students, and engender a positive approach to study. Teachers are very aware of the problems of students with special educational needs and plan appropriate work and support. Students' response is consequently positive. They help each other and are appreciative of the teachers' help. Students work hard in class and most take pride in their coursework.
180. The subject is well led by a committed co-ordinator. The new short course GCSE has been successfully introduced. A new technician is making a positive contribution to the department's work. National guidelines have been integrated into the systematic assessment procedures, although all teachers have not yet been fully trained to appreciate the finer points. A network and modern technology such as broadband have been introduced. There is no formal monitoring of lessons, but the co-ordinator analyses results and highlights areas of teaching that can be improved. Action is

consequently taken, for example, through an emphasis on raising the quality of coursework by improving students' self-evaluation of their work.

**National Key Stage 3 Strategy:
Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

181. The use of information and communication technology is embedded in the programmes of all subjects but its execution differs from subject to subject. Information and communications technology is effectively used in art and physical education to promote learning. Design and technology teachers create good opportunities in lessons for students to gainfully use computers. In English, Year 9 students are motivated by the use of digital cameras and scanners whilst preparing presentations. Modern languages, history and geography make good use of information and communication technology as a tool to aid learning. Such departments use a wide range of information and communication technology skills. However, science, mathematics, music and religious education do not.
182. Overall, the school is making reasonable use of information and communication technology to enhance students' learning experiences. However, this is not yet centrally monitored to ensure that the required contribution of all subjects to information and communication technology is fully developed. There has been no mapping of each department's potential contribution to students' capability in the subject, or an audit of what has actually happened. It is, therefore, hard for omissions to be spotted and rectified or good practice spread. The school cannot be sure that each student is increasing their knowledge in a structured and effective manner. The implementation of the information and communication technology strand of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is intended to remedy such deficiencies, but staff have not yet attended training and no planning has taken place.

MODERN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The subject area is very well led and well managed, so its contribution to the curriculum is strong.
- Teaching in French and German is good, with very good subject knowledge, class management and assessment, so students learn well.
- Boys' and girls' GCSE results in French are well above the national average.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results in German, which are below average.
- The more frequent and effective use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- The provision of detailed, updated schemes of work to reflect and share good teaching practice.

184. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average in French and average in German. These standards are achieved because teaching is good in both subjects, with significant improvement in the teaching of German. Students' achievements in relation to standards on entry in Year 9 are good. They make very good progress in French. In German, progress is good despite a later start and less time in Year 9. Improvement in modern languages since the previous inspection has been good.

185. In 2001, boys' and girls' GCSE results in French at A* to C were well above the national average and higher than in the previous year. All students entering gained a grade in the range A* to G. Girls gained higher grades than boys. Boys and girls performed better than in most other subjects taken at the same time. In 2001, boys' and girls' GCSE results in German at A* to C were much lower than the national average, lower than in other school subjects and similar to the previous year. Boys' grades at A* to G were lower than average, but all girls were successful in this range. In the Summer 2002 examination the trend for improvement for A* to C grades in French improved, however, there was a slight decline for results in German.
186. When students enter the school in Year 9, their attainment is average in French but well below average in German. The 2002 teacher assessments show that students' overall attainment in modern languages by the end of Year 9 is above average. In French and German, most students quickly develop in lessons taught largely in the language. They follow short conversations recorded by native speakers, and compose brief statements about life in school and at home. By the end of Year 9, most students, including some with special educational needs, enjoy role-play, simulating situations such as a visit to the doctor. Students adapt their writing to purposes ranging from posters to short letters and postcards. In French, many use past tenses accurately to describe recent holidays and leisure pursuits. In German, students have less time, but most work hard to make equally good progress. Students learn to understand classroom instructions, exchange greetings and convey information about themselves, their friends and families. In both languages, most students achieve a good grasp of grammar and structures. They use number for times, dates or to collate the results of surveys. Students speak spontaneously and complete written exercises fast and accurately. Some lower attainers cope with the languages as a result of extra individual attention and support in lessons.
187. In Years 10 and 11, nearly all students study one language for GCSE and a few study two. In French, standards are above average, equating to recent high GCSE results. Progress is slower in German, although most boys and girls are currently working towards success in the higher level GCSE. Most students achieve well, expanding their vocabulary and writing detailed coursework based on teenage interests. The gap in attainment between boys and girls is starting to close. Higher attainers in both French and German express their ideas confidently on topics such as fashion and the tourist attractions of their region. Using the future tense, they explain their choice of work placement and their expectations of the experience. Students develop good reading skills studying authentic sources and gifted linguists benefit from working with the two language assistants. Lower attainers in French and German, including some with special educational needs, develop the basic language skills needed for travelling and living in Europe.
188. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and overall it is good. Teachers are fluent in French and German, offering their students an excellent model to copy. They use English selectively to support slower learners or explain grammar. Teachers manage their students very well, offering well-planned, stimulating activities that hold students' attention and enthusiasm. They are firm or supportive with a small minority who find the work hard or achieve too little. Teachers achieve a good balance of directed and independent activities such as paired conversations or reading comprehensions giving students responsibility for their own learning. They involve students in the introduction, demonstration or summary of new language. Students enjoy this change of focus and appreciate their classmates' efforts. Teachers' high expectations are shared with individual students or whole classes. They encourage students to work out grammar rules and demand accuracy and spontaneity in speaking. Teachers deploy conventional resources well, but use computers too rarely.

They organise games, competitions and simulations of teenage activities, adding variety and interest to lessons. Worksheets are usually adapted to suit different students' abilities. Teachers assess students' work very well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. They help students to track and predict their own performance in modular GCSE courses. Regular thorough marking involves students themselves and establishes their individual targets. Teachers individually assess some students' special needs to keep them fully included. They use homework well to prepare and follow up lessons. Students' creativity and interest is evident in coursework and in the wall displays in classrooms and corridors.

189. The modern languages department is very well led and well managed. Established good practices, combined with fresh ideas and energy, have brought strong improvements, particularly in German. Formal discussion, monitoring and evaluation give clear direction and purpose to languages learning. The commitment of teachers and assistants to exchanges and visits to France and Germany enrich many students' learning. The exploitation of the Internet is improving with international links through the Comenius scheme. Better and more effective means of assessing progress and attainment are narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. The purchase of new resources is leading to revision and expansion of the schemes of work to reflect and share the best teaching practice.

MUSIC

190. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- There is a good relationship between students and teacher.
- The teachers' knowledge of music is good.
- Students are very well behaved and attitudes to the subject are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The development of a scheme of work, which is specific to this school.
- Systems of assessment and recording of student attainment, achievement and progress.
- The lack of opportunities for students to be involved in making music as a social experience.

191. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average in Year 9 and average by Year 11. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although more satisfactory teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11 than in Year 9. Consequently, students' achievements in relation to standards are also unsatisfactory overall. Whilst learning in music is unsatisfactory, students' attitudes to music are mainly very good. In spite of their positive attitudes, students make unsatisfactory progress as they move through the school because of weaknesses in the teaching and management of the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.
192. Standards in music at the end of Year 9, according to the 2002 teacher assessments, were above average. In all, 77 per cent of students were assessed as attaining Level 5 or above, against a national average of 64 per cent. In 2001, 64 per cent attained Level 5 or above and it would appear that standards are rising. There are, however, no records or assessment documentation to support the 2002 teacher assessment grades. GCSE passes at grades A* to C in 2001 at 75 per cent were above the national average. However, the school's pass rate fell to 70 per cent in 2002.
193. The overall quality of teaching in Years 9 to 11 is unsatisfactory. There are, though, several good and very good aspects to the teaching, which help to make students' experience of music positive. Their very good behaviour and attitudes to the subject

mean that lessons are conducted in a pleasant atmosphere with very good relationships between students and teacher. Students work well together, when involved in composition tasks, and at all levels they show very good ability to listen to one another and to be appreciative of each other's achievements. However, the evidence is that students are not challenged in the development of their aural awareness.

194. In Year 10 there is much emphasis upon developing a vocabulary of terms that help to describe the sound of music. Although students are knowledgeable of the actual words, they show uncertainty in applying this knowledge because the teacher's planning is not focused. Too many words are presented at once and without supporting examples in sound. In one instance, over half of a lesson elapsed before any music was heard. In another project in Year 9, students were investigating music in advertising. In the ensuing practical task, however, the emphasis was upon the visual aspects of advertising, the musical content was not challenging and the students' development of musical skills did not progress. Students in Year 11 are creating some attractive music in their composition tasks and are well supported by the teacher's knowledge of music and relevant techniques, including the use of new technology.
195. Schemes of work are not specifically adapted to the needs of the school and the planning of activities to develop skills and musicianship is weak. The previous report referred to the need for planning to pay attention to what students should know, do and understand. Progress in this area of planning remains unsatisfactory. There is much evidence of students' work not being marked for long periods. Record keeping is unsatisfactory and students do not know what standard they are achieving. In the previous report it was noted that planning was needed to develop systems for assessment and recording of progress and this is still a very weak aspect of management that requires immediate improvement.
196. The students enjoy better resources for making music than existed at the time of the previous report. However, the limited scale of investment means that resources are still very inadequate. Although keyboard facilities suitable for Year 9 have improved, there are still not enough modern keyboards for whole class use. Years 10 and 11 are not able to use equipment that provides access to multi-tracking and personal recording. The school is well served by visiting instrumental teachers, although not many students take advantage of the availability of lessons, apart from percussion, guitar and keyboard. At the present time there are no instrumental groups, or choir, meeting on a regular basis. Consequently, there are no opportunities for students to experience and enjoy any kind of co-operate music making. This is a weakness in the subject's provision for their social, cultural and multi-cultural development.
197. Overall, the leadership of the department requires improvement in order to develop the planning of a provision for music that encourages aural and practical skills and which opens doors to the experience and enjoyment of music making.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

198. Overall the quality of provision of physical education is **very good**.

Strengths

- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are very good, supporting students' achievements in the subject.
- Extra-curricular provision through physical education is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Improvements to the indoor accommodation for the subject.

199. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average throughout Years 9 to 11. These standards are achieved because the teaching is very good overall. Students' achievements in relation to standards are good. Students' attitudes towards physical education, and their behaviour in lessons, are also very good overall. As a result, the quality of their learning in the subject is mainly very good. Teaching and learning are good in Year 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students make very good progress as they move through the school from Year 9 to Year 11. Students with special educational needs learn very well and make good progress in the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
200. In the 2001 GCSE physical education examination all students gained an A* to G pass grade, and the number of students gaining the higher A* to C grades was significantly better than the national average. This very high level of attainment was repeated in the 2002 examination. Although more boys than girls take the examination, the attainment of the girls was better than the boys. Students' attainment in the examination compares very favourably with their attainment in their other subjects.
201. Students arrive from their middle school bringing with them a range of physical education standards and experiences that are generally in line with expectations. The formal assessments by the teachers at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards in physical education are above the national expectations for both girls and boys. The inspection evidence confirms these findings. Students quickly settle into their new school and by the end of Year 9 students' attainment is at least in line with national expectations, with the majority of them doing even better. Attainment in netball, soccer, hockey and basketball are good. Students perform enthusiastically with secure basic skills, and a developing understanding of the rules and conventions of the various games. Levels of skill in rugby football are less well developed. The level of swimming is good. There are very few non-swimmers in the school, and almost all demonstrate a high level of competence in a variety of strokes as well as life saving and personal survival techniques.
202. Good progress is made in Years 10 and 11, and by the time students are 16 years old most of them attain levels that are better than expected. They develop good skills in performance and evaluation in a range of sporting activities. They have a good knowledge of rules and tactics, and undertake a range of roles including performing, officiating and coaching. Students in the examination groups develop understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. They become confident in the use of technical language, and the majority produce well-presented and detailed course work folders.
203. Students with special educational needs are well integrated and receive much sensitive and effective support from both staff and students. They reach commendable levels of attainment. There is no evidence of students with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. Gifted and talented students are encouraged to extend their skill both in school and with external sports clubs. A number of students have represented Yorkshire in a variety of sports, and a few have gone on to gain international honours.

204. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the department and has a significant impact on the attainment of the students and their enjoyment of the subject. Lessons are well organised and are conducted at a brisk, demanding pace, achieving an appropriate balance of activities and offering students a range of appropriate challenges. The subject planning is well structured with a choice of tasks that promote a high level of interest and effort. There is an expectation that students will work hard and behave well and these expectations are almost always met. Students respond very positively to the enthusiastic approach of their teachers. They behave well and are prepared to work hard. Their enjoyment of their work is very evident.
205. The outside accommodation is good and is supplemented by the occasional use of the community swimming pool. The quality of indoor accommodation remains a concern. The school lacks a specialist sports hall.
206. This is a very well organised and efficient department, led by an excellent subject co-ordinator. High quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work and helps the teaching of the subject. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other and show a very strong commitment to their students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good resources, including a range of artefacts and videos, support learning.
- There is a sensitive regard to students' pastoral needs.

Areas for improvement

- The management of the subject at senior management and departmental level, including the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- The teaching of the subject in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.
- The assessment of students' work.
- The more effective use of marking and homework to raise standards.
- The development of information and communication technology to support the teaching and learning of religious studies.

208. The school does not offer nationally accredited courses in religious education and there is very little formal teacher assessment of the attainment of students at the end of Year 9. Consequently, no judgement can be made on trends in standards reached over the past few years. Attainment in lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory, mirroring the quality of teaching and lesson planning. However, there is too little time allocated to the teaching of religious education during the academic year, so that standards and achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 are unsatisfactory. Curriculum organisation also hinders learning. The subject is not well managed and there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Statutory requirements are not met.
209. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and learn about particular aspects of religious education. For example, Year 10 students talk knowledgeably about Hindu views on reincarnation. Year 9 use a variety of books to investigate Christian, Jewish and Muslim funerals, and present their findings well to the whole class. They gain from the teacher's good knowledge of these practices and the well-prepared guidance sheets on research sources. Achievement is not high enough because students are not sufficiently well encouraged to consider how their learning links with questions about the meaning of life and death, as interpreted by these three world religions.

210. Progress over time is unsatisfactory as religious education is only taught for part of each term, and students cannot benefit from a continuous reinforcement and extension of knowledge and understanding. Years 10 and 11 students study religious education within six-week blocks of teaching time, which also aim to teach aspects of personal, health and social education as well as citizenship. There is not a focus on key aspects of the locally agreed religious education syllabus and the statutory curriculum is not taught. Very little written work was seen and in-depth, extended writing is poor. Literacy skills are, therefore, insufficiently well developed through the subject. There is too little time for the promotion of good work in spiritual, social, moral and cultural education. Consequently, religious education is unable to make a strong contribution to multi-cultural education.
211. Teaching and learning in individual lessons seen were satisfactory. Students benefit from a sensitive regard of their individual needs. However, in the occasional lesson, because of the lack of specialist teaching, there were little pockets of student inattention which, whilst not serious in themselves, lessened the sense of good purposeful learning. Lesson planning is sound, although some staff feel uneasy about how the religious aspect of the topic fits in with the rest of the unit. Staff work hard with small groups of students to ensure that learning progresses, but there are too few references to subject vocabulary to support literacy development. A scrutiny of the sparse written work indicates that marking is basically satisfactory. Teachers make supportive comments, but students are not consistently told what they have to do to improve. Not all students fully understand what their marks represent and what they have achieved. Infrequent use of homework to reinforce and enhance knowledge limits achievement. Students with special educational needs make good progress based on their prior attainment. This is due to the high quality help they receive from specialist support staff.
212. Overall, students' attitudes are satisfactory. Most students are diligent and well behaved, although a few find it difficult to work hard throughout the lesson. There is too little time for students to reflect deeply on issues and consider a range of ethical questions.
213. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The school's timetable and scheme of work do not facilitate the good teaching of religious education. For example, students are not taught about Christian beliefs, such as the importance of Pentecost or the Sacraments. There are no specialist teachers and staff have not received recent training, although a good selection of resources, including artefacts and videos, has been acquired. The religious education co-ordinator has a number of other responsibilities and roles within the school. Senior management has not monitored the effectiveness of the co-ordination of religious education and the co-ordinator has not evaluated the work of the team of teachers who teach religious education. This is important as they come from a range of subject backgrounds. Information and communication technology is hardly used to support the subject. Assessment lacks rigour. The previous report stated that attainment in Year 9 was satisfactory, but it is now unsatisfactory, as it is in Years 10 and 11. Statutory requirements are still not met. There has been little improvement since the previous inspection.

CITIZENSHIP

214. The overall quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The overall satisfactory standard of teaching and learning through the school's personal development and social education course.

- The match of planned curricular provision to the new citizenship syllabus requirements.
- All students in Years 9 to 11 have good access to this new course.

Areas for improvement

- Staff training to develop the skills necessary to teach this new course.
- The development of whole-school assessment procedures relating to the course.
- The monitoring of the teaching and learning in citizenship lessons to identify and share good practice.

215. This is a new course, which is planned within the personal development and social education curriculum. From the limited evidence available at this stage of the school year, standards of work seen are satisfactory for students in Years 9 to 11. It is not possible to reach a judgement on progress over time. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall where aspects of this course are taught in personal and social development lessons. Students' attitudes are positive. When given the opportunity, they contribute satisfactorily in discussion and relate well to one another, listening carefully to the opinions being expressed.

216. Students in Year 9 listen carefully and complete tasks sensibly. They know that democracy involves individuals in making choices and reaching decisions at national and local level. Students name a number of political institutions and describe their functions. For example, they distinguish between the role of members of parliament and local councillors. Where teaching is satisfactory, they have appropriate opportunities to debate and vote on an issue such as hunting with dogs. This activity helps them experience 'democracy in practice' and promotes tolerance, supporting their personal development well. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, students are not given the opportunity to engage in useful discussion.

217. Overall, students adopt responsible attitudes in citizenship lessons. Students in Year 10 are aware of the importance and function of the school council. They listen carefully when it is reported on and ask sensible questions to clarify their understanding of its decisions. Students recognise the importance of involvement in decision-making. They improve their discussion skills through debate. In Year 11, students sensibly consider and discuss their options when planning their work experience. They gain useful knowledge and understanding of health and safety requirements in relation to their placements. This is because the teaching ensures appropriate opportunities for discussion and provides relevant information to students.

218. A thorough audit of existing provision took place earlier in the year. This has enabled the school to match existing topics within personal development and social education to the requirements of the new syllabus. As a result, the school has successfully incorporated these elements of citizenship into its programmes of study so that planned provision matches syllabus requirements effectively. A second strength is that all students have good access to this new course. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to ensure that the new syllabus is in place and that the planned programme of work matches statutory requirements. Areas for improvement have been recognised and include further staff training, the monitoring of citizenship lessons and the development of effective assessment procedures. The school has made a good start in developing this area of the curriculum. It recognises the importance of monitoring students' progress carefully to ensure that citizenship is taught effectively within the curriculum model adopted.

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

219. In the inspection, nine 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 2001, the latest year for which national comparisons were available at the time of the inspection.

GCE AS level courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Mathematics | 2 | 50 | 62 | 0 | 15 | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| Music | 1 | 100 | 84 | 0 | 29 | 1.0 | 2.4 |

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 |
| Mathematics | 18 | 94 | 87 | 50 | 43 | 5.9 | 5.8 |
| Chemistry | 6 | 100 | 90 | 50 | 43 | 8.0 | 5.9 |
| Biology | 13 | 92 | 88 | 38 | 34 | 5.9 | 5.3 |
| Physics | 5 | 100 | 88 | 80 | 40 | 7.2 | 5.7 |
| Other Sciences | 3 | 100 | 90 | 33 | 30 | 6.7 | 5.2 |
| Full Design and Technology | 13 | 77 | 91 | 8 | 30 | 3.1 | 5.4 |
| Sports / PE Studies | 13 | 100 | 92 | 31 | 25 | 6.2 | 5.1 |
| Art and Design | 8 | 100 | 96 | 38 | 46 | 7.0 | 6.6 |
| Music | 2 | 100 | 93 | 67 | 35 | 6.0 | 5.7 |
| Geography | 11 | 100 | 92 | 55 | 38 | 6.9 | 5.7 |
| History | 8 | 88 | 88 | 0 | 35 | 3.3 | 5.5 |
| Sociology | 1 | 100 | 86 | 100 | 35 | 8.0 | 5.3 |
| English Literature | 17 | 100 | 95 | 35 | 37 | 5.9 | 5.9 |
| Communications Studies | 4 | 100 | 93 | 25 | 31 | 5.5 | 5.5 |
| French | 5 | 100 | 89 | 40 | 38 | 6.4 | 5.6 |
| German | 1 | 100 | 91 | 100 | 40 | 10.0 | 5.8 |
| General Studies | 50 | 88 | 85 | 30 | 30 | 4.9 | 4.9 |
| Post-16 VQ: Business | 10 | N/a. | N/a. | N/a. | N/a. | 12.3 | 10.5 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Post-16 VQ: Art and Design | 5 | N/a. | N/a. | N/a. | N/a. | 12.0 | 13.2 |
|----------------------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Intermediate vocational qualifications

| Qualification | No in final year | % gaining qualification | | % gaining merit | | Average point distinction | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Business | 1 | 100.0 | - | 0.0 | - | - | - |
| Art and Design (Post September 2000) | 4 | 50.0 | - | 50.0 | - | - | - |

The table may display null values where less than 100 17 – 18 students nationally were entered for the examination

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

220. The main inspection focus was on mathematics and physics, but one lesson in each of chemistry and biology were sampled.

Mathematics

221. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The examination results at the end of Year 13 are consistently above average.
- Relationships between staff and students are very good.
- Students develop very good independent learning skills.

Areas for improvement

- The more systematic monitoring of students' progress.
- The achievement of lower attaining Year 12 students.

222. Results in A-level examinations in 2001 were above the national average. This has been a consistent pattern for a number of years and results in 2002 are very similar. Retention of students on courses is almost 100 per cent. However, a number of students did not attain a qualification at the end of Year 12 in either 2001 and 2002 and did not continue into Year 13.

223. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average in Year 13 and average in Year 12. For example, by the end of Year 13 students can confidently use calculus and rearrange equations by substituting trigonometric formulae. The most able Year 12 students prove the formula for solving quadratic equations and use probability terminology and equations with confidence. Those of lower prior attainment still have difficulty with using unfamiliar terminology and formulae. Standards are comparable in the different modules. Students complete more modules in pure mathematics and statistics than in mechanics, leading to higher standards overall in these aspects of mathematics.

224. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and some is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Work is very well structured to cover the examination syllabus and supported by published resources. The predominant teaching style, however, is restricted to giving model answers and working through textbook exercises. This limited range of styles was also mentioned in the previous inspection report. In the better lessons, students are encouraged to work through problems publicly, explaining their reasoning. Any errors are used constructively to help learning. For example, in a Year 12 lesson several students explained different methods of solving quadratic equations and their learning was good. Questioning is used effectively, with sufficient time given for students to think and very good individual support is provided both in and outside lessons. Most students in Year 13 have developed good independent learning skills and make use of these. In Year 12, students are more inclined to wait for the teacher to recognise their difficulties. This is a particular problem for those of lower prior attainment. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is too much exposition by the teacher and learning activities are confined to textbook exercises. Although this approach enables students to develop techniques for answering questions, it is less effective at building their understanding.
225. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable and ensure good syllabus coverage. Only one teacher other than the subject co-ordinator teaches post-16 mathematics and a great deal of informal discussion about the course takes place between them. Teachers teach different modules and students' results in module tests are not systematically co-ordinated. Interim assessments and marking are left to the individual teacher. Feedback to students is mostly verbal and informal. While all students know their target grades, very few know whether their present work is at that level, especially in Year 12. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Above national average standards have been maintained and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. However, the heavy dependence on published material was raised as an issue in the previous report and still needs attention.

CHEMISTRY

226. One Year 13 A2 lesson was sampled. Teaching and learning were very good and attainment above average. Students are well taught by enthusiastic staff and there are very good working relationships between students and their teachers. Students show confidence in their ability to apply knowledge, particularly during discussions as observed in the lesson on equivalence point. High levels of personal development and commitment are evident and students clearly enjoy the subject.

Biology

227. One Year 12 AS lesson was sampled. Teaching and learning were satisfactory and attainment average. Students are taught and supported by experienced staff who ensure that they all make appropriate progress. A relaxed teaching and learning environment is evident and students are adequately challenged. The students showed varying degrees of confidence in their abilities to relate to complex formulae involving peptide molecules. Overall, students show good attitudes towards the subject.

Physics

228. Overall, the quality of provision in physics is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good, with increasing expectations being placed on students.
- Experienced teachers have very good subject knowledge and an awareness of the required standards.
- The good and relaxed student-teacher relationships, which encourage active learning.
- The good quality of the practical work undertaken by students.

Areas for improvement

- An increased use of student performance data for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Improved use of information and communication technology, particularly in data logging as resources become available.
- The application of mathematical knowledge in physics.

229. The A-level results in 2001 were well above the national average. Some 80 per cent of students gained A or B grades, and these results were significantly better than in 2000. In the 2001 AS examinations, results were above average, with two-thirds of the students gaining A and B grades. In both of these examinations all students gained passes. In 2002, results were also very good at A-level and good at AS level. There are no clear trends as the small number of students involved makes comparison with earlier years unreliable. In both examinations the performance of the minority of female students in the groups is at least equal to that of the male students, and is generally better. Retention rates are good; students complete the courses and make satisfactory progress overall, based on their GCSE results.

230. Standards of work seen in the sixth form are mainly above average. In both year groups, students work co-operatively with each other. Of particular note is the standard of practical work. Students handle apparatus confidently and conduct experiments with minimal guidance. For example, in a Year 12 class, students investigated electrical resistivity; they could identify the appropriate variables and with some prompting relate the appropriate graph to the required calculation. Year 13 students have progressed to higher levels of analytical and evaluative skills and have a good understanding of errors.

231. Clear explanations by teachers, and the individual support they provide when needed, helps students make progress in lessons. Those requiring additional help are encouraged to seek staff at lunchtimes. Teachers display enthusiasm and have good subject knowledge. They attempt to extend the understanding of the students by skilful use of pertinent questions. Some students are rather reticent answering questions in class. This indicates insecure knowledge and inadequate background reading required for homework. This occurred in a Year 13 class where diffraction was discussed, and also in Year 12 in a lesson on potential dividers. In both lessons, students were unsure about the use of the mathematical aspects under discussion and needed much support from the teachers.

232. Students are developing mature relationships both with each other and with their teachers. Co-operation is very evident in lessons and male and female students relate well and support each other's learning.

233. Subject leadership is good, the teaching being equally shared by two teachers. The teachers have a good understanding of the students' abilities, although they do not use assessment information fully to monitor the progress of individual students and identify learning goals that will help students to make better progress. Resources are

satisfactory in terms of available texts; information and communication technology provision in the library and other work areas enhances independent learning.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

234. The GCE AS and A-level course in design and technology (product design) was a focus subject in this area of the curriculum.

Design and Technology

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

Strengths

- The achievement of students is good and this enables them to gain better than expected grades in examinations.
- Working relationships between students and their teachers are very good.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject and this supports learning and achievement.

Areas for improvement

- The use of individual reviews with students to set improvement targets.
- The use and application of information and communication technology in the subject.
- Students' knowledge and understanding of product analysis and modification for improvements.

236. GCE A and AS level examination results in 2001 were below average. However, the results for 2002 show a significant improvement, with many students taking the examination gaining A and B grades. The numbers of students choosing to follow the design and technology course is increasing and the numbers completing the courses are satisfactory.

237. Attainment in lessons is good and many students achieve at or above their predicted grades. This is due in part to the very good relationships between teachers and students and to the positive attitudes that students have towards their work. Teaching overall is sound and enables students to consolidate and extend their knowledge. Students are attentive, work productively and respond well to supportive teaching.

238. In the work seen in Year 12 students demonstrate a range of drawing techniques. For example, students, in the development of their ideas, effectively apply isometric and orthographic skills. By Year 13 students are modelling and testing their final designs well, but product analysis and modifications for improvement are less well developed. Students use information and communication technology to improve and enhance the presentation of their work. However, they are unable to access the necessary computer-aided equipment, and appropriate software, in order to develop advanced computer-aided design skills. Students use technical language well and by the end of Year 13 communicate their ideas using annotated sketches, design specifications and written evaluations, many to a high standard. Male and female students achieve well and make good progress through Year 13.

239. Teaching is good, with lessons well planned and structured so that students explore and investigate products and develop an independent approach to their learning. For example, in a Year 13 lesson students learning about ergonomic design considerations had the opportunity to look at a racing and mountain bike. Working together, they explored the physiological and anthropometrical aspects associated with ergonomic considerations. Relationships between teachers and students and between students

themselves are very good, which creates a positive and respectful learning environment.

240. The subject is well managed with clear strategies for identifying and maintaining improvements. However, the use of performance data, relating to reviews with individual students in order to set targets for improvement, requires further development in order to further raise standards.

BUSINESS

241. Work in the Years 12 and 13 AVCE courses in Business Education was inspected in this area.

Business Education

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average, especially in relation to the prior attainment of the students.
- Teachers have good, up-to-date subject knowledge and use local industry and well-prepared, and chosen, resources to enhance the curriculum.
- The good quality of teachers' continuous assessment gives students clear guidance.
- The co-ordinator manages the department well and is very committed.
- The good, positive relationships between staff and students focus on developing students' independent learning and research skills.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work have not been updated to include new curriculum developments.
- Assessment and performance data on students is not analysed in fine detail.
- Teaching strategies do not enable students to fully appreciate the in-depth link between new topics and the wider business environment.

243. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average, reflecting the high quality of departmental leadership and teaching, which is good overall. Students make substantial progress compared to their achievements by the end of Year 11. They enjoy a subject that is relevant to everyday life and allows them to use problem solving to confirm their understanding of theory. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

244. The results for the students taking the post-16 vocational courses in business education in 2001 were well above the national average. The provisional results for 2002 indicate a similar pattern. For example, all the students on the one-year AVCE course passed, with more than a quarter obtaining a high grade. Nearly two-thirds did better than their GCSE results had indicated and only one student did worse. Over two-thirds of the students taking business education examinations in 2002 obtained better results than in their other subjects. Students make good progress in business education and retention rates in the subject are good.

245. These high standards are mirrored in the written work of the Year 13 students taking the advanced vocational course, as well as by their knowledge and understanding shown in lessons. A class studying the use of information and communication technology in a business environment was producing a web-enabled document to include text, graphics and hot spots. The teacher's good subject knowledge was an important factor in their success. This was also the case during a lesson on finance when the teacher used references to current issues in America to illustrate the tenuous

nature of assets. The pace of learning of the current Year 12 is good. They have a good knowledge of the basic economic question and the organisation of industry, referring to the restructuring of the BBC and the perceived dictatorial management structures of some British firms.

246. Teaching is good in three-quarters of the lessons and not less than satisfactory. The teachers' up-to-date knowledge and the strong links with local industry motivates students. A range of well prepared and chosen materials is used well. A particular strength is the teachers' ability to stand back and ensure that students think for themselves. Good research and independent learning skills are developed. Pertinent questioning, and tests, reinforce and extend learning. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy and students do well in these aspects of business, as they do in information and communication technology. Students comment favourably on the continuous assessment that pinpoints difficulties and highlights areas that need improving. On occasions, teachers missed opportunities to enhance students' understanding through overviews that stressed the holistic nature of business activity.
247. The commitment of the teachers and positive attitudes of the students result in an effective learning partnership. Students appreciate the continuous support that they receive, including through e-mail communications, and enjoy the challenge of solving problems related to current issues. They work well in lessons and produce good research.
248. Good leadership promotes high achievement. There are high expectations that students will make good progress and they respond accordingly. Relatively few drop out of classes in the first year. Resources, including the local community, are very well organised and enhance learning. Schemes of work have not been extended to take a detailed account of current developments, such as citizenship or the focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. However, industrial links and resources have been further extended. Assessment data is analysed, but not always rigorously. The high level of attainment and progress mentioned in the previous report has been maintained at a time of great change in examination structure and academic expectations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

249. No courses were the focus of inspection in this area but two Year 12 lessons for the AS and Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) extension courses were sampled.

Information and communication technology

250. In the Year 12 AS course although standards were average, the quality of teaching and learning were very good, as were the students' attitudes. Consequently, students achieve well. The lesson, which involved the study of management systems, was very good because the teacher challenged the students to a thoughtful, considered approach to the topic. There were also good arrangements between the teacher and students for the e-mailing of homework and the subsequent marking of this work. When exploring management systems, the students made good use of their personal knowledge of local and family businesses.
251. In the Year 12 Computer Literacy and Information Technology course, students are provided with a good opportunity to extend and develop their personal, practical information and communication technology skills. Discussion with students showed that they appreciated the value of this qualification in relation to the skills likely to be

required by potential future employers. In these terms, the attainment of the students was well above average and their achievement good in respect of gains in their general accuracy levels when using a word processing program. Teaching and learning were good, and students' attitudes very good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

252. In these areas, only the AS and A2 physical education courses were the focus of the inspection. No other subjects were sampled.

Physical Education

253. Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

| |
|--|
| Strengths |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students' attainment is above the national average.• The quality of teaching and learning is very good.• Students are well motivated and enthusiastic about the subject. |
| Areas for improvement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvements to the indoor accommodation for the subject. |

254. There has been a significant increase in the number of students opting to take A-level physical education since the previous inspection. In 2001, the number of students gaining the higher pass grades of A and B in the AS level examination and the A-level was in line with the national average. The pass rate for these two examinations in 2002 showed a significant improvement. Retention rates for students completing the courses are high.

255. Inspection evidence indicates that students currently in Year 12 achieve standards that are at least in line with the national average, and a majority are doing better. Students in Year 13 achieve well above average. They engage in productive debates about a range of subject related topics, including the commercialism of sport, and factors effecting sporting performance, and come to informed and perceptive conclusions. Many have a good command of the technical language of the subject and use it accurately and effectively. Students readily use the Internet to broaden their knowledge and to research individual topics.

256. The teaching of the AS and A2 course is very good overall. It is never less than good and some excellent teaching was seen. Teachers are aware of the different ways in which students learn and they work hard to use methods and provide tasks with resources that meet the students' needs. A particularly impressive feature is the importance which teachers place on a continuity of approach from Year 11 to Year 12. They are aware that the change to sixth form study is difficult for some students and, therefore, attempt to ease them into research and further reading. The expectation of what students can do is high and students respond with equally high levels of industry and a mature approach to their studies. Teachers pass on their considerable expertise and challenge students to think intellectually. They contribute to students' learning by guiding them and pointing them towards a wealth of background information and resources. Lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers mark students' work meticulously and give them much advice on how improvements can be made. In addition to having impressive subject knowledge, teachers have good working relationships with students and treat them as responsible adults. Most students have progressed from taking GCSE in physical education in the school to the A-level courses. As a consequence, teachers know the students very well, are aware of their

strengths and weaknesses and are skilled at asking them the right questions in order to prompt thought and enter into discussions.

257. The excellent leadership and management are reflected in the subject's results, and by the obvious enjoyment of both staff and sixth form students. The availability of a room dedicated to the subject's work, with an interactive whiteboard, is providing a considerable aid to raising attainment. A large percentage of the students have opted to take part in one of a number of recreational activities including soccer, netball, swimming, badminton and fitness training. A small number of students are involved in the Community Sports Leaders Award. This a nationally recognized award for young people who wish to gain skills in leading sporting activities.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

258. No subjects were the focus of inspection in these areas, but lessons were sampled in art, music and drama.

Art and design

259. One art lesson was sampled, which included combined groups of students from Years 12 and 13 studying AVCE and GNVQ courses. Although attainment was average, teaching and learning were good and students' attitudes to the subject very good. Overall, art and design in the sixth form is a strength because of the teachers' very good subject knowledge and expertise. They give students a broad range of experiences that enable them to develop as artists and to appreciate the arts and crafts of their own and other cultures.

Music

260. One Year 12 AS lesson was sampled. Students were working on a composition related to film music, for example for *Lord of the Rings*. Attainment was average and although teaching and learning were satisfactory overall, students' progress was slow because they were insufficiently clear as to the structure of the work. However, the teacher was encouraging and helpful and the students' attitudes and approach to their work very good.

Drama

261. One Year 12 AS drama lesson was sampled. Here students were planning the staging of an extract from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Discussion showed that the students had a good background knowledge of the play and their level of attainment was mainly above average. The lesson was satisfactory overall because the teacher had to intervene regularly as 'director' to speed up the students' planning and rehearsals. Teaching and learning were, therefore, satisfactory overall. However, there were some good reminders of Stanislavski's philosophy that "*movement must have a purpose*". This instilled more sharpness into the action and students' involvement in the lesson was basically good.

HUMANITIES

262. Within the humanities, geography and history were the focus of the inspection. Religious education was sampled.

Geography

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

Strengths

- The good quality of the enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching.
- The good range of resources, which supports students in their learning activities.
- The very good attitudes of students towards the subject.
- The high quality of working relationships between teachers and students.

Areas for improvement

- Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- The completion of arrangements for performance management.
- The development of planning, which clearly defines priorities, actions and costs.

264. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above the national average. These standards are achieved because teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and the quality of teaching is good. The attitudes and behaviour of students are very good and contribute to good learning in the subject. The standard of students' work on entry to the sixth form is above average. They continue to make good progress and they achieve well. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

265. In 2001, all students entered for the A-level examination at the end of Year 13 obtained a pass grade. Over half those entered gained the higher-grade passes of A and B. Students did better in geography than in most other subjects in the school. The provisional results for 2002 are again good, with all students securing a pass grade, although the proportion gaining the higher grades is lower. In the 2001 AS examination at the end of Year 13 the pass rate was above the national average. All students obtained a pass grade and 40 per cent obtained a higher-grade pass at A or B. Provisional results for 2002 are lower. Although a similar proportion gained the higher grade passes of A and B, only 60 per cent secured a pass. Geography is a popular choice, especially for female students. The numbers of students completing the geography courses in the sixth form is high.

266. The standards of work seen in the current Year 12 are above average. Students' work is well organized and well presented. Their work shows a good understanding and application of geographical skills and knowledge. For example, in a study unit on 'Water on the Land' the students show a clear understanding of the hydrological cycle and key features, such as the storm hydrograph and river channel morphology. In a human geography unit on population they draw a range of maps and analyse data using the correct advanced statistical techniques.

267. The standards of work seen in the current Year 13 are above average. Students show a very good understanding of the inter-relationships of the human and physical environments. They have very well developed skills of geographical enquiry. For example, in their work on coastal features they could draw diagrams to analyse the physical processes at work and annotate them with accurate technical language. Such knowledge is then successfully applied to their investigations about a village battling against the sea. In a lesson aimed at supporting their personal studies, the students were able to correctly identify a range of statistical techniques that they would use to analyse and interpret their findings.

268. The quality of teaching is good. All of the four lessons seen were good and one was very good. A very good feature of the teaching is the high quality of relationships that teachers develop with their students. Teachers are enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge. They develop up-to-date resources and provide opportunities for

fieldwork that stimulate students' interest and promote good learning. Marking and assessment by teachers are good and clearly identify strengths and weaknesses. A particularly good feature is the use of assessment and marking of past examination questions. Lessons proceed with pace and challenge. Students are actively engaged and their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is very good. For example, in a very good Year 13 lesson the teacher provided good feedback to students on a written assignment. The students then progressed their knowledge and understanding by a high quality discussion of longshore drift based on a recent fieldtrip and supported by good quality teacher-produced resources. In a Year 12 lesson, good use was made of the Internet to research migration flows from Kosovo. Students worked with enthusiasm and demonstrated good research skills.

269. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but aspects need to be improved. The quality of staffing, accommodation and resources is good, but there has been no formal structured observation of teaching and learning. Arrangements for performance management in the subject require completion. There is no written departmental development plan.

History

270. Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching, which results in very good learning.
- Students' very good attitudes, commitment and positive views.
- The effectiveness of the department in meeting the individual needs of students.
- The accessibility of the subject, which is open to any student who wishes to study history.

Areas for improvement

- The achievement of a more equal gender balance amongst students studying history.
- Students' awareness of the value of studying history for wider skills development.

271. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average, with a number of students in Year 12 achieving higher than average standards. These standards are achieved because teaching is very good overall. There is open entry to the sixth form in history. Because of this, prior achievement is quite varied, but most students make good progress and there are good retention rates between Year 12 and Year 13. Students' attitudes are very good throughout; they are committed, hard working and participate well in discussion. Students with special educational needs make very good progress, because they are effectively supported and fully involved in all aspects of lessons. The progress of gifted and talented students is good, because they respond well to challenging tasks. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

272. In the 2001 GCE A2 level examinations, results were below average in comparison with national averages. However, the small number of entrants makes statistical comparisons difficult. Standards at AS level are average. In the 2002 GCE A2 levels, standards appear to be higher, with more students achieving the higher grades. However, no national data is yet available to make a thorough comparison.

273. The very good teaching in many lessons has a positive impact upon learning. In Year 12, students study the Russian Revolution. Imaginative resources and challenging questions help students analyse character and motive extremely well. One student describes Trotsky as "*inspirational, energetic and passionate*". The effective use of political cartoons helps students recognise how images can be more powerful than words. In a contrasting lesson on Henry VII, the class teacher's very secure knowledge

promotes thinking effectively, when introducing a problem-solving activity based upon a wide range of source material. Students reach decisions based on evidence and then compare their suggestions with what actually happened. This helps them recognise that some problems have more than one possible solution.

274. In Year 13, achievement is good. Teachers have very good knowledge and plan lessons carefully. Relationships are very good and students respond in a very positive manner, working hard throughout each lesson. They analyse the influences of socialism and nationalism within Mussolini's 'Corporate State' and identify the values that underpin its policies. Students use their information and communication technology skills effectively to retrieve and organise information in support of this task. When studying the reign of Elizabeth I, students identify enabling and motivating factors behind exploration; for example, the English tradition for sea faring, coupled with the desire for wealth. They are aware that, by this time, explorers had long known the world was round, thus making these voyages possible.
275. The curriculum is based upon courses that provide students with good opportunities to study contrasting periods of history. The choice of the GCE AS and A2 level courses provide good opportunities that not only support students' differing interests in history, but also make good use of the particular strengths of the teaching staff. The department promotes equal opportunities extremely well, being accessible to any student who wishes to study the subject. It is enriched by educational visits; for example, two students are sponsored by the '*Holocaust Trust*' to visit Auschwitz.
276. This is an effectively managed department at sixth form level. The needs of students are carefully analysed and strategies are planned to meet those needs. These factors have a positive impact upon the quality of experiences enjoyed by students studying history. The subject supports students' personal development well; for example, encouraging them to reflect upon issues and their response to them. For example, one student offered an interesting critique of Trotsky's ruthless policies, by setting them within the context of the time.
277. The department is successful in attracting a number of able students, although there is a gender imbalance, with only two male students currently studying history. In discussion, students are very positive about their experience in this subject. They point to stimulating teaching and interesting courses as reasons for choosing history at this level. A number of students hope to include this subject in higher educational studies. However, they have a restricted view of how the skills they acquire might support future employment. This specific issue has not been addressed fully enough within the department and has had a limiting effect upon students when they choose their A-level options.

Religious Education

278. One Year 12 lesson was sampled. This was a religious education based unit, which formed part of the students' general studies course. Students were studying values and moral reasoning, and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education were met in this lesson. Standards were above average and achievement good because the quality of teaching and learning were good. The teacher made good use of the figure of King Richard III and our perception of him as a historical and Shakespearian literary figure to stimulate discussion. Students consequently

understood the need for taking an objective viewpoint on social and moral issues and their interest was well engaged.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

279. In these areas, English literature and French were the main focus of the inspection. One lesson in German was also sampled.

English Literature

280. Overall, the quality of provision in English literature is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers use a range of good strategies to develop students' breadth of knowledge in English literature.
- The very good relationships in lessons give most students the confidence to think for themselves.
- The small group work is successful in helping students to focus on the important elements of a writer's work.

Areas for improvement

- Strategies to involve those students who are too passive in whole-class discussions
- Greater opportunities for students who find writing difficult to develop their ideas orally in class.

281. The number of students opting for English literature in the sixth form is high. Most students stay on and complete the courses in both Years 12 and 13. Results in examinations have been inconsistent, ranging from average to just below average in the last four years. Currently, standards are in line with course expectations and students are achieving well in both AS and A-level English literature compared with their attainment in GCSE.

282. Most students in Year 12 are lively and participate fully in discussions, though a minority rely heavily on the others. For example, they read out their impressions of arriving at the original Globe theatre very effectively, using a good range of apt vocabulary. They had obviously learned well from their recent study of the history of literature, as shown in an imaginative display taking the form of a time-line, illustrated with key quotations from important writers. Teachers expect students to think for themselves and they often ask them to work in small groups and present their ideas to the rest of the class. Teachers keep the lesson moving with sharp prompts to take students back to the text so that if they become fanciful in their ideas about Shakespeare's language they have to justify their assertions with quotation.

283. Older students show more sophistication in their exploration of ideas. They understand the way that cultural influences affect a writer's perspective, and indeed a reader's. Teachers' questions help them in this: "*When was this written? What else was happening at this time?*" Students are keen to explore links between different texts such as *The Crucible* and *Measure for Measure* in order to clarify their understanding of moral dilemmas. In a study of romantic poetry, the more able show a clear understanding of the effects of different verse forms. Others are less inclined to voice their opinions.

284. The written work of most students shows good development over time from a rather pedestrian expression in Year 12 to the more fluently argued essays in Year 13. Higher attaining students write lively and engaging essays using varied techniques,

such as rhetorical questions and the clever insertion of key quotations to add conviction to their point of view. Teachers' marking is helpful, but a minority of students find it difficult to write clearly constructed essays. For example, in a study of a Seamus Heaney poem, a small number of students used stilted expressions and did not convey real depth of analysis. They do not have enough chances to discuss their essay style in class to help them to develop a wider vocabulary for this work.

285. The quality of teaching is good. In some classes the teachers have to work hard to generate discussion, but they have a lot of experience and use a wide variety of strategies to encourage response. The use of open-ended questions and provision of a clear structure for group work are good examples of how teachers make demands on students. This helps students to develop their own ideas. This often results in good discussions where more able students show good insight, for example, into the structure of *Wuthering Heights*. They describe the different perspectives of the 'author's voice' and how she creates unity in a novel.
286. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers and students have coped effectively with recent changes. Assessment is satisfactory and book resources, though rather worn, are adequate in number and used to good effect by most students. They also use information and communication technology to help them in their research.

French

287. Overall, the quality of provision in French is **good**.

Strengths

- Most students gain A-level grades A to E and a minority gain the higher grades A or B.
- Teaching and learning are good and some teaching is very good.
- Teachers have high expectations, to which the students respond well.
- Teachers relate very well to students, closely monitoring and supporting their work.
- The number of students studying French in Year 12 has increased.

Areas for improvement

- The enrichment of students' learning through use of the Internet and by creating links with native speakers.
- The shortage of lesson time for French in Year 13.

288. In recent years, small but increasing numbers have entered for French at AS and A-level. Results have fluctuated from year to year, but nearly all students are successful, with a minority attaining the higher grades A or B. The most recent confirmed results for 2001 were below average, with no student attaining A or B. The inspection evidence is that standards in AS and A2 level studies are rising. A few students are capable of the higher grades and all students respond comfortably to the demands of the course. Male and female students achieve equally well. Retention rates for the course are good. The close, personal attention students receive from their teachers enables them to achieve much of their potential, although they are restricted in Year 13 by a shortage of time for the subject.
289. Standards in work and lessons seen are average but students achieve well. They make rapid progress in Year 12, building on the good results they obtained at GCSE. They consolidate verb forms and grammar well, and create a firm basis for writing discursive essays on an increasingly wide range of topics. Students are confident speakers, benefiting from the excellent model presented by their teachers and the language assistant. They conduct brisk continuous dialogues and make interesting personal presentations on subjects under discussion. These range from daily routine and pocket money to subjects of cultural, social and moral importance, such as higher

education, rights and responsibilities and aspects of the European Union. A minority of students are less confident in speaking but their written work, pitched at a lower level, is sound, conveying their ideas simply but effectively. A few difficulties with grammar are evident but most students have an extensive range of verb forms, idioms and structures with which to express their ideas. Some students use computers for research or to present individual work, as well as for group projects on subjects including French-speaking countries. In Year 13 students continue to make good progress. They read with understanding and warmly debate the philosophy, characterisation and historical detail of 20th Century literature and films.

290. Teaching and learning in French are consistently good and a minority of lessons observed were very good, with correspondingly high achievement. Teachers' high expectations are evident throughout lessons, although teachers ensure that the least confident students remain included through repetition, reinforcement and support. Students benefit from the thorough marking of their written work and the good advice their teachers give them about improvement. However, external predictions of examination grades have yielded discouraging projections for some.
291. Students of French are mature, attentive and personable. They show interest in the subject, although for some the practical application of language through travel and contacts with French speakers is very limited. Most are astute and perceptive in understanding authentic texts. Students in Year 12 do independent research to supplement the resources their teachers give them. They project their own personalities and view of the world through the lengthy and detailed essays they write. Lessons have clear aims and are largely interactive so that students share responsibility in the intimate and mutually supportive small classes. Much of the work set has a direct bearing on examination requirements, so topics are usually predictable. More enrichment has recently started to be provided by the establishment of government sponsored Comenius links in Europe.
292. A-level French is well managed, with a concerted team effort by the teaching staff. Senior school managers and governors take a strong interest in its development. The well-focused work of the students is concisely set out in brief documentation, which also reveals how shortage of teaching time gives little opportunity for expansion into more adventurous study. Nevertheless, students take a strong personal interest and show flair, with a few looking enthusiastically towards career applications for their qualifications.

German

293. AS level work in German was also sampled, including one lesson observation. In this, the quality of teaching and learning were very good, founded on expert subject knowledge and mature, constructive relations between teacher and students. The work involved the students in personal presentations, contributing to the topic 'Family and Social Relations'. This illustrates the fact that students' listening skills are well developed and that they successfully extract the gist and precise detail of the teacher's fluent, authentic German. Students were well challenged and responded very well, being attentive and appreciative of each other's efforts and speaking freely from their own experience.

