

INSPECTION REPORT

WOLDGATE SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

POCKLINGTON, YORK

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118081

Headteacher: Mr J Bower

Reporting inspector: Philip J H O'Neill
3162

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 6th December 2002

Inspection number: 249870

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 - 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Kilnwick Road Pocklington York
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms E Forth
Date of previous inspection:	4 th December 2000

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30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30317	Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector	History English as an additional language	
2866	Robert Battey	Team inspector	Art and design	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
27050	Val Blackburn	Team inspector	Biology	
13217	Malcolm Butterworth	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs	
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18045	Peter Morley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woldgate is a mixed comprehensive school, serving students between the ages of 11 and 18, with 1279 students on roll, including 182 sixth form students. The school is bigger than other secondary schools; the sixth form is about the same size as most other sixth forms. The school serves the small market town of Pocklington and a large surrounding rural area, including many villages. Ninety-eight per cent of students are from a white British background and only seven students have English as an additional language. Four per cent of students claim free school meals; this is well below the national average. All other indicators suggest that students as a whole come from an average socio-economic background when compared with national norms. The attainment of students entering the school is average. At 15 per cent, the proportion of students with special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of students with formal statements of need, at two per cent, is average. The number of students staying on into the sixth form is rising.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woldgate School is an effective and improving school where students achieve well as a consequence of consistently good teaching, the students' very positive attitudes to their learning and the supportive, cordial relationships between teachers and students. The sixth form is a strength of the school and students achieve very well in a supportive learning environment. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall, the school achieves high standards across the subjects, particularly in history.
- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching that supports good learning and ensures good progress.
- Students' attitudes are very good and make a very positive contribution to their learning.
- The school is very effective in including all students in what it provides, particularly the students with special educational needs, who make very good progress in acquiring the skills of literacy.
- Advice and guidance about future options and career opportunities are very good.
- The school makes very good use of specific grants and financial planning is very good.

What could be improved

- Communication between senior managers and staff is not sufficiently clear to support the development of the school as a consistently cohesive community.
- The timetable arrangements do not always provide the most effective support for teaching and learning.
- The arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education are unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation for teaching music is very poor and is having an adverse impact on standards and resources are unsatisfactory in music and science.
- The learning resource centre does not function well in supporting independent learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in December 2000 and has moved forward well since then. Standards of attainment have improved as a result of effective target-setting and improvements in teaching. Lessons have now greater challenge and teachers have higher expectations for students learning. There is now more systematic monitoring by senior and middle managers of teaching and of students' behaviour. Time-tabling was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and still remains a problem. The curriculum is now more suited to the needs of all students through the introduction of more vocationally biased courses. The main staffing difficulties noted at the last inspection have been resolved. The management of the school has improved but weaknesses remain in the way that senior managers communicate with the rest of the staff. Otherwise, governors and staff have the will and drive to make further significant improvements in what the school provides and achieves.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In the 2002 tests for 14 year-olds, in comparison with all schools nationally, attainment in science was well above average, and above average in English and mathematics. In relation to attainment in similar schools, attainment in English and science was below average, and well below average in mathematics. Boys and girls reach similar standards in science. In English and science there has been a steady rise in attainment, whilst in mathematics there is no clear trend. Overall results are improving at the same rate as most other schools nationally.

Overall attainment at GCSE in 2002 was above average for boys and girls in relation to all schools and average for similar schools. Results are improving faster than most schools nationally. An inspection of lessons and students' work points to a sustained rise in standards. Girls did far better than boys and have been doing so over the last four years and far better than nationally. The highest performing subjects were art and design, English language, English literature, and history. The least successful subjects were French, geography, German, information and communication technology and physical education. Standards of literacy are good, whilst students reach satisfactory standards in numeracy. The school sets and meets challenging targets for attainment. A Level results are well above average overall in 2001, with particularly good results in chemistry and English literature, general studies, geography, history, mathematics and business studies, but below average results in German, physical education and Information and Communication technology. Students do well in the vocational courses.

The students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Those students who experience difficulties in learning are catered for diligently and build well on their earlier learning. Students who come to the school speaking little English are given good support to participate fully in all that is provided and they achieve as well as their peers.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students have a strong affection for the school. They value what it offers them and respond well. The attitudes of the majority of students are very good and they participate happily in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, the behaviour of the students is good in lessons and around the school. A few students are less well-behaved and there is occasionally some boisterous behaviour in corridors.
Personal development and relationships	Students and teachers work well together. A few students are more reluctant learners. Relationships between students and among students and staff are good. Most students are polite and friendly to each other, to staff and to visitors and respond well to opportunities offered to them to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Attendance is now good. There is some lateness in Years 10 and 11 that impedes the start of lessons.

Students are happy and generally eager to learn. They appreciate what the school offers them and want to succeed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. English, mathematics and science are taught well. In the other subjects, teaching is mainly good, but very good in art and history and satisfactory in modern foreign languages. Literacy is taught well across the school, whilst skills in numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Teaching is occasionally weakened by too little involvement of students and an untidy start and finish to lessons. Teachers work well with students who experience difficulties in learning so that they achieve to the full extent of their competence. They ensure that students who are new to English quickly acquire the level of fluency they need to participate fully in their studies. Students are generally good learners. They attend to their work and are eager to find out how to improve. A few are less committed and tend to settle for a modest pace to their work. The school does well in meeting the needs of all students.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and has clearly identified developmental needs. There is some useful alternative provision for Years 10 and 11 and a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are weaknesses in the timetable arrangements that hinder the effectiveness of teaching.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Students with special educational needs receive very good support and are helped to become good learners. They make consistently good progress.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Students for whom English is an additional language in the home are well supported in the acquisition of fluency.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision for the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good. Religious education offers particularly good opportunities for deepening students' spiritual and moral awareness. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively and this supports their social development. Students are not well prepared to live in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its students	The teachers know the students well and offer good personal support. Assessment is generally used well to support students' learning. The school works well in ensuring students attend regularly.

The school has satisfactory links with parents. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. The school takes great care to ensure that the students are safe and looked after well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses in the way decisions are made and communicated. In consequence, the implementation of some key policies is not always consistent and the school has not developed a shared sense of purpose.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are now well placed to support the school. They are very well led in carrying out their distinctive responsibilities and know the school's strengths and the areas for further improvement. They have ensured that most statutory requirements are met apart from that relating to the provision for a daily act of collective worship for all students.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school generally looks carefully at its performance in relation to other schools and adjusts what it provides accordingly.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of many of its resources, including designated funding. Information and communication technology is not always used sufficiently to support learning in Years 10 and 11 and the use of the learning resource centre is not well developed.

There is a good level of competent and experienced staff to support the work of the school. Accommodation is good overall but very poor in music. There is a good supply of resources in most subjects but not enough in science and music. The school takes care to compare what it offers and its results with those of other schools, locally and nationally. In all items of significant expenditure considerations of cost and value are paramount.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Forty parents attended the meeting before the inspection, whilst 164 responded to the questionnaire canvassing their views on the school.

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school expects their children to work hard and do their best their children are happy at school their children make good progress they are comfortable about approaching the school if they have concerns or questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the way the school works with parents to support their children's learning the information provided about their children's progress the range of activities provided for their children outside lessons the work provided for their children to do at home

The inspection agrees with the parents' overall positive view of the school. The inspection finds that the way the school works with parents is satisfactory. While parents' consultation evenings do not always facilitate parents' understanding their children's learning and progress, the quality of written reporting on progress is good. The inspection finds that, compared with most schools, there is a good range of activities provided for children outside lessons, particularly in sport and games and in music. The inspection looked carefully at the use of homework to support children's learning and finds that, overall, it is used well in most subjects.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM WOLDGATE SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form currently caters for 182 students and is steadily expanding. In Year 13, there are far more female students than male, whilst in Year 12 there is almost the same number of males and females. The sixth form offers a wide range of AS Level, A Level and vocational courses. Though most students join the sixth form with above average levels of attainment, students are admitted on to courses that meet their particular aspirations and where they stand a good chance of completing them successfully. A good proportion of students stay on into the sixth form after completing Year 11. A few students transfer from other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is a strength of the school. It is very effective in providing the students with a wide range of courses that suit their interests and aspirations. There is an abundance of good and very good teaching. The students make significant advances in learning through very good guidance and support. The sixth form is cost effective, gives good value for money and has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is very well led and managed.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good overall; students achieve very well and reach good standards
- Students' attitudes are very good, as are relationships within the sixth form and these make a strong contribution to learning
- The range of courses is well structured to include all students and builds positively on their prior attainment
- Leadership is very good, offering clear direction to the sixth form

What could be improved

- Occasionally, the higher-attaining students are not encouraged to read beyond the requirements of their courses.

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	Good. Students achieve well relative to prior attainment because teaching is consistently good and often very good or excellent. Very good leadership and management of the department have allowed further mathematics to continue despite time-tabling restrictions.
Biology	Good. Students make good progress given their starting points at GCSE. Teaching is very good and this results in good learning which is leading to improved examination results.
Design and technology Product design	Good. Standards in A Level are good. Teaching is consistently good. Students appreciate the support and commitment of teachers, whose strong subject knowledge helps them make good progress.
Business education	Good. Attainment in advanced vocational business is above national averages. Students are motivated and developing well as independent learners. They benefit from high quality teaching that uses individual reviews of students' work to show clearly how they can improve.
Information and communication technology	Good. Standards in information and communication technology are improving. Current Year 12 and 13 students are working above the national average. Students are confident, competent and independent users of information and communication technology.
Health and social care	Good. Attainment in the intermediate and foundation courses is above national averages; in the advanced course it is average. Attainment exceeds predictions based on the lower than average starting point of students on entry to the course due to some high quality teaching.
History	Very good. Very good teaching and management of the subject leads to very good learning. Standards are well above the national average. The subject is very well led and managed.
English	Very good. Standards are above average and students make good progress because of the quality of the teaching, which is consistently good, and effective leadership and management, which has brought significant improvement since the previous inspection.
French	Very Good. Standards have improved significantly as a result of good leadership and are above average in Year 13. The quality of teaching is good, with the result that students achieve well in relation to their earlier learning.

Apart from the nine subjects that provided the focus for the inspection of the sixth form, chemistry, physics, art and design, geography, music, Spanish and physical education were sampled. Excellent teaching and learning and good standards characterised art and design in Year 12. Students show a good grasp of basic ideas in physics and chemistry. Good standards are attained in geography as a result of good teaching. In physical education very good teaching and learning lead to well above average standards. In music, despite the very poor accommodation, teaching is very good and standards are average, with some good examples of improvisation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Teachers give students very good guidance and support in their work overall and monitor their progress carefully. The support provided for students in anticipating their careers is very good.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is very well led in promoting high standards and stimulating teaching. The sixth form is managed very well to ensure cost-effectiveness and gives good value for money.

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 supported and encouraged in developing independent study skills• they are challenged well in their work• they were helped well in settling into the sixth form• the range of courses available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the range of activities available outside courses• the advice offered about careers and future options• the information they are given about their progress

The inspection supports the students overall positive account of their experience in the sixth form. It does not support the view that there are too few activities outside courses or that support and guidance are not good enough. Students are well informed about their progress.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. In the 2002 tests for 14 year-olds, in comparison with all schools nationally, attainment in science was well above average, and above average in English and mathematics. In relation to attainment in similar schools, attainment in English and science was below average and well below average in mathematics. Girls outperform boys in both English and mathematics to a greater extent than nationally. Boys and girls reach similar standards in science. In English and science since the last inspection there has been a steady rise in attainment, whilst in mathematics there is no clear trend. Overall results are improving at the same rate as most other schools nationally.
2. Overall attainment at GCSE in 2002 was above average for boys and girls in relation to all schools and average for similar schools. Results are improving faster than most schools nationally. Evidence from lessons and work seen reveals a sustained rise in attainment as a result of the continuing improvement in the quality of teaching, which shows itself in the teachers high expectations for attainment. The key weakness in teaching at the time of the last inspections were the low expectations, particularly for the higher attaining students. Girls did far better than boys and have been doing so over the last four years, and far better than nationally. However, the school is beginning to change this pattern by paying more focused attention to the boys skills in learning. The highest performing subjects were art and design, English language, English literature, and history. The least successful subjects were French, geography, German, information and communication technology and physical education. Standards of literacy are good, whilst students reach satisfactory standards in numeracy.
3. In lessons and in work seen for Years 9 and 11, standards are good in English, mathematics, science and art and, very good in history. In information and communication technology and physical education in Year 9, and in design and technology in Year 11, standards are good. In French, music and religious education standards are satisfactory in Years 9 and 11, and in design and technology and modern foreign languages in Year 9. In Year 9, standards are good in geography. Standards of literacy are good, whilst students reach satisfactory standards in numeracy. The school sets and meets challenging targets for attainment. These targets are generated by accurate tracking of students' progress and realistic predictions of attainment.
4. The students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Achievement by students with special educational needs is very good. In literacy in Years 7 and 8 it is excellent, largely because both teaching and learning support are of very high quality. By the end of each year many students who have been listed for learning difficulties in Years 7 and 8 are removed from the special needs register and, in 2002, every student on the Year 11 register gained a grade in GCSE English. The department is very successful in substantially improving reading ages of a very high proportion of special needs students.
5. Through Years 7, 8 and 9, students with special educational needs make good progress in most subjects and particularly in reading, although gains in writing are not always quite as good. Most of these students, boys and girls, also make good progress in numeracy skills. Students who come to the school new to English are

given good support to participate fully in all that is provided and they achieve as well as their peers.

Sixth form

6. In the 2002 A Level examinations, results were well above average overall and have improved steadily over time. In individual subjects, where the numbers entered are large enough to make sensible comparisons with the national average, standards were well above average in chemistry and art and design. Standards were above average in all other subjects, apart from mathematics, music and geography where standards were average and biology where they were below average. Students reached good standards in the vocational courses. In lessons and in the work seen in the subjects that formed the focus of the inspection, standards are good in history, good in English, mathematics, design and technology and very good in information and communication technology. Standards are satisfactory in French. Very good teaching and learning lead to very good standards in art and design. There are average standards in geography. Very good standards are now evident in physical education as a result of very good teaching. In music, teachers make every effort to overcome the very poor accommodation and take the students to average standards overall, with some good examples of improvisation and composition.
7. Almost all the students complete the courses they join as a consequence of the effective use of target setting and support. Students demonstrate good standards in the key skills of communication, the application of number and information and communication technology. Students build very well on the attainment they bring to their courses. The overall targets set for improving standards are challenging and are regularly met and in some cases exceeded. The achievement of students who experience difficulties in learning is very good in relation to their earlier attainment.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Students' attitudes to school are very good and are complemented by their good behaviour and relationships with staff. These support students' personal development effectively and contribute to a warm and friendly learning environment. Students co-operate well with one another when working in groups. They settle quickly, listen attentively and concentrate on the tasks set. The majority of students respond quickly and engage responsibly in discussions and answer questions with enthusiasm. Students with special educational needs share the positive attitudes, which are evident throughout the school. A small, but significant, number of students are not keen to learn. They take longer to settle down and frequently interrupt learning and teaching. In some lessons, a few students shout out, engage in idle chatter and show a lack of co-operation. This was particularly evident amongst boys and consequently affects their achievements.
9. Most students join enthusiastically in extra-curricular activities and this supports their achievements. For example, during the inspection a significant number of students were observed enjoying football and rehearsing for the forthcoming production of Oliver. These activities have a positive effect on learning. Other students actively use computers at break times, lunchtimes and after school. This enables them to develop their information and communication technology skills and to complete homework tasks, thus increasing their confidence and motivation to learn independently. Through formal and informal interviews, students shared their positive perceptions of the school and indicated that staff are caring, sensitive and supportive. Students reported that teachers provide good teaching and interesting lessons. A significant number of

students felt that the school values them and that teachers empathise with their differing needs. These views contribute to effective relationships and a culture conducive to learning.

10. Behaviour of most students is good in lessons and around the school and this makes a considerable contribution to their progress. Students know what is expected of them and respond in a positive manner. They are generally polite, respectful, friendly and welcoming. There is little evidence of bullying, but some students and their parents reported concerns about the anti-social behaviour of some students. However, most students were adamant that bullying is dealt with appropriately and students are encouraged to learn in a tolerant and harmonious environment. There is no evidence of vandalism, but litter around the school is a persistent problem. There are occasional incidents of boisterous, noisy and inappropriate behaviour, which are particularly evident when students move between lessons and are unsupervised. The school works hard to support students who find self-discipline difficult. However, in 2001/02 there were ninety-four fixed period exclusions, which is above the national average for similar schools. There were no permanent exclusions. Nevertheless, exclusions have fallen in recent years except in 2000/01, when they rose to one hundred and ten. This significant rise was due to a very disruptive Year 11 group of students, mainly boys.
11. Relationships throughout the school are constructive. Students relate positively to their peers, teachers and other adults. They treat each other with respect and are willing to help each other in a variety of ways. Students in Year 11 and the sixth form support the wider community through work experience. Many of these students take advantage of opportunities to work closely with younger students in supporting their learning. Younger students value their positions of responsibility and serve the school as class monitors, team captains and as responsible and diligent fundraisers. Most of these productive relationships and positions of responsibility effectively support students and students' personal development and enable them to serve their school and wider community as responsible citizens.
12. Attendance is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The levels of unauthorised absence are below the national average. This is due to the diligence of staff and the work of the educational welfare officer who continues to ensure that registers are taken at prescribed times and all absences are thoroughly investigated. Students generally arrive in time for school and for individual lessons.
13. Since the previous inspection, students' attitudes to learning and behaviour have significantly improved and this is due primarily to teachers' good classroom management and their close working relationship with students. The teachers' work is further enhanced by the support and guidance provided for excluded and disaffected students.

Sixth form

14. The sixth form is a closely-knit community of learners, sharing a common intent to succeed. Students work well together in groups or individually and respect the need to preserve a quiet atmosphere when others are studying. They are willing to take responsibility for their own learning and for the life of the school. They serve the school as head boy and girl with assistants and are supported by Year 12 prefects. Students serve on the year and school councils and represent their school community in sports tournaments. Attendance is very good and students arrive on time for their lessons. A strength is the quality of the relationships between themselves and their teachers. In lessons, students show considerable maturity in the way they discuss issues. They listen to others' opinions and are good at seeking reasons for their own. They are

sensitive to the diversity of cultures and beliefs in society and are good at detecting and responding to racial or gender stereotypes.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. Of the lessons seen in Years 7 to 11, teaching was excellent in one in every eleven lessons, very good in a quarter of the lessons, good in around a third, and satisfactory in a quarter. A small proportion of lessons was unsatisfactory.
16. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is very good in art and design and history and in drama in Years 10 and 11. It is good in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, music, physical education, religious education and citizenship. Teaching is satisfactory in modern foreign languages. Good teaching of literacy across the school is steadily becoming a key factor in improvements in standards of attainment. Skills in numeracy are taught satisfactorily. The numeracy policy is not yet securely rooted in practice across subjects. Teachers work well with students who experience difficulties in learning so that they achieve to the full extent of their competence. They ensure that students who are new to English quickly acquire the level of fluency they need to participate fully in their studies.
17. What strengthens teaching, above all else, is the teachers' knowledge of their subjects. This is allied to thorough preparation and positive, encouraging relationships with the students. The best lessons are characterised by serious intent and a lively pace, tempered by good humour. A strength of many lessons is the clarity of the start when objectives are made clear and tasks defined in such a way that students settle quickly to their work. Further strengths in lessons are the use of effective questioning to probe for understanding in order to support those who fall behind in their knowledge. Lessons often come to life through the creative use of the students' ideas and the introduction of stimulating resources. This was a key feature of a lesson in Year 10 when the teacher was developing the students' skill in creative writing. There seemed no end to the teacher's capacity for using reading, note-taking and the exemplification of the creative and colourful use of language. The students were totally captured by the flow and interchange of ideas and made very significant gains in their sensitivity to the subtleties of language. There were many other lessons marked with similar qualities.
18. Unsatisfactory lessons are marked by little involvement of the students in the proceedings as a result of too much direction by the teacher. These lessons are occasionally debilitated by a lack of challenge in the activities or by too slow a pace. Lessons judged to be satisfactory are weakened occasionally by an untidy finish when the teacher attempts to speak across the disorder created by students who have already decided that the lesson is finished. Weaknesses occur too, when higher-attaining students are given work that is too easy. Some teaching is weakened in English as a result of limited use of questioning to extend understanding and encourage more considered responses. There is not always enough account taken of the needs of the more able students in modern foreign languages and in music. In religious education, the more able students are occasionally given work that is too easy. Teachers sometimes overestimate the attainment of students at the end of Year 9.
19. Students are good learners. They attend to their work and generally know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. A few are less committed and

tend to settle for a modest pace to their work. Students generally build quickly on the attainment they bring to the school and are eager to succeed. Students with special educational needs, including those students with a statement of need, make good advances from their earlier levels of attainment, as a result of the teachers' sensitive response to their needs. Students who are new to English are supported well to ensure that they participate fully in lessons and make good progress in their work.

Sixth Form

20. Overall, teaching is very good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Of the lessons seen, one in twelve were excellent, a third very good, almost half good, with a few satisfactory and a very small measure of unsatisfactory teaching. The great strength of teaching in the sixth form is the breadth and depth of knowledge of the teachers. This leads to lessons that focus on essentials, but take students into increasingly more challenging engagement with their studies and encourage them to reach for the higher grades. Lessons are planned thoroughly, presenting the content in a way that is amenable to students at all levels of attainment. This helps the students to feel at ease with even the most demanding ideas. The teachers and students form very constructive relationships and respect each other's role. The key skills of communication, the application of number and information and communication technology are taught well. At the heart of the success of the best lessons is the acuity with which teachers identify and respond to individual needs. The assessment of students' progress in lessons is usually astute and is a key factor in the students' learning, providing them with clear indications of how they are getting on and of how they might redirect their efforts. Assessment is also used to very good effect in the identification of and provision for the more able students. However, there are occasions when higher-attaining students are not encouraged enough to read more extensively around the topics they study.

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

21. The quality and range of learning opportunities for students in Year 7 to 11 are satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. However, many of the timetable problems identified at that time still exist. There are problems with split classes and allocations of curriculum time to subjects. The fortnightly time-tabling across the school means that some staff see students once a fortnight and sometimes two lessons come closely together with no lesson being taught again for a fortnight. Many students have different teachers for the same subject.
22. The curriculum caters satisfactorily for the needs and aptitudes of all students and the appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. The school does much to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all students. Students, including those with special educational needs are helped well to engage fully in lessons and in the day-to-day life of the school. This is also true of students who have English as an additional language. Students who have more pronounced special educational needs are well taught and supported and make very good progress. They are particularly well catered for in the learning of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and of how to study.
23. The curriculum builds well on the very good links established with the primary schools. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory for students up to the age of 14. For older students up to the age of 16 it is good. From Year 10 onwards students are given good opportunities to have a modified curriculum matched to their respective needs and their aspirations. This includes work-related learning and a good range of

vocational courses. Across the school, appropriate schemes of work and good planning, together with good teaching, effectively support the development of the curriculum. Appropriate external examination arrangements are in place for older students, focused on GCSE and GNVQ qualifications and supported by a good range of accreditation for alternative courses.

24. The quality of the school's provision for careers and vocational education guidance, supported by the very good links and support from the local Connexions Service, ensures that students and parents, from Year 9 onwards, receive very good advice before they leave school and afterwards. The school has organised this provision very well. The students' knowledge of career options is enhanced very well through the very good range of links the school has established with local industry and commerce through programmes of work experience.
25. The school has evolved a good range of strategies for teaching literacy across the curriculum. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are not as far advanced. Subjects use information and communication technology effectively to support learning.
26. There are time-tabling problems for the teaching of the schools' personal, social and health education programme. The allocated time for its presentation and its recent implementation with no time to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness have made some teachers justifiably uneasy about its content and value. Effective use is made of outside speakers, particularly in support of the good teaching in citizenship. For example, the police and the health service are used well when drugs and sex education are covered. The school has examples of good practice from which it can build a more effectively consistent presentation across the school. For example, the teacher in a Year 10 class planned and resourced very well a stimulating lesson dealing with the physiology of the functions of the body, including health, social and moral issues.
27. The school is strongly committed to racial equality and has clear policies to ensure equality of opportunity, equal treatment and access to most parts of the curriculum. The deputy head responsible for social inclusion provides a clear focus and leadership and this ensures that positive action is taken to support the needs of disaffected students. Successful alternative strategies to teaching and learning enable disaffected students to re-integrate back in to the classroom and reduce the previously very high level of exclusions.
28. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, in which an increasing number of students participate. There is a good range of sporting events taken by members of the physical education department with a good range of opportunities to engage in inter-school competitions across a range of sports. There are school choirs and a school orchestra. Students can attend at lunchtimes and in the evening for extra art and for computer work where the teachers are available to help them as required. Drama plays an important role, supported very effectively by musical input. For example, many students during the period of inspection were very actively engaged in rehearsing for the forthcoming production of *Oliver*. Here, staff and students from the art and design department play a very effective role in costume and scenery design.
29. Areas for development in the provision for students' spiritual growth and experiences noted in the last inspection have been addressed and the provision is now good. Students are encouraged to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way in which they affect people's lives. They are encouraged to develop a sense of empathy with others when, for example, discussing the life of Anne Frank. They see the importance of concern and compassion for others through raising money for charities. The thread of spirituality runs through a number of subjects especially

religious education, where students are given space for reflection on questions such as the problem of suffering or God's interventions in the Bible narratives. In art, students are encouraged to reflect beyond the surface features of, for example, the dream paintings of Magritte and Dali. Although there is still no statutory daily act of corporate worship, the students receive positive spiritual experiences in other areas. Assemblies for each year group are held weekly and in those observed, students explore issues of deep personal concern to them.

30. Students learn to distinguish right from wrong and, in discussion, to think through the consequences of their own and others' actions, as in topics such as abortion, in religious education or underage sex in citizenship, where these issues are discussed with seriousness and sensitivity to their moral implications.
31. There are good opportunities for students to relate socially. Students often work in pairs. They participate in many activities including games, school-sponsored walks, and stage productions which reach out to the wider community. Field trips and a residential experience in Year 9 give students opportunity to work successfully as a team.
32. Students are challenged to recognise and understand their own cultural assumptions and values in many subjects such as history and art, for instance, through a visit to Rievaulx abbey. There are very productive cultural and language visits to France, Spain and Germany. The displays around the school ensure that other cultures are portrayed positively; there are examples of positive images of some minority cultures, including art from the east and Japanese culture. All students are given good opportunities to participate actively in extra-curricular activity. Students with disabilities work alongside their able-bodied peers. These positive measures enable the school to recognise the diverse cultures and the minorities represented in the school community. However, opportunities to exploit and celebrate the richness of different cultures are not evident in all subjects. Opportunities to prepare students to live in the multi-cultural society of modern Britain are missed. An example is music where there was little opportunity to experience or appreciate the musical traditions and idioms of non-western cultures.

Sixth form

33. The school offers a good variety of courses in the sixth form that meet students' individual needs, interests and career aspirations. It has been very successful in offering all students greater breadth in their studies, whilst maintaining the traditional depth and quality of A Level courses. The extension of provision of vocational courses has done much to encourage more students to stay on into the sixth form. Students are prepared well for making decisions about the courses they intend to pursue. Very good attention is given to the transition period from Year 11 to 12 through consultation evenings and individual interviews with staff. The school is socially inclusive, ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all students, whilst preserving a realistic appraisal for individual students to achieve.
34. A high proportion of Year 11 students choose to continue their studies into the sixth form as they appreciate the quality of support and encouragement provided. The school offers approximately 18 AS/A Level courses, complemented by advanced vocational courses and General National Vocational courses. A few courses are very successfully taught through video-conferencing. A significant innovation has been the provision of the opportunity for the more able and talented students to follow a Level 1 Open University course. This is one of the first such initiatives in Yorkshire. Religious education is taught through the broader post-16 programme, including educational

visits and the residential experience. The curriculum is designed and regularly reviewed to reflect the students' immediate needs and future career aspirations. The curriculum is meeting external requirements and is very responsive to local needs.

35. There are good opportunities to pursue well-organised work experience placements. The curriculum is enhanced through personal and social education and general studies. The personal education programme includes highly-focused aspects of careers guidance. General studies and the careers programme make a significant contribution to teaching the key skills of communication, the application of number and of information and communication technology. Teachers encourage students to explore the deep moral and spiritual significance of the issues they discuss. Good opportunities exist for students to accept positions of responsibility, for example, through the effective students' council as well as acting as prefects and by helping with paired reading in Years 7 to 9.
36. An extensive enrichment programme encourages students to engage in a wide range of accredited award-bearing activities. These include a first aid certificate course, a baby sitting certificate, a sports' leadership award and many others. This far-reaching programme makes a strong contribution to the students' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

37. The effective arrangements for child protection complement the very good provision for students' care, support and guidance, health and safety, which ensures that the school community learns and develops in a safe and secure environment. Parents feel that their children are in safe hands and are supported well in their work.
38. A well-informed, caring and sensitive designated teacher effectively implements the secure arrangements for child protection. He ensures purposeful leadership and effective co-ordination, which enables staff to implement child protection procedures appropriately. Governors provide training and good quality information for teachers and new staff to enable them to keep abreast of issues and to ensure that students' safety and well-being are not compromised. All known incidents of neglect and abuse are recorded, reported and thoroughly investigated. The child protection provision is supported by the very good use of specialists such as the school's educational welfare officer and other specialist agencies.
39. The provision for students' health and safety are good. The school manager provides good leadership and co-ordination and ensures the effective implementation of a very comprehensive school policy. There are regular fire drills, risk assessments of accommodation, and checks on fire equipment. The school health adviser and agencies such as the police, fire service and local authority consultants are used well. Effective procedures are in place to report, record, and monitor and investigate all accidents. All these measures ensure the safety and well-being of the school community.
40. Overall the monitoring of students' academic performance and personal development are good. The educational and personal support and guidance given to students are also good. Since the previous inspection the school has refined and implemented a detailed central record of students' progress and achievement. These approaches provide valuable information to enable departments and form tutors understand the performance of individual students and groups. They also help teachers to make comparisons between students' results in the different departments and to inform the annual department and faculty reviews.

41. In most subjects students understand and know their National Curriculum levels. Information is shared with them and often displayed in classrooms, so that they can improve their work in order to reach higher levels. Marking is used well by teachers to indicate common errors and any underachievement by students. There is inconsistency in the quality of marking across subjects and teachers. The English department makes very effective use of data from students' primary schools and from the end of Year 9 national tests, in order to set targets and thus monitor progress.
42. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development. These are very effectively implemented. Students appreciate the constructive, purposeful and trusting relationships with form tutors and the very effective advice and guidance they receive. Form tutors deal effectively with students' concerns and monitor their learning carefully, using student planners and interviews.
43. Disaffected students are very well supported by the Student Development Centre, which works effectively in discouraging and modifying anti-social behaviour and in helping students to adopt positive attitudes to learning. The work of the centre has enabled significant numbers of students to integrate back into the classroom, with the result that the overall levels of exclusion have been reduced. The centre works constructively with a number of specialist agencies to further support the learning and personal and social development of these disaffected students.
44. The school has very effective policies and procedures for monitoring and raising attendance. The school provides a welcoming and caring environment, which ensures that most students enjoy coming to school. It has an established system of incentives and rewards that are valued by the majority of students and this contributes to improved levels of attendance. The rigorous investigation and monitoring of all absence by staff and the education welfare officer further improves attendance. Most parents and students support the school's policy on attendance, but a significant number of students in Year 10 and 11 persistently arrive late for school and this affects existing levels of attendance.
45. The procedures for monitoring behaviour are good. Students are consistently encouraged to follow the school's code of conduct and behave in a disciplined and mature manner. Most staff encourage and reward good work, effort and behaviour at all key stages. The school's code of conduct is displayed in most classrooms and around the school and is used effectively to encourage positive behaviour and discipline. Inspection evidence indicates that good classroom management helps to minimise inappropriate behaviour and to ensure very good attitudes to learning, which are complemented by good behaviour and relationships.
46. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good. The anti-bullying policy, the race equality policy and the disability discrimination policy provide a solid foundation for good practice. Staff at all levels are committed to providing a safe and happy environment for learning. Staff are supported effectively should students behave inappropriately during lessons. The school takes every possible step to eliminate bullying. Teachers provide anti-bullying advice for students and ensure that parents are involved in encouraging and supporting positive attitudes and behaviour. There are effective procedures to investigate, record, monitor and report all types of prejudice and racism. These measures promote good relations between students and with teachers and prepare students for life in a culturally diverse society. However, opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity are not always taken in some subjects.

47. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant progress in the care of students and has improved the systems for raising and monitoring attendance and behaviour. It has also initiated strategies for the reintegration of disaffected students, which evidently contributes to students' welfare, safety and wellbeing.

Sixth form

Assessment

48. The school has good procedures for assessing and recording attainment and uses the information gathered very well in helping students to succeed. The students have a clear picture of how they are doing and of how to do better. Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is determined accurately, mainly on the basis of the results of GCSE examinations. Underpinning assessment procedures is a comprehensive tracking system that enables staff to identify quickly those students who are underachieving, and those students who need special help. Particular care is taken to keep track of the needs of students with special educational needs. A strength is the extent to which teachers ensure that students' levels of literacy and numeracy are at the right level to support work on their courses.

Advice, support and guidance

49. The school provides very good academic and personal guidance and support for sixth form students. In both Years 12 and 13, students meet with their tutors twice a week and follow a diverse programme that ranges from helping them to apply for university, to offering guidance about money management. During discussion, students say that they find the modules to be useful and feel that the school prepares them well for life after school.
50. Students are trusted and granted considerable autonomy in the use of their time. The school takes great care to ensure that the students work in a healthy and safe environment. Standard health and safety procedures are in place.
51. Students get clear information about their progress. In addition to their annual report and regular parents' evenings, they receive precise feedback on how they are achieving and left in no doubt about what is required in order to improve predicted grades. The accessibility of the teachers ensures that nobody is left to struggle with difficulties.
52. Links with universities, colleges of further education, training providers and employers are very good. Students acknowledge that they receive excellent guidance on the options available to them in further and higher education and training. They are confident about their prospects when they leave the sixth form.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire have reported that they are pleased with the school and the education their children receive.
54. Parents feel that teachers expect students to work hard and achieve their best and as a result they make good progress. Most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school about their concerns and questions, though a significant minority are not at ease in approaching the school with difficulties. Inspectors, whilst agreeing with parents' positive views, also addressed their concerns about the way the school works to

support their children's learning, homework and the range of activities provided for their children outside of lessons. Inspection evidence indicates that there is a good range of activities outside of lessons and these constructively support students' achievements and personal development. The provision for homework is good and much of what is provided is challenging and supports students' independence and confidence to learn outside the classroom.

55. Though most parents acknowledge their sound relationship with the school, a substantial minority feel that they do not have strong connections with what goes on in the school. Parents value the good quality information they receive including the information provided in the school newsletters, prospectus, and governors' annual report. This information is complemented by the students' annual report that is written clearly and accessibly and enables parents to follow effectively their children's progress. In most subjects targets for improvements are set and provide opportunities for parents to support their child's learning. The school prospectus, annual report from governors and the end of year students' report comply with statutory requirements. Parents are urged to monitor their child's daily progress through the homework planners and most parents use this opportunity effectively, but do not consistently use it appropriately to communicate information between the home and school. Whilst the overall channels of communication remain satisfactory, the consultation evenings are not always well attended and opportunities to communicate with staff are lost, with a consequent effect on the reporting of progress and the relationship between some parents and teachers.
56. Most parents actively support their child's schooling and comply effectively with the home/school agreement, ensuring regular and punctual attendance. They support the school's policy on behaviour and homework and very effectively support fund raising, school performances and other social and cultural events. Inspection evidence indicates that the school production of *Oliver* is a huge success and a significant number of students, teachers and parents are involved in the preparation and presentation. The impact of parents' involvement in the life of the school continues to have a positive effect on students' achievement and their personal and social development.
57. Many of the concerns in the previous report have been addressed and the school has improved the overall quality of information it provides for parents, but the information provided through consultation evenings is affected by low attendance of some parents and this affects the quantity of information for parents.

Sixth Form

58. The parents and students have a very positive view of what the sixth form provides. Parents are given a clear account of their children's progress and are closely involved in tracking their progress. They feel free to come to the school with queries or concerns.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Over the years, senior managers have made a concerted effort to create an effective and improving school and in many respects they have been successful. The headteacher, in all that he does, has the welfare of the students at heart. He has done much to develop policies and procedures that support teachers in their work. He has been successful in strengthening the monitoring of teaching in order to confront the significant underachievement identified at the previous inspection, although there remains some

lack of refinement in the observation of teaching in order to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged.

60. Leadership and management have been weakened as a result of difficulties in communication that surfaced following the ineffective introduction of the new timetabling arrangements. This exercise was conducted without sufficient awareness of its impact on teachers and the damage it caused to relationships between teachers and the senior management team. The timetabling arrangements are cumbersome and unresponsive to the needs of the curriculum, resulting in many anomalies. This weakness in communication has been recognised by all the parties involved, but has not been addressed decisively enough. The consequence is that unnecessary tensions and barriers to change exist between teachers and senior managers. These difficulties have slowed the development of a sense of common purpose across the school but have not undermined the teachers' resolve to work to the advantage of all students. This shows itself in the high proportion of good and very good teaching and in the teachers' overall high expectations for attainment. Despite the difficulties in communication, subjects are all at least well led. English, mathematics, art, history and business studies are very well led.
61. The governors are very well led in the carrying out their distinctive responsibilities and know the school well. They have put themselves in a strong position to work closely with the school in addressing the acknowledged difficulties in communications and in holding the school to account for the quality of what it provides. They have ensured that the school meets all its statutory requirements, apart from that relating to the provision of a daily act of collective worship. What is provided, however, is often inspiring. Governors are closely involved in establishing the school's priorities and in helping to shape future developments. They also keep a close eye on the standards attained.
62. A strength of the school lies in the shared desire to improve and to confront current difficulties. This was revealed clearly in the constructive way the inspection was embraced as an opportunity and not as a threat. Individual departments work well, although often in isolation from one another. The faculty structure does not serve the functions of management well in that it does not facilitate communications within the school, but is rather an additional layer of management. Members of departments are supported well by their colleagues but the school does not reveal itself as a consistently cohesive community. There has been a long history of fragile relationships in some parts of the school. These have been addressed successfully in most areas but there remain residual pockets of resistance to change and a lack of trust in senior management.
63. The school has clear aims and purposes. A particular strength is its concern for the inclusion of all students in what it offers. This shows itself particularly in the very good management and organisation of what is provided for students with special educational needs. It is revealed also in the quality of care provided for students. It shows, too, in the care taken to manage provision for students for whom English is an additional language.
64. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching have been at the heart of recent initiatives. This aspect of the school's work was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Teachers are helped to explore approaches that meet the needs of all students. The appraisal of teachers has been effective in developing their skills. Senior managers have faced up to weaknesses and taken the appropriate steps to address them. Staff new to the school are helped to settle quickly into the school's routines. They receive good guidance on standard

routines and procedures. There has been a regular programme of staff development, but none that has helped to address weaknesses in communication. The school uses appraisal and performance management well to improve teaching.

65. Financial planning is very good. It is supported by the considerable expertise of a finance officer who does excellent work in keeping track of day-to-day expenditure. He produces accurate and accessible regular reports for the governors. The system of departmental bidding for funds is fair. The budget is clearly directed towards agreed priorities for development and to meeting the school's targets for improvement. Funds designated for particular purposes are appropriately spent. This is also true of the funding and resources set aside to support students with special educational needs. The most recent auditors' report found the school's financial systems to be in good order. The few minor procedural matters raised have been addressed appropriately. The school uses new technology very well to support its work. Care is taken to invoke considerations of cost and value in all major items of expenditure. The school consistently compares what it provides with that of similar schools and seeks ways of ensuring that current costs are regularly reviewed.
66. At the time of the last inspection there were significant problems in relation to staffing. Since then the school has made very good progress in this area. There is now a close match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. Almost all teachers are appropriately qualified, with many very well qualified. In most subjects, teachers' knowledge and understanding have a very positive effect on students' standards and learning. Staffing to support students with special educational needs is good. In departments with numbers of part-time staff work is well co-ordinated to ensure progression and continuity of teaching. There are sufficient well-organised office and administrative staff to provide effective support. These members of staff provide very good support for the teachers in ensuring that standard routines are established and maintained. They are particularly good at welcoming visitors to the school. Staff who attend to the cleaning of the school and the maintenance of the grounds work hard, although litter remains a persistent problem. The catering staff take great care to ensure that students eat in a relaxed and pleasant environment.
67. Accommodation is satisfactory and some aspects of it are very good. The school is situated on a pleasant, extended site on the outskirts of Pocklington. Some external features, such as the roads and car parking facilities, have been recently improved and are very good. Generally, classrooms are satisfactory. The new block, in which religious education, history and geography are based, has very good classrooms and storage spaces which are conducive to good standards. Some science laboratories have recently been refurbished, the remaining ones being scheduled for upgrading in the near future. However, some art rooms are in different blocks within the school and this creates problems for teaching. Two art rooms in one building share the same entry door, access to the second room being directly through the first. This creates regular disturbance to lessons.
68. The music and physical education departments have substantial accommodation problems. The accommodation for music is very poor and there are clear implications for both teaching and learning. Accommodation for physical education has good features, but there are insufficient indoor spaces and those which do exist are withdrawn from use for extended periods each year in order to house examinations. There is no designated classroom for teaching examination courses in physical education.
69. Overall, there is an adequate supply of learning resources. Resources are very good in mathematics where the mechanics equipment is varied and effective, also in

information and communication technology which has a ratio of 1:5 computers to students with good provision of digital cameras, Intranet and Internet links. Provision is good in art, religious education, geography and history, satisfactory in English, modern foreign languages, citizenship and design technology. Access to information and communication technology resources is difficult in physical education, with no designated room, but overall satisfactory. Music resources are unsatisfactory in the main school. There is a lack of information and communication technology, no tuned, and very few un-tuned instruments, as well as an insufficient number of keyboards. Provision of resources in science across all years is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient texts in Years 7 to 9, and insufficient physics resources in Years 10 and 11 which has a negative effect on whole class practicals. In the sixth form there is a shortage of textbooks and capital equipment, for example, microscopes in biology and physics.

70. The learning resources centre does not work effectively as a resource for independent learning. There is a limited range of reference and non-fiction books for students to use across all years, for example, in history. Students have access to information and communication technology in the library/resource centre but the range of texts, magazines and periodicals is limited. It is not well used and does not function as a helpful resource to support learning. The arrangements for the management of the centre do not work well.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

71. The sixth form is very well led and managed. Striking features are the quality of relationships between the staff and the students and the clear sense of direction and purpose communicated by the sixth form learning co-ordinator. The current range of courses is very well organised around the students' needs and aspirations. The range of vocational courses on offer does much to encourage many students, who might otherwise leave school, to continue successfully into further and higher education. What is impressive is the extent to which new courses and new forms of curricular enrichment are investigated. It is this dynamic sense of common enterprise that permeates the life of the sixth form.
72. The governors take a keen interest in the progress of the sixth form and have supported its development fully. They have been careful to monitor the cost of the sixth form so as to ensure that it is not subsidised by the rest of the school. Very careful management of funding and resources has ensured that it remains cost effective. Demanding targets are set for improvement and are regularly exceeded.
73. Planning for the future development of the sixth form takes proper account of competing provision and reflects a strong belief in the distinctiveness of what it provides. Budgeting is carefully linked to agreed priorities. The departments work closely together to ensure that numbers following courses are viable and that students joining courses are aware of the challenges that await them.
74. The teachers who teach in the sixth form are very well qualified to do so. There are good opportunities for them to extend their skills through some well-organised in-service education. Students with special educational needs are supported effectively by appropriately qualified teachers. Resources are generally satisfactory but they are unsatisfactory in science and music. Accommodation is very good and is used well. However, accommodation for music is very poor. The learning resource centre does not function effectively as a stimulus to independent learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve communication between senior managers and staff by:

- seeking professional support in order to analyse and tackle the difficulties experienced;
- involving all the staff in seeking a solution to these difficulties;
- monitoring regularly the staff's perception of senior management.

(paragraphs 60-62 and 64)

Improve timetabling by:

- abandoning current arrangements as soon as possible,
- ensuring that the new arrangements have the support of the teachers and provide the most effective support for teaching and learning.

(paragraphs 21, 26, 121, 172, 192, 189 and 214)

Improve the arrangement for teaching personal, social and health education by:

- reconsidering the content and coherence of the course,
- ensuring that those teaching the various elements have the confidence and knowledge to do so.

(paragraph 26)

Improve the very poor accommodation and the unsatisfactory resources for music.

(paragraphs 156, 158, 160)

Take steps to develop the learning resource centre as a more effective stimulus for independent learning by:

- increasing the stock of books and improving the use of information and communication technology resources, particularly those needed to support sixth form study,
- addressing weaknesses in the management of the centre.

(paragraphs 74 and 139)

Sixth form

Ensure that the higher-attaining students are encouraged to read beyond the requirements of their courses by:

- making more imaginative use of the learning resource centre;
- putting students in touch with books that demand higher-order analytical skills.

(paragraph 20)

Other matters for the attention of the governors:

- Though the school continues to work hard on this front, there still remains a significant gap between the attainment of boys and girls.

(paragraphs 107, 123, 140 and 146)

- The higher-attaining students are occasionally given work that is too easy.

(paragraphs 18, 20, 169 and 173)

- Students' multi-cultural awareness is underdeveloped.
(paragraph 32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 -11	127
	Sixth form	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		73

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	11	34	45	31	6	0	0
Percentage	9	27	35	24	5	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	3	14	16	3	1	0	0
Percentage	8	38	43	8	3	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	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1097	182
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	47	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	24	2
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	69	2

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	7

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	112	98	210

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	78	85
	Girls	90	78	84
	Total	169	156	169
Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above	School	80 (80)	74 (76)	80 (83)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC Level 6 or above	School	41 (44)	51 (54)	43 (47)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	75	82	91
	Girls	86	87	90
	Total	161	169	181
Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above	School	77 (73)	80 (79)	86 (74)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC Level 6 or above	School	55 (35)	58 (47)	41 (41)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	108	98	206

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	49	104	104
	Girls	56	93	94
	Total	105	197	198
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	51 (59)	96 (97)	96 (100)
	National	50 (48)	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 student	School	44.2 (43.0)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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	11	90.9
	National		n/a

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	29	24	53
	Average point score per candidate	17.1	20.2	18.5
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	27	22	49	6	4	10
	Average point score per candidate	17	20.8	18.7	6	7	6.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	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

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1255	94	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	73.85
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.3

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	564

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.7
Key Stage 4	22.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	3651485
Total expenditure	3503334
Expenditure per student	2737
Balance brought forward from previous year	126783
Balance carried forward to next year	274934

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15.85
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23.55

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

12.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out

1279

Number of questionnaires returned

164

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	60	5	2	3
My child is making good progress in school.	34	51	7	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	59	13	5	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	59	19	6	2
The teaching is good.	15	59	10	4	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	43	30	11	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	27	57	11	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	29	62	6	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	9	40	35	10	6
The school is well led and managed.	12	52	12	7	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	21	59	12	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	33	23	15	22

Other issues raised by parents

There were no other issues raised.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Students learn well because of the quality of the teaching, which is good and at times very good or excellent.
- The quality of the relationships teachers have with students contributes significantly to the above average levels of attainment.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject have resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection.

Areas for development

- The inability of some boys to write fluently and accurately means they do not attain as highly as the girls.
- Opportunities are missed in some lessons to use whole class discussion to extend students' speaking and listening skills and challenge their thinking.

75. The proportion of students attaining a grade in the A*-C range in the 2001 English Language GCSE examinations was above the national average and significantly so for the girls. Nearly every student in the year was entered for the examinations and all attained a pass grade. Levels of achievement were therefore good. The results in 2002, however, were lower in terms of the number of students attaining in the A*-C grade range. This was because of a fall in the girls' standards. When these results are compared to students' levels of prior attainment, however, progress was made and achievement was satisfactory. Boys have continued to improve, although the gap between their attainment and that of the girls remains significant. The subject maintained its 100 per cent pass rate. The future publication of national comparisons for 2002 is likely to show that standards are still above average.
76. In English Literature results at the highest A*-C grades were above the national average in 2001. Boys attained in line with their national counterparts but the girls did better than their peers nationally. There was a very high entry for the examinations, much higher than the national entry, and every student obtained a grade. Students therefore progressed well and their levels of achievement were good. Results in 2002 were down on those for 2001 although all students who were entered obtained a grade and achievement was satisfactory.
77. Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average and in line with those of similar schools. They were comparable to the results in science but better than those in mathematics. This represents very good achievement, given that students' attainment on entry to the school was average. Girls attained higher standards than the boys. Results in 2002 were comparable to what was attained in 2001 and although the gap between boys' and girls' attainment of the higher Level 5 results diminished, the gap at Level 6 and above increased.
78. The standards of work seen in Year 9 are well above average and reflect the students' levels of attainment in the national tests. Levels of achievement are therefore very good. Students' extended writing is well planned and fluent and they are able to adapt their style for who they intend to read it. There remain weaknesses, however, in the writing of the less competent boys in terms of accuracy and sentence grammar. This is

an issue for the subject head to address. Students with special educational needs make very good progress in developing their writing skills. All students make use of computers for drafting and presenting their work. In Year 11 the standard of work seen is above average and levels of achievement are good. Students are able to write analytically and develop an argument, which they support with appropriate textual references. They use critical vocabulary accurately. Computers are used for research and planning as well as for improving presentation and this was seen to good effect in media studies. Word processing is used extensively and this is an improvement since the last inspection. By Year 11 the quality of the boys' written work has improved, but the gap between what they achieve and how well the girls write remains an issue. The quality of work being undertaken in media studies in Years 10 and 11 is of a high standard and students work with commitment and enthusiasm.

79. Students read well and standards are above average. Students of lesser competence make very good progress in developing this skill and by the end of Year 9 all students are able to benefit from reading a range of increasingly difficult texts. They are fluent when reading aloud and enjoy the challenge of doing so expressively to convey meaning. Students in a Year 9 lesson on the novel 'Stone Cold' by Robert Swindells were eager to share in the class reading and did so with commendable confidence and élan. The very good standards of speaking and listening are above the national average. Students have a good command of Standard English and speak confidently and fluently. They are responsive to teachers' questioning but there are occasions when they are reluctant to engage fully in whole-class discussion. In a Year 9 lesson on persuasive techniques with students of high competency, the teacher had to work hard to bring out a response. There was not the lively interchange of ideas normally seen in discussion when students are fully engaged with the subject material.
80. Students progress well in the subject because of the quality of the teaching, which is good and at times very good or excellent. The great strength in the teaching is the quality of the relationships that the teachers have established with the students and they are rewarded with their charges' very positive attitudes to the subject. As a consequence learning gains are significant. This is the case in media studies as well as English. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and the planning of lessons takes account of the needs of all groups. This inclusive approach to teaching results in good progress being made by students of all competencies and from varied backgrounds. The monitoring and assessment of students' work is very good and marking is regular and supportive and clear pointers are given on how to improve. Learning objectives are always communicated effectively and teachers demonstrate very clearly the quality of work they require from students. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson where students were able to use arresting descriptive language in their writing because the teacher had demonstrated clearly how to use vocabulary in an imaginative way. The model of what to aim for was before them as an example of good practice. The one area of teaching that needs developing is the use of questioning techniques to stimulate students to engage in class discussion. Students' thinking needs challenging through the use of more rigorous questioning which demands reflection and considered responses and which sparks argument and debate. Such lively interchange is essential if young people are to become curious and critical.
81. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of the subject provides a clear direction to the work of her colleagues and leads a united and committed team. Her induction of staff new to the department is undertaken supportively and with sensitivity and as a result they quickly make an impact on the quality of students' learning. She has established a working culture where the sharing of good practice is routine and where teachers are encouraged to visit each other's classrooms and to discuss how teaching could be improved. Systems are in place for

the monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and the department's database is used to pick up underachievement. The work that the subject has undertaken to develop literacy as part of the national initiative to raise standards has brought improvements in students' use of language and sentence structures. There have been significant improvements since the time of the last inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is now well above average and the good progress made in Years 10 and 11 results in standards which are now in line with those of similar schools. The use of computer technology in teaching is well established. There was some unsatisfactory teaching at the time of the last inspection. This is no longer the case. The very best teaching seen was outstanding. An area for development is to work with the library to build up a collection of stimulating and challenging books to foster wide reading, particularly among the more competent students. The department is aware of this and is preparing to play a pivotal role in this whole school development.

82. The subject has the capacity to sustain the improving trend and raise standards further because the teachers are self critical and supportive of each other and they constantly seek ways to improve the quality of their work.

Literacy

83. The raising of standards of literacy has been a priority for the school over the last eighteen months and continues to be a focus for development. Training days have been held on improving students' non-fiction writing and on the use of the library and learning centre for research purposes. Good practice is shared informally and at staff meetings and the literacy co-ordinator meets with subject leaders to monitor progress in implementing the literacy policy. Literacy progress units are organised and delivered by six trained teaching assistants and those Year 7 students who entered the school with Level 3 English have received support at lunch times on the organisation of their writing. An information retrieval unit was planned and taught because of its use in a range of subjects. The literacy summer school organised by the literacy co-ordinator and the head of the communications faculty was of great benefit to students.
84. There are many opportunities for extended writing in geography, together with research tasks that lead to writing for specific purposes and audiences. In history, presentations and debates offer structured speaking and listening opportunities. Discussions occur in science on moral issues arising in biology and students are encouraged to report on experiments or predict outcomes. Such activities build confidence and allow for fluent expression. Mathematical investigations call for students to describe, explain and analyse and this improves their communication skills. The constant reinforcement of grammar and grammatical terms in modern foreign languages reinforces literacy and the use of grammar elsewhere. The areas for future development in many subject areas include extending opportunities for discussion and group talk, and further work on the teaching of different types of text.
85. Standards of literacy across the main school and in the sixth form are good. Students are confident and articulate when speaking and they listen well, showing respect for each other's contributions. Reading standards are high and students are able to benefit from the range of texts they encounter in subject areas. Standards of writing are also high, although there are some boys who underachieve in their application of this skill. This is being addressed in English by less literature-based teaching and by the selection of written tasks which are more appropriate for them.
86. The challenge facing the school is to keep the raising of literacy standards a high priority and to improve further on what is already good practice.

Drama

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

Strengths

- The standards attained in GCSE examinations are above average.
- Students have positive attitudes to the subject because of the strong working relationships they have with their teachers.
- The subject has a high profile in the school and is well supported by senior management.

Areas for development

- There is not a consistent approach in the selection of units of work for teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9.

87. The proportion of students attaining a grade in the A*-C range in the 2001 GCSE examinations was above average. They therefore achieved well, particularly the girls, who obtained higher standards than the boys. There were more students entered for the subject's examinations than is the case nationally and all obtained a grade. Results in 2002 were also high and the publication of national comparative information is likely to show that standards remain above average.
88. The standards of work seen during the course of the inspection are also above average. Students show understanding of sensitive issues and have the ability to communicate those perceptions clearly and with feeling in a variety of forms. Students evaluate their own work and that of their peers and so are beginning to take greater control of their own learning. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson where there was good use of evaluative language and a lively interchange of ideas. Students were keen to suggest improvements and there was an eagerness to refine performance. This resulted in work of a high standard, which was challenging and enjoyable. Because students explore a wide range of moral, social and cultural issues the subject contributes significantly to their personal and social development.
89. Students achieve well in drama because teaching is good and at times very good. Subject knowledge is secure and lessons are carefully planned and taught in a lively, stimulating way. There is a good balance between teachers' explanation, group work, presentations and evaluations and as a result students are exposed to a progressively challenging sequence of activities. The result is work of considerable merit. The schemes of work for Years 7, 8 and 9 need revising to ensure that students are taught a common curriculum. The subject head is aware of this and it is a priority for development.
90. The newly appointed head of the subject brings extensive experience of the theatre to bear on his work as a teacher and is providing clear direction to the work of his colleagues. He has already identified what needs doing to raise standards further and is well supported in this by a committed and able team. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities to extend students' knowledge and enjoyment of the subject. The annual school production is a focal point in the school's calendar and provides exciting opportunities for many young people to collaborate in a creative enterprise. Students also benefit from theatre visits, workshops and festivals. The subject has access to good accommodation but is in need of lighting and sound resources to expand the technical side of the curriculum. At the present time the dated equipment that is available has to be borrowed and does not always serve the needs of the curriculum.

91. The subject is well placed to improve further on this provision because of the commitment of the staff and the energetic leadership of the head of subject.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of the provision is good.

Strengths

- Results in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are consistently above national averages.
- Achievement is good for students at all levels, particularly younger students with special educational needs.
- Teaching, overall, is good. It is often very good or excellent, incorporating the best features of the national strategy.
- The attitudes of students overall are good. Many students take high levels of responsibility for their own learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for development

- The use of information and communications technology is not as effective as other resources.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not challenge students enough.

92. In 2002, unconfirmed results attained by students in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were above the national average. This reflected the performance of students in 2001. Whilst these results were well below those of similar schools they represent good achievement relative to standards on entry to the school in Year 7. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Students in mathematics perform marginally less well than in English and science.
93. In 2002, unconfirmed GCSE results gained by students were above the national average, as they had been in 2001. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. Students regularly perform better in mathematics than in most other subjects in the school. This represents good achievement relative to prior attainment.
94. In the current Year 9, standards seen in work during the inspection are at least above and often well above what could have been expected relative to prior attainment for most students. The best students solve pairs of equations with ease, by graphical and algebraic methods and apply algebraic techniques accurately and confidently to real life situations. In a very good lesson, these students rose to the high level of challenge set by the teacher and extended their learning to its full potential by appreciating situations where no solutions exist.
95. The weakest students, most of these having special educational needs, attain standards in geometry that compare to average standards nationally. They learn and apply methods accurately and confidently and construct lines according to given conditions. The very good use of resources, including high quality board compass and various paper sizes, together with the individual attention offered by the teacher and assistant in this small group are major factors in the students very good progress. Average-attaining students, however, made no more than satisfactory progress using information and communication technology to assist with trial and improvement methods in algebra. A significant number has not grasped the fundamentals of the

method prior to using the equipment and time is wasted explaining this on an individual basis during the lesson.

96. Standards exceed national expectations at the end of Year 9. In Years 7 and 8, lower-attaining students, including all those with special educational needs, achieve standards well above what could be expected, because of the imaginative and consistently very good quality teaching in these classes. In Year 11, overall, students attain above average standards. The best students show high quality skills in investigative work. They are systematic in this and the majority use tables and graphs meaningfully to detect patterns. In a very good lesson reinforcing such skills, the students also showed confidence and accuracy in generalising such patterns into algebraic formulae. The teacher used the idea of painting a cube and splitting it into different numbers of smaller cubes, requiring students to calculate how many faces in the smaller cubes will be painted. By offering equipment to experiment and encouraging discussion, the students learned very well.
97. Students reach above average standards for their ages in Year 11. Most lower-attaining students in Year 11 make good progress and achieve more than could be expected relative to their performance in Year 9 national tests. They use tally charts to count word lengths in magazine and newspaper articles accurately, then compare graphs and statistics meaningfully to make comparisons. For the very lowest-attaining students, however, all with special educational needs, progress is satisfactory in Year 11. Throughout Year 10, students at all levels progress well. The introduction of the modular course and the more generous allocation of teaching assistants, to support the consistently good quality teaching which impressively embraces suitable features of the national strategy for mathematics, all play a significant part in this.
98. Overall, teaching is good. It is often very good or excellent. It is occasionally just satisfactory and rarely unsatisfactory. The best teaching ensures challenge at the correct level because of accurate assessment using good questioning. It encourages and provides active participation by students at all levels, including those with English as an additional language. The most impressive teaching of all results in students making mature decisions about their own learning and provides imaginative homework. Teachers use resources well, especially the high quality transparencies on overhead projectors to introduce topics and demonstrate teaching points. They use a good mix of textbook, worksheet and paired activities to motivate students. Teachers almost always structure the learning processes effectively, at a challenging pace and always maintain effective relationships with students.
99. In all lessons, literacy is used well, to focus students' learning. This is a particularly strong feature of lessons with younger students, particularly those with special educational needs where attention to individual learning needs is extremely well developed and teachers show outstanding skills in this respect, even when not supported by the very effective assistants.
100. In the less effective and one unsatisfactory lesson seen, teachers either underestimated the level of challenge needed or assumed too much prior learning. Lessons were also less effective where students were expected to respond to oral input and questioning for too long. Occasionally, because many classes are split between two teachers, a lack of continuity reduces the effectiveness of their learning. However, teachers work very hard and usually successfully to overcome this.
101. Students have a good attitude to learning mathematics. In many instances, such as with high attaining students in Year 9, they choose to do extension work, such as applying what they know about the geometry of right-angled triangles to finding areas

of hexagons, or finding out when pairs of equations have no common solutions. Lower-attaining students in Year 10, determined to achieve higher grades in their first module test, worked at a furious pace through tests of their choice to allow them to tick off their progress on a chart profiling their achievement displayed on a classroom wall.

102. Students discuss mathematics well amongst themselves. They are polite, well behaved and prepared for school with their own basic equipment. They are keen to demonstrate their ideas on the board and all persevere well. Only when students are required to learn at the wrong level, or the pace of the lesson drops, are they less than keen on mathematics, and even then they are well behaved.
103. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department is a very good teacher who leads by example. He is passionate about mathematics and puts into practice within the limits imposed by timetabling difficulties, the belief that all students deserve the best opportunities to achieve their potential. The principles of the mathematics strand of the national strategy lie at the heart of the schemes of work for all students. Teachers are deployed effectively, good assessment systems are in place and all teachers have their own teaching room, allowing them to display work and information of good quality, but more importantly prepare effectively on a lesson by lesson basis. Problems with blinds make learning more difficult in some rooms. Morale is good, with the department office a genuine communal area. The department is a good team, with very effective delegation and other very hard working teachers. Whilst the range of computer software is too narrow to enhance learning sufficiently, a wide range of other resources are readily available to all teachers and are used well, including graphic calculators.
104. Overall, the department has shown good improvement since the previous inspection, mainly because of the good progress now made in Years 10 and 11 and the improvement in teaching.
105. Numeracy across the curriculum is now satisfactory overall, and is improving. The numeracy co-ordinator has worked hard to provide guidance for all subject areas in order to standardise techniques involving numeracy, such as graph drawing, other data handling and the setting out of calculations. There are good examples of numeracy in art, design and technology, science and health and social care. There is extremely good use of numeracy in history, where students extract data about ages at death from registers, convert this to graphs and use this to complete the task. Contributions in other subjects, however, are not enhancing work in those curriculum areas.

SCIENCE

Overall, the provision in Science is **good**.

Strengths

- There is a strong staff who communicate well and share good practice to improve their teaching.
- The department is well managed.
- The quality of GCSE coursework has improved and contributes much to improved grades in the GCSE examinations.
- Most students have very positive attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement

- There is a shortage of resources across the school, which restricts practical and learning opportunities.
- Technical support is insufficient in a department of this size.

106. On entry to the school in 2001 the attainment of a significant majority of students was average with very few showing above average attainment. Results in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds in 2001 were well above national average levels and below those of similar schools. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The proportion of students achieving a Level 5 and above dropped slightly in 2002, though these results have yet to be confirmed. The results have improved since the previous inspection.
107. GCSE examination results in 2001 were above the national average, but below those of similar schools. The girls did significantly better than the boys, particularly in the higher grades of A* and A. In 2002 the proportion of students achieving an A*-C grade rose slightly with more boys achieving these grades. The results have improved since the previous inspection, but there has been some fluctuation due to cohort differences.
108. In work seen during the inspection, standards were above national expectations by Year 9. Literacy skills have improved and students use them well in reading and writing, particularly when writing up experiments. The use of writing frames enhances their presentation. Science is making a strong contribution to improving literacy skills, ensuring that students pay due care to spelling and punctuation
109. In work seen during the inspection, standards of achievement of Year 11 students were above average. Students' practical skills have improved and they deal confidently with a range of investigations. The quality of coursework has improved because of the use of word processing has improved presentation. Planning, observation and analysis are strong features of their coursework, but evaluation is weak. A Year 10 class of average prior attainers carried out an experiment well to burn a small mass of hay and test the ash for alkalis, showing a good grasp of the basic ideas involved. Students in a Year 10 class of above average prior attainment carried out an experiment to good effect to test the solubility of some foods and relate their results clearly to the principles of digestion.
110. All students make good progress from Year 7 to 11. In a Year 7 class, students with special educational needs carried out an experiment accurately to change starch into sugar because the teacher gave very clear precise instructions and provided suitable apparatus. In a Year 8 class, students with average prior attainment rapidly understood the phases of the moon and how eclipses are formed: this resulted from the excellent use of resources by the teacher, and the continual assessment of their knowledge with perceptive questions.
111. An extremely challenging group of students in a Year 11 class showed interest in observing a demonstration of a reaction between heated copper and air. They completed the results and did appropriate calculations because the teacher monitored their progress and supported them well. In a Year 9 class, there was a good example when above average-attaining students gave answers on the refraction of light at a level above what would be expected. This was because of the incisive questioning by the teacher.
112. A rapid acquisition of knowledge and skills as a result of very good pace and productivity are strong features in the best learning. Students work well individually and in groups. They have a very positive attitude to the subject and enjoy their practical work. The department has worked very hard in raising standards in literacy. Students with English as an additional language demonstrate an understanding of science and a clarity of expression equivalent to those of their peers.

113. Teaching is good throughout the school and is a major strength of the department. There has been considerable instability in staffing over the last five years due to long-term illness. Only in September 2002 was there a fully stable team of teachers led by a permanent head of department. Teachers plan the lessons very well and use a wide range of strategies to promote successful learning. They share good practice and this is helping to raise standards. Good management of students is a feature of most lessons, but a few students have poor listening skills and there is some low-level disruption in some lessons. Expectations of the students are high and teachers praise and encourage the generally good behaviour and attitude of the students. While objectives are not always shared with the students, teachers do, however, sum up at the end of lessons with question and answers to check how much the students have learned. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 there are insufficient textbooks to support students' learning. There is also a shortage of resources in physics to support practical work.
114. There are too few technicians to support teaching. The learning support assistants give valuable support to students with special educational needs. Individual education plans are used well and the literacy targets are sometimes reinforced with subject-specific targets. Homework is given regularly throughout the school, but marking is inconsistent. Procedures for assessing students' attainment are good. There is a comprehensive analysis of attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and the results contribute well to identifying ways for students to improve.
115. Leadership and management of the department are good and the head of department has a very clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards even further. He has only been in post for 11 months, but has already welded together a strong and effective team of highly committed teachers. As a result of this, teaching has improved throughout the department. Resources for information and communication technology have improved since the previous inspection with good use of Internet retrieval, spreadsheets and word processing, but there is currently no data logging because of the lack of compatible hardware. Improvements since the previous inspection include much improved staffing, and all staff are well qualified. Schemes of work are now more helpful.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Standards across the school are above average.
- Students achieve very well by the end of Years 9 and 11 and have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent.
- Supported by good planning, there is a very good progression of work across the school matched to the students' discerned needs, their interests and their ages.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject promote an excellent shared commitment amongst staff to improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Students in Years 7 and 8 do not always provide evaluations of their work in their sketchbooks.
- Timetabling arrangements are unsatisfactory.

116. On entry to the school many students have limited experiences of the subject and standards are average. By the end of Year 9, the majority of students, both boys and girls, are attaining above average standards and achieve very well. At present the school enters Year 11 students for GCSE examinations and has started a new GNVQ examination with Year 10. Due to the very good subject expertise of the teachers and the overall very good quality of teaching, students attain above average standards and achieve very well. Results in the 2001 GCSE examination were average. In the yet unconfirmed 2002 examinations results are above average. Due to the higher number of girls that choose to study the subject girls do better than boys. The present students studying the GNVQ examination are well above average. Since the last inspection, standards for students by the end of Years 9 and 11 have been maintained at above average levels.
117. Inspection evidence indicates standards over time are fully supported by good planning matched to a scheme of work and resources that address each project being studied very thoroughly. Students are confident in the use of a wide range of media and materials, covering two and three dimensions. Their work in progress is carefully matched to their ages and interests and is supported very thoroughly with a clear analysis and knowledge of artists they have studied to develop and influence their style. They demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of how artists use colour, line and shape and interpretation of the very wide range of artists studied. For example, students in Year 8 showed an excellent interpretation of their studies of artists such as Claude Monet, Paul Klee, and of modern-day garden designers. They developed their own painted pictures of gardens and collages interpreting the colour, style and design of gardens.
118. Students show a very good command of technique. This was illustrated by students in Year 10 completing an observational pencil drawing very successfully. Supported by the very good illustration by the teacher the students showed a very good interpretation of the use of pencil drawing to get depth, shape and space in their pictures. Standards were further raised through the teacher's use of contrasting classroom displays of already completed pieces of work, giving a very thorough analysis of their style and how it was developed. The very good quality of displays around the school of both two- and three-dimensional work further celebrates the students' successes and illustrates the very wide range of media used and accurate range of techniques acquired.
119. The students' literacy standards are well supported by the use of key words and students writing evaluations of their work as they progress. Younger students do not develop this as well in their sketchbooks. All students, as part of the very good use of homework, are encouraged to research the work of artists, giving clear explanations for the artists' work and how it relates to their own. Despite the limited resources in the department, good use is made of information and communication technology. Students are confident with the use of the Internet and research artists' work very well.
120. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. Of the lessons seen, a third were excellent. The good planning supports these very high standards. The teachers work very well as a team and are very well managed by the head of department. The teachers work very hard to overcome staff absences and support any supply teacher very well. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson where the students, by studying a chosen artist, made their own booklets on the artist for the use of young students. As a result of the advice and support given, the careful selection of resources by the head of department and the individual teachers' skills a teacher of English was able to deliver a very good lesson. This type of collaborative work has done much to maintain above average standards during a time of staffing turbulence.

121. Students show very good attitudes to the subject. They work with high levels of enthusiasm, motivation and interest. They apply themselves well to their studies, working at a very good rate to gain very good levels of skill and understanding. There is an excellent application of the school's policy for inclusion in the department. Students and parents justifiably talk highly of the provision the department makes. A very high number of former students successfully follow careers in art and design. These include the fine arts, sculpture, fashion, jewellery, and theatre design and computer animation.
122. The department is very well led and given a clear direction to its work. A good range of contacts exists with artists from outside the school. During the period of inspection a visiting artist gave a very good demonstration of a quick-firing technique. This gave the opportunity for students to fire their recently glazed clay creations to good effect. The school's timetabling arrangements mean that there are split classes. To meet the students' needs the teachers give freely of their non-contact time.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject.
- Attainment is above average.
- Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good.
- There is a good range of opportunities for students to work in resistant and compliant materials.

Areas for development

- There is not enough technical support in food and textiles technology.

123. Students join the school with average skills in design and technology. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 students are at the level expected for their age. Across the subject girls perform significantly better than boys. Girls generally take greater care in both practical and written tasks, which is reflected in the larger number of higher levels achieved by the end of Year 9.
124. Overall attainment at the age of 16 was above the national average in 2001. Although the unconfirmed figures for 2002 show a fall in the number of higher grades, students did better than expected when taking account of their prior attainment. Although the gap between boys and girls was reduced in 2002, it remains significant. In food technology, textiles and graphic products, results were above the national average. However, the number of higher grades in resistant materials and systems and control fell short of the national figures. Overall students exceeded expectations, performing better in design and technology than in many other subjects in the school.
125. Students in their first three years in the school make average progress. Those identified with special educational needs are given additional support from the teacher so that they make progress at a similar rate. Students who are seen as more able by the school achieve equally well, as do those with English as an additional language. All students have the chance to work in a good range of materials. They develop their design skills to the expected level, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Practical skills improve over the three years with some higher-attaining students making products with a high quality of accuracy and finish.

126. Most students, as a result of good teaching, achieve better than expected, given the level of their prior attainment. They build on the firm foundation of skills and knowledge established during the first three years. Their understanding of the design process is evident in the way they produce specifications to meet the need of the end user. Students have a good basic knowledge of the range of materials, combining them in innovative ways in order to realise final designs. For instance, one student chose to use wood and aluminium to create an original compact disc storage rack. Students in food technology have a good understanding of production methods and the need to follow rules of hygiene when simulating an industrial production process. This team-based activity not only enhanced their subject knowledge, but also gave them full responsibility for the success of the finished product. The emphasis that the department places on high quality outcomes was reflected in the products seen.
127. Teaching is good. Teachers are generally well prepared and as a result of good relationships with students, enthusiasm and good subject knowledge, provide stimulating lessons. Students make good use of information and communication technology, including digital photography. The good and very good lessons have rigour, humour and ensure the full participation of the students. Good pace and challenge combine to achieve good learning. Where lessons are less effective, students do not get enough opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers provide information without allowing students to contribute or reflect on what is being taught. On occasions, the common tasks do not extend the more capable students. Overall, however, students are positive about the subject and appreciate the quality of the teaching they receive. They find teachers approachable and prepared to give freely of their time to improve their chances of success. The hard work and good management in the department has served to lessen the impact of the inequitable curriculum provision in the first three years. Students, particularly in Years 7 and 8, have in some instances four or five different teachers, some of whom are not working in their subject specialism. This affects the quality and range of students' practical experiences.
128. The leadership and management of the department are good. Staff are committed, supportive and work well as a team. Accommodation is satisfactory though two new food technology rooms have been refurbished. Resources are adequate to meet curriculum needs but computer-aided manufacturing equipment is limited. The department has the benefit of good technical support but the amount of time available for food and textiles is insufficient to match demand fully, which results in additional pressures on teachers. The department has moved forward satisfactorily since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good: lessons are well structured and the use of a wide range of teaching strategies motivates students and develops their thinking skills
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and co-operate well with one another
- The subject is well led and managed and there is increased collaborative working by staff and the sharing of good practice

Areas for improvement

- GCSE examination results are not yet good enough
- Information collected from assessments is not being used fully to plan future learning
- National Curriculum criteria are not always applied accurately in the assessment of students' levels at the end of Year 9.

129. Overall attainment is satisfactory. Whilst results in previous teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below national expectations, work seen during the inspection is now above average and students are making good progress. The recent appointment of teachers to the department who are sharing good practice and using a wide range of successful teaching methods has contributed significantly to this improvement. Students' performance in the 2001 GCSE examination was below average and school data for 2002 indicates that results were also below national averages. However, in work seen during the inspection students' attainment in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and sometimes good. Both boys and girls are achieving well in relation to their previous attainment. This recent improvement in both attainment and student progress has been assisted by the introduction of a new GCSE course and a more focused approach to coursework. Students have a clear understanding of the requirements of the course and know what they need to do to achieve good grades in the examination.
130. In work seen during the inspection, Year 7 students interpret map symbols well and use co-ordinates accurately. Students in Year 8 make good use of information and communications technology to produce a well-researched and well-presented study of Niagara Falls. In a very good lesson in Year 9, students clearly understood the causes and consequences of earthquakes. They put information in order of priority very effectively to solve the mystery of who died in an earthquake and why. All students use the technical vocabulary of the subject with confidence. Students in Year 10 construct and interpret graphs accurately and make sound comparisons between data sets. Students' factual writing in Year 11 is usually good and they analyse and evaluate information well. For example, in good coursework about the Central Business District of York students had evaluated their hypotheses and reached well-reasoned and accurate conclusions about their validity.
131. Overall the standard of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and usually it is good. Teachers' planning is thorough and they share learning objectives with students who then know exactly what to concentrate on. Well-produced, varied and carefully selected resources motivate students and maintain their interest. For example, the attention of Year 7 students was immediately gained by the teacher wearing a jester's hat and carrying a large 'talking stick' to represent his role as leader of the tribe in a lesson on the sites of early settlements. By using a variety of teaching methods teachers successfully challenge students and extend their ability to think for themselves. Students co-operate well with each other when working in groups and share their ideas freely whilst also listening carefully to the opinions of others. For

example, they were able to arrive at a class decision about where to put their settlement through persuasive reasoning and discussion.

132. Leadership and management of the department are good and have contributed to the recent improvement in students' progress and attainment. The collaborative working of a team of committed teachers has ensured that the standard of teaching is now good and is a strength of the department. Teaching is monitored effectively. The monitoring of learning is less well developed and the use of assessment information to plan learning is underdeveloped. Some teachers are not fully secure in applying National Curriculum criteria in the assessment of students' levels in Year 9 which has resulted in the levels given being too low.
133. Since the last inspection the subject has improved on many fronts. A settled team of specialist subject teachers and new accommodation have considerably enhanced students' learning. The department has the capacity and imagination to raise the profile of geography within the school and improve further.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above the national average.
- Very good teaching results in all students making very good progress, whatever their prior level of attainment.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good.
- Regular assessment of the progress made by students enables teachers to monitor learning regularly.
- Very good leadership and management which enables year on year improvements in teaching and learning to take place for the benefit of all students.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough access to information and communication technology.

134. Standards of work seen during the inspection are very good and well above the national average. These standards are achieved because teaching is very good. Students' achievements in relation to standards on entry to the school are very good. Their very good attitudes to work coupled with the teachers' skills in creatively using all available resources in lessons leads the quality of learning in history to be very good. All students, including those identified with having a special educational need, make very good progress as they move through the school.
135. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that students' attainment is well above the national average. A significant and growing number of students choose to study history in Years 10 and 11 and their progress continues to be very good. GCSE results for 2001 were well above the national average in relation to the performance of both boys and girls, although boys achieved fewer grades in the A*-C range than the girls. The unconfirmed results for 2002 indicate that results are in line with the national average but significantly above the school average. At the time of the last inspection results at GCSE were above the national average with girls significantly outperforming boys. Over the last two years the department been successful in improving the performance of boys and the difference in the 2002 GCSE results is minimal.

136. In lessons, all students speak with confidence. They enjoy and respond very well to the challenging range of questions asked of them with the result that they gain a very broad and detailed understanding of the topic they are studying. All students are skilled at using a wide range of resources in the classroom, which helps to deepen their understanding of why events took place and the effect they had on the lives of people living both in Britain and other parts of the world. In one Year 10 class students were using five different resources to reconstruct for themselves a picture of life in a nineteenth century workhouse. The teacher's initiative in introducing into the lesson the exact daily rations of gruel, brown bread and cheese that the workers were given made this lesson more realistic. From the beginning of Year 7 students are expected to use the information gained from using a variety of sources to produce extended pieces of written work, which include well-reasoned arguments based on historical fact.
137. At the time of the last inspection students' literacy skills were being very well developed and whenever possible they were provided with the opportunity to develop their skills of numeracy. A very effective feature of all lessons observed during the current inspection were the wide range of opportunities given to the students to develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. This focus is a major contributory factor to the high standards achieved by all students at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Numeracy skills are being developed where opportunities arise. The approach to citizenship is developing and a number of units of work throughout Years 7 to 11 provide opportunities for students to explore systems of government and understand their civic responsibilities. Planning for the use of information and communication technology in lessons is good; however, at present neither students or staff has access to computers in the classrooms. As a result, learning opportunities are restricted. The department's contribution to the social, moral, cultural and spiritual aspects of students' learning is good.
138. The very good standards achieved by all students can be directly attributed to the very good and imaginative teaching they receive in class and the work they are regularly expected to complete at home. Teaching overall throughout the department is very good, with some that is excellent. In all lessons, there are strong relationships between the teachers and their classes. In lessons where teaching is good or better, expectations are high, planning is thorough and students are set a wide range of different tasks to maintain their interest and extend their knowledge. Other striking features include the very good use of questioning, which really challenges thinking, and the passion for the subject displayed by the teacher. Written work is marked regularly and the progress made by each student assessed and recorded each half term. Students know how well they are doing in terms of National Curriculum and GCSE requirements.
139. Leadership and management are very good. The department development plan places a high priority on raising attainment, particularly for the higher-ability students in Years 7 to Year 9. Very good teamwork results in a shared commitment to improvement. Effective communication and good documentation are key factors contributing to the success of this subject area. Accommodation is very good and is a key factor in contributing to the positive learning environment for staff and students. Resources in the school learning resource centre for students' use are inadequate and the department has therefore wisely targeted spending on purchasing high quality resources for use in the classroom. Progress since the last inspection is very good

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured with good support given by teachers during practical work.
- Students in Years 7 and 8 are particularly well behaved and show positive attitudes to the subject.
- Many teachers use information and communication technology in teaching their subject and there are excellent links with history (Year 7) and geography (Year 8).
- There is a high ratio of computers to students.
- The subject is well led and a range of learning resources has been developed over the past two years.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough.
- Boys underachieve with a widening gap emerging by the age of 16.
- The needs of the every pupil are not being met: there is often insufficient challenge for the most able and least able students.
- Some information and communication technology rooms lack ventilation, natural light and are too cramped.

140. By the end of Year 9 standards of all students, including those with special education needs, are good when compared to national standards. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Girls perform better than boys at the higher levels. Standards at GCSE have improved significantly since the last inspection. In the 2001 GCSE results, half the students taking the examination achieved a higher grade and all students taking the examination, including those with special education needs, achieved a pass grade; however, this was still below average. The unconfirmed results from 2002 are below average. Overall, girls achieve better than boys at GCSE at the higher grades.

141. Teachers' assessment overestimates students' achievement in Year 9. The majority of students gain good basic skills in lessons. Students process information from the Internet confidently. The most able can annotate their booklets to explain the techniques they have used to produce computer-based work. All students evaluate their work critically. In Year 8, students can conduct effectively a multimedia presentation linked to their work in geography. They use the Internet for information well in the form of text and images that they combine to create their presentation. Some of the students animate their presentations imaginatively. In Year 9, students can create a spreadsheet and use it well.

142. Standards reached by 16 years are below average. Results from recent GCSE examinations were also below average. The unconfirmed results of the 2002 examinations show candidates achieving half a grade lower than expectations. Attainment of students in some lessons continues to be less than satisfactory. In one Year 10 lesson students spent up to half a lesson keying data into a spreadsheet. Year 10 students struggled to understand the system design process. They completed the task mechanistically without understanding what they were doing. In Year 11 students can satisfactorily plan a project. Those who approached the task through a project relevant to them had a better understanding of the task.

143. Students in all years have a good attitude to learning and are good at helping and co-operating with one another and with their teachers. All students, including those with special educational needs, use equipment safely. They are responsible and keen to use computers. Many of the students have home computers. Despite this, homework does not feature as a normal part of many lessons. This denies students the opportunity to develop work independently.
144. Overall teaching is good. The common units of work used in Key Stage 3 help to ensure a satisfactory basic entitlement for all students. Many other subjects use information and communication technology well in lessons. The achievement of students is monitored carefully on the teacher Intranet although not enough use is made of the data to inform future planning. Lessons begin promptly, usually with a statement of learning intentions. Most lessons have good pace. Few allow for the needs of the most able and the least able students.
145. The department is well managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator is responsible for many of the improvements noted since the last inspection. There is a high ratio of computers to students. Much of the equipment is new. The school has wisely started to plan for replacement equipment. Poor ventilation, lack of natural light and cramped conditions affects concentration in some rooms. The students benefit from a well-managed Intranet and broadband. Improvements since the last inspection have been good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' oral fluency in foreign languages is good.
- Students' have a good understanding of how they can improve their performance.
- The setting of clear lesson objectives leads to well-focused lessons.
- The additional support for students' learning through booklets, displays and feedback is good.

Areas for development

- There is not enough use made of the foreign language as the normal means of classroom communication.
- The range of teaching techniques to increase students' motivation and involvement is too narrow.
- There is not enough challenge for the more able and less able students, particularly boys.
- Students do not engage in enough writing activities in order to consolidate their learning.

146. The attainment of 14 year-old students in languages is similar to that of students nationally. Standards achieved by girls are significantly better than those of boys. Most students make satisfactory progress but some higher- and lower-attaining boys achieve less well.
147. In 2001 at GCSE, in French and Spanish, the percentage of students attaining grades A*-C was a little below the national average. Between the ages of 14 and 16, however, students made less progress than those in other schools. This was particularly the case in Spanish. In German, the percentage of students achieving A*-C was well below national figures. This is explained by more lower-attaining students entering the

examination than is usual. When this is taken into account progress made was satisfactory. Girls' achievement continued to be much better than that of boys.

148. Unconfirmed results in 2002 demonstrate similar patterns of attainment and overall progress. Variations between languages again reflect the different ability ranges of students entered. This explains the GCSE Spanish results, which were well below national pass rates. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the attainment of 16 year-old students is improving and moving closer to national expectations. Significant problems of staffing, teachers' absence and the organisation of the languages curriculum adversely affected standards in 2001 – 2002. Good progress is now being made in resolving these issues with positive influences on students' performance throughout the school.
149. In French and Spanish the best attainment of students aged 14 is in listening and reading. Better progress is made in acquiring new vocabulary and writing short phrases than in writing at greater length. In some lessons, students are given a wide range of activity to practise their spoken language, resulting in their growing confidence in talking about their daily routines, hobbies and interests. In other lessons, average and lower-attaining students are hesitant. This is because of a lack of sufficient opportunities to practise in pairs and groups so that they all have the chance to speak.
150. In a Year 9 Spanish lesson more able students recognised and understood a variety of tenses referring to past and future events. As a result of careful guidance by their teacher they picked out eight details of four people's daily routines, which demonstrated good listening skills. In a French lesson, students read short extracts about a far from ideal holiday recognising a range of different tenses and referring to past events. Students with special educational needs and lower-attaining students benefit from good individual support and monitoring by their teachers. In a Year 7 Spanish group of these students this resulted in students achieving good knowledge of the names of buildings in a town. Many, however, were hesitant in asking and giving directions around a town because they were given activities that were too complicated for them.
151. In lessons the attainment of most students aged 16 is close to the national expectation. A number of higher and lower attainers, however, do not progress as well as they should. This is attributable to a lack of challenge in some classes and to the difficulties in the staffing of modern languages in the last two years. The areas of best achievement are similar to those of younger students. In a Year 11 lesson students listened to recordings of role plays and GCSE oral questions. More able students gave a range of replies with good comprehension. They achieved a satisfactory understanding of topics such as education and future careers. In a Spanish lesson students made short, accurate comparisons between English and Spanish schools. They recognised past tenses and more able students described past activities such as what they did at Christmas. In a Year 10 German lesson, higher attainers understood and wrote short personal CV's and portraits, but needed support from their textbooks. Further opportunities for them to practice oral German in pairs or groups would have improved their hesitancy in speaking and in saying their telephone numbers in German, for example. Although generally co-operative in their behaviour, students' attitudes were passive as most questions and answers only involved one student at a time.
152. Good achievement was seen in a class of lower-attaining students, also in German. In this lesson a wide range of different activities were used to teach the past tense. Pictures, guessing games, individual white boards and grids were all used to give maximum variety of practice and to include students of all abilities. As a result, by the end of the class nearly all students wrote statements about daily routines in the past

tense with good accuracy. Attention and motivation were maintained throughout the lesson because students were involved in all activities.

153. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Some good and a few very good lessons were also seen. Teachers have expert knowledge and understanding of their subject and are fluent speakers of their first foreign language. They plan carefully and make their lesson objectives clear to students. Homework is set regularly and is usually marked in sufficient detail to help students learn from their mistakes. Teachers ensure that students know how well they are doing in relation to the levels of the National Curriculum, help them to evaluate their own progress and set clear targets for improvement. They provide a good range of additional support such as vocabulary booklets, displays on classroom walls and feedback to students.
154. In several lessons students' achievement is held back by the limited range of learning activities offered to them. There are too few opportunities for more intensive individual practice. Teachers use English too often as the language of the classroom.
155. Modern language teachers benefit from good leadership. They are supported and guided by good documentation and schemes of work. There is a sound understanding of the key issues and priorities facing the subject area. This, combined with professional self-evaluation and team working, ensures that the quality of work in modern languages continues to improve. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection with the resolution of many of the key issues identified. Further work is still required to improve boys' attainment and the quality of students' oral and written work.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision for music is **good**

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers show considerable commitment to their work, despite the very poor accommodation.
- Students at the age of 14 know and understand their National Curriculum levels.
- Leadership and management are good.
- There is a good variety and range of extra-curricular activities

Areas for Improvement

- Students have a limited understanding of music from other cultures
- Accommodation is very poor
- Resources for music making are unsatisfactory

156. Standards attained by students at the age of 14 according to assessments done by teachers are well above average, with girls attaining considerably higher than boys. However, the work seen in lessons and from student notebooks indicate that these assessments are over-generous and overall attainment is in line with expectations. There is also little difference between boys' and girls' attainment; often boys are more willing to express opinions and to answer questions in lessons. Students in Year 7 have often had limited prior experience of music. Despite the limitations and inadequacies of accommodation and resources that dramatically restrict the variety and range of practical work that can be undertaken, students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of Year 9 they are identify,

understand and play chord sequences and to improvise melodic patterns over a ground bass. Sometimes there are insufficient appropriate activities to challenge the more able students. As a result these students do not always fulfil their potential in lessons.

157. Standards attained by students at the age of 16 are average. In recent years results indicate a decline in the percentage of students achieving A*-C grades. In 2002 there was a reduction in the numbers of students entered for music GCSE, with girls attaining better than boys, a reversal of the situation in previous years. Prior to 2002 and again in the current Years 10 and 11, numbers of students who choose to study music are much higher. A careful analysis of the reasons for a decline in attainment has been undertaken. This has identified the need for a systematic approach to the teaching of composition. As a result, students in Year 10 have a clear understanding of the relationships between keys and how to structure their pieces. When they compose they think carefully about combining different instruments in order to create the intended effect. All students in Years 10 and 11 discuss their work enthusiastically, giving reasons for their choices. At present, however, many students are still unable to notate their work or extend melodic work successfully.
158. Teaching is good. During the inspection there were examples of very good teaching especially in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are often taught with energy and enthusiasm and this, combined with the musical knowledge of the staff, ensures that students want to learn. Teaching was less effective when the focus and pace of the lesson was not maintained. Explanations were insufficient which meant that students were unable to proceed effectively with their written task later in the lesson. Students' work is regularly assessed against national data and good work rewarded. The introduction of students' self-assessment methods at the end of pieces of work gives them responsibility for reflecting upon and evaluating their work then setting themselves targets in order to improve their musical skills. Marking is very thorough and students in Years 10 and 11 receive very good written feedback about their coursework. This gives clear and direct ways for them in order to improve their work. Because of the insufficient resources for information and communication technology, opportunities are given to Year 11 students to attend extra sessions at lunchtime and after school in order to complete coursework. Relationships in the classroom are good with staff demonstrating a positive, supportive and caring approach to the students. The dire state of the accommodation and lack of resources severely limits the amount of practical work done by all students. Rooms are cramped, become stuffy and there is no soundproofing. There is nowhere for students to work in small groups and as a result students are unable to improve their ensemble skills, which are lower than expected. During the inspection rain came through the ceiling in a teaching room leading to students' learning being affected as they avoided the buckets on the floor.
159. Strengths of the department are the attitudes students have to their lessons and the opportunities afforded to them for music making at other times. The department is a hive of activity at lunchtimes where students can practise instruments and also participate in the wide range and variety of extra curricular groups. The repertoire played reflects a variety of styles and is carefully chosen to ensure all students can contribute to the performance. The commitment students have to these ensembles is good. Music makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social development, but their cultural development is limited, as there is insufficient study of music from other cultures.
160. The leadership and management of the department are good. Teamwork is very good; with high musical standards promoted by all staff including the visiting instrumental teachers. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have worked hard to improve the underachievement noted during the last

inspection resulting in improved standards by students at the age of 14. The established good practice has been built upon and this has led to the development and use of new systems for monitoring the progress made by students. Accommodation is now very poor; lessons often taught in adverse conditions. Resources are unsatisfactory. There are no storage facilities for students' instruments and there is insufficient information and communication technology equipment. The department has no recording equipment and this means that students, especially in Years 10 and 11, suffer, as they are unable to record their performances regularly in order to make improvements. The significant weaknesses in accommodation and resources are inhibiting the department from making further progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students.
- The department is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Indoor accommodation is too limited.
- Some marking lacks sufficient detail to help improve written work.

161. By the end of Year 11 standards in physical education are satisfactory although considerably more boys than girls take the examination each year. For five years the number of students gaining good passes at GCSE has been in line with the national average and their written work, particularly in projects, is often very good. They make very effective use of information and communication technology. Project work reflects students' capabilities to take responsibility for their work and the more able of them clearly do so. Occasionally students are asked to copy information instead of being encouraged to research and record it, and this results in a lack of originality. Standards of spelling and grammar are good.
162. By the end of Year 9 boys and girls reach good standards in most practical aspects of the subject. Girls' performances in gymnastics are very good, indeed, some have excellent skills which are executed in combination to build high quality sequences. However, boys' standards in gymnastics are below expectations with only a few able to control weight on their arms. The great majority of boys lack awareness of the crucial importance of tension and quality in the performance of gymnastics. Football skills are good with most boys striving successfully to improve. Year 9 girls work very well to produce good standards of creative dance. Boys and girls with special educational needs perform well and make similar progress to other students.
163. The overall standard of teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully and identify clear objectives, sharing them with students at the beginnings of lessons. Occasionally when teaching is very good or even excellent, students are given the chance to plan, evaluate and discuss their work. These opportunities are always accepted and result in practical and theory work of higher standards. This was seen in two gymnastics lessons.
164. Leadership and management are good. Achievements and examination results are carefully reviewed and appropriate actions taken to enhance them. Improvement has been good since the previous inspection. The curriculum has been modified to meet

the requirements of the National Curriculum and most other areas identified for improvement have been addressed. However, many students, boys and girls, are still unable to discuss the effects of exercise on the cardiovascular system, for example.

165. Accommodation is of mixed quality. The fields, gymnasium and sports hall are of good standard and conducive to good attainment, but indoor spaces are too limited. Each year, for prolonged periods, these facilities are withdrawn for examinations and this creates problems in meeting practical requirements of the curriculum. There is no designated classroom in which to teach examination courses and causes difficulties for staff. Access to information and communication technology is difficult and the department does not have networked technology.
166. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Boys, girls and students with special educational needs take part enthusiastically although, in some lessons, too many older girls fail to participate without giving acceptable reasons.
167. Physical education staff try hard to provide a programme of extra-curricular activities, but are unable to provide opportunities for competition in some major games. There is an annual outdoor pursuits course in the Yorkshire Dales for all Year 9 students. Students speak highly of this experience.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The provision for religious education is **good**.

Strengths

- Students' progress and attainment is good.
- Well-planned teaching results in good learning.
- The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for development

- Timetabling arrangements in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory.
- The higher-attaining students are occasionally given work that does not challenge them, especially in Years 7 to 9.

168. Standards on joining the school are broadly average. By the end of Year 9, students have made good progress and standards of attainment are at the national average. All students in Years 10 and 11 study the short course GCSE and last year's results are well above national average. The unconfirmed results from 2002 point to a significant improvement on the previous year's results. Girls did significantly better than boys.
169. In Years 7 to 9 students make good progress. They recognise religious symbols, understand their significance, use religious language and terms and explore other religions beside Christianity, for example, Sikhism and Judaism. They reflect on the connection between belief and behaviour, for instance the belief in the sanctity of life and how we treat others using examples from the holocaust experience. They have extended periods of reflection using a lighted candle as focus. Work is carefully planned to match individual needs, and more individual support is given to lower-attaining students. Higher-attaining students are not challenged enough to think further and explain the reasons for their answers. All are helped to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of key words and concepts, which are displayed around the classroom and rehearsed from time to time.

170. In Years 10 and 11 they continue to make good progress so that by the end of Year 11 they can explain confidently the different ways that faith groups express their beliefs, for example, a study of Christian and Muslim approaches to marriage. They respond to a range of contemporary moral issues using their own and other's experience. Students of all abilities are included in discussion and their contribution valued, although higher-attaining students take the lead in developing arguments more readily. A group of 16 students have elected to study for the full course at GCSE in their own time and the teacher's, after school and high grades are predicted.
171. Since the last inspection the department has addressed most, although not all, concerns. The department has taken the lead in students' spiritual development across the school. Although there is still no statutory daily act of corporate worship, the weekly assemblies for year groups are of high quality. The spiritual dimension has been tracked and highlighted in the day-to-day experience of the students, for example, in art and English amongst other subjects. The lack of proper provision on the timetable for religious education in Years 10 and 11 has still not been rectified despite having been an issue in two previous inspections. Lessons effectively amount to one a fortnight as the timetable is shared with health and sex education. This has a negative affect on learning, particularly on that of boys, who appear less organised than the girls in remembering their work, looking after their books and completing assignments during the comparatively long spans of non contact with the teacher. This is borne out by often minimal or missing work in the boys' books scrutinised and the underachievement of boys compared to girls at GCSE. The teachers are to be commended on the high results they achieve for their students, despite this disheartening timetabling arrangement.
172. Teaching in religious education is good in all years and is a key factor in the good progress made by students. Staff are secure in their subject knowledge including the two non-specialist teachers observed, and lesson planning is good. Marking of written work is sometimes not helpful in improving learning. Generally, time and resources are used well, lessons have a crisp pace and include many opportunities for students to put forward their own views. The type of questioning does not always challenge the higher attainers, the teacher often settling for the first answer without probing further and getting students to elaborate on the reasons for their reply. Lessons are organised well and teachers use a good range of strategies to inform and encourage reflection, for instance, using candles, religious images, video extracts or the ingredients for a Passover meal which the students taste. There are high expectations of behaviour and of students' response and participation.
173. Learning is good because the students are given time to evaluate their progress, using marking schemes and levels at the end of each topic. They show interest in their work and make considerable intellectual effort to come to grips with key ideas. Teachers are rigorous in their use of accurate religious terminology and this helps students to recognise the similarities and differences in world religions. Students are encouraged to work independently especially in Years 10 and 11.
174. The department is well managed and there is a clear and shared vision for the development of the subject. Attainment and progress are encouraged by a well-developed scheme of work. Resources are good. Classroom displays are good because they reinforce students' learning and affirm their achievements. Visits are arranged in year groups to a synagogue, a mosque and a nearby Buddhist centre with follow up work and reflection which contributes significantly to understanding and tolerance of multicultural differences.

CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **good**

Strengths

- There is a well-planned programme involving the whole school.
- Teaching is good with secure grasp of subject.
- The subject is being established on existing good practice.

Areas for improvement

- There is a need for greater clarification and refinement of initial assessment procedures.
- The contribution of individual subjects is not sufficiently monitored
- There is insufficient identification of practical opportunities for student responsibility.

175. This subject is taught according to the requirements of the National Curriculum and built into the existing personal, social and health education programme. Its discreteness has been understood and emphasised, as have the practical skills of enquiry and debate.

176. Due to the recent introduction of this subject there are no results to indicate levels of attainment, achievement or progress in learning. The earliest end of Year 9 evaluations of students' attainment will be available in 2004.

177. The assessment procedure adopted by the school is clearly based on a student portfolio. This will record the skills they acquire and the experiences they have of responsible action and participation as members of the school community and beyond. Students questioned are aware that their progress is being monitored, together with their own self-evaluations. Parents have been informed that they will receive an end-of-year report. These procedures are to be refined as the subject is developed.

178. During the week of inspection it was impossible, due to timetabling, to see more than a handful of lessons and these were in Year 10. The standard of teaching overall was very good. The teachers had secure knowledge of the topics covered and the lessons were well planned but not over directed. For instance this was seen in a lesson where a debate was set up entirely by the students democratically deciding a topic, electing a chair and running proceedings with minimal but telling prompts from the teacher. The use of questions probed students' understanding, challenging their thinking and involving intellectual effort. As a result their confidence and skill in marshalling arguments grew in a short space of time. The pace of these lessons was crisp. The students were clear about what they were doing and why and were given space at the end of the lesson to evaluate their success and identify areas for improvement. All students were included and involved. Lower-attaining students made valued verbal contributions and both boys and girls equally held the floor. Another lesson on democracy used information and communication technology to log on to an opinion poll. Students' response when questioned was that the dramatically different topics had given them a heightened awareness of issues that they previously perceived as irrelevant to them.

179. Progress in the lessons was very good. Students demonstrated good skills of debate and evaluation of ideas. A class debating fox hunting had come prepared with marshalled arguments, which they had researched on the Internet as homework. This helped them to learn better by focusing quickly on the topic to be discussed. Speeches given by the same group showed they had researched well. Students learned how to propose and second and all exercised their listening and analytical skills so that they

could counter-argue effectively. Another group considering ethical problems and reflecting on personal responsibility, came up against the complexities of legal and moral issues and suggested responsible action.

180. The contribution of citizenship to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is positive and very evident. Literacy is supported in the attention to correct definition of terms, for example, voluntary euthanasia; most students understood the significance of statistics used as support for an opinion.
181. The development of the programme in citizenship is well led. A good foundation has been laid and good practice has begun in this subject.

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

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.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	12	92		42		5.7	
Biology	13	85		31		4.6	
Chemistry	12	83		25		4.3	
German	3	100		33		4.7	
Design	12	91.7		25		4.0	
English literature	28	100		36		6.2	
French	9	100		45		6.7	
General studies	46	98		41		6.4	
Geography	8	88		25		4.5	
History	22	91		32		5.6	
Mathematics	25	64		28		3.8	
Media Studies	20	100		55		7.2	
Music	6	67		0		3.3	
Performance studies	14	100		43		6.9	
Physical education	5	100		20		5.2	
Physics	13	92		31		4.9	
Psychology	14	64		14		3.2	
Spanish	1	100		0		4.0	

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	14	100	96	43	46	6.4	6.6
Biology	8	75	88	25	34	4.8	5.3
Business studies	9	89	92	33	32	5.1	5.5
Chemistry	6	100	90	50	43	6.3	5.9
German	7	100	91	43	40	5.1	5.8
Design	11	100	91	27	30	5.6	5.4
English literature	11	100	95	55	30	6.3	5.9

Geography	5	100	92	60	38	6.4	5.7
General studies	33	85	85	36	30	5.3	5.5
History	17	100	88	41	35	6.2	5.5
Mathematics	18	94	87	56	43	6.6	5.8
Media studies	7	100		14		3.7	
Physical education	11	100	92	18	25	4.0	5.1
Physics	2	100	88	100	40	10.0	5.7
Psychology	5	80		20		4.4	
AVCE Business studies	7						
AVCE ICT	2						

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies (GNVQ Intermediate)	2	100		100		0	
ICT (GNVQ Intermediate)	5	100		0		0	
Health and social care (GNVQ Intermediate)	3	100		67		0	
Art and design (GNVQ Intermediate)	6	100		0		0	
Health and social care (GNVQ Foundation)	1	100		100		0	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

182. Mathematics and biology formed the focus of the inspection. Physics and chemistry were also sampled. In chemistry, examination results were well above average in 2001 and in 2002 two-thirds of students attained a higher grade. Only one student entered A Level physics in 2001, but in 2002 numbers entering increased considerably, with all students attaining a pass grade, a third of these at the high grades.

183. In the one chemistry lesson sampled, teaching was very good; students learnt very well because the lesson was structured and well prepared. Different methods and resources were used to challenge and develop students' understanding of how to perform complex calculations relating to energy changes in a chemical reaction. In the practical physics lesson sampled, teaching was also very good. The teacher's very secure subject knowledge meant he could help students' understanding of theory based on a range of different practical experiments. However, the learning of a few students was affected by insufficient resources, which prevented them from learning as well as others.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Results in GCE A Level examinations consistently show good achievement relative to GCSE performance.
- Teaching is very good, with a strong focus on individual needs, enabling students to develop impressively throughout the duration of the two year course.
- Students are enthusiastic about mathematics.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for development

- The use of information and communication technology is not sufficiently developed to enhance learning as much as other resources.
- Timetabling arrangements hinder the progress of students studying further mathematics.

184. Unconfirmed results in 2002 showed that the proportion of students gaining the higher grades A/B were broadly in line with the national average and the proportion of pass grades A-E above the national average. This reflected the performance of 2001, but the number of candidates in 2002 was significantly more, representing a proportion of the original main school cohort, higher than in schools nationally. Impressively, about one-third of the passes are in further mathematics. In the last three years, there have been about twice as many male as female entries. This is in line with the national trend. Results, overall, consistently represent good progress relative to GCSE performance.

185. The standard of work of current students is also above national expectation. In Year 13, students are now achieving well compared to predictions based on GCSE results. In the lessons seen, they were doing very well as a result of sharply focused teaching that challenged them individually at demanding levels. When studying aspects of pure mathematics, students in Year 13 demonstrated a good knowledge of how to apply formulae connecting two different angles to calculate an unknown angle. Whilst a significant proportion found difficulty in the first year of the course, they now show much more confidence with algebra and trigonometric formulae. In statistics, students again worked with growing confidence, in designated pairs, to talk through and demonstrate their prepared solutions of homework problems. The class then followed this up with good quality discussion, indicative of sound understanding about the merits of the solution in relation to the statistical techniques required.

186. Many students in Year 12 studied mathematics at the intermediate tier of GCSE in Year 11. However, they are already making significant strides in the AS course. In an outstanding lesson in mechanics, they followed intensely the practical demonstration and investigation using pulleys and weights, measuring the angles of the string compared to the weights, to develop a high level of understanding of the relationships between tensions in string and forces due to gravity. In co-ordinate geometry, they also demonstrate a good understanding of how the equations describing straight lines drawn on a grid related to the diagrams. They apply techniques quickly and correctly from different starting points to find the equations of such lines.

187. A minority of students in both Year 12 and Year 13 are studying further mathematics. As the initial whole school timetable does not allow for this, the students attend other mathematics lessons where possible. For example, those doing statistics, sit in on mechanics lessons, so that they are with a teacher and work largely independently, but

may call upon the teacher if necessary. These students are making good progress, because of their high ability levels, determination and the extra efforts of the teachers. However, progress in the extra work required for further mathematics is not at the same high rate as their achievement in the standard mathematics course.

188. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan very thoroughly how to bring out the best in all students. They assess their students very well and provide plenty of opportunities for them to attempt questions from past examination papers and others of a similar nature to achieve their individual potential. Lessons are lively. Discussion is instigated well by all teachers, who are confident in their own subject knowledge. Homework is targeted very effectively at particular developmental skills. Whilst overhead transparencies are always used effectively, and resources are used exceptionally well in mechanics as the need arises, the use of computer software is negligible. There is little to support the very good use students make of calculators in statistics and graph work.
189. Students are very enthusiastic about mathematics. In lessons, this is more openly seen from female students, but male students have an admirable more quiet determination. Students support each other extremely well and take high levels of responsibility for their own learning both inside and outside the classroom. The relationships are so very good, that all feel able to ask questions openly. This helps promote deep understanding. Many students, particularly some in Year 13, have needed to overcome disappointing results in Year 12, similar to those seen nationally as a result of the new post-16 arrangements. However, because of their perseverance, and skilful, patient nurturing of students' abilities by the teachers, they are now developing very well. Weaker students in Year 12 know they are valued and are heartened by this. They are showing very good levels of justified confidence already within the first term of their course. All students work very hard.
190. Leadership and management are very good. The team of teachers is strong, provides very good support, and is extremely well deployed within the restrictions imposed by the whole school timetable. The very clear direction provided by the head of department has allowed the more gifted students to study further mathematics, whilst ensuring that all students of mathematics are very well served by the department. The department has made good improvement since the previous inspection.
191. Teachers in the department make a significant contribution to the development of key skills for all students in the sixth form. Teachers with responsibility posts within the department prepare and teach effectively the 'Application of Number' courses at Levels 2 and 3.

SCIENCES

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching by subject specialists is very good, resulting in very good learning.
- Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students appreciate the work staff do on their behalf.
- Examination results are improving

What could be improved

- The quality and quantity of resources available to support the teaching of the subject are unsatisfactory.

192. Up to 2001, results in A Level biology were well below national averages and for several years significantly below other subjects in the school. In 2001 results improved and were in line with those nationally, with a third of students attaining the higher grades but not all a pass grade. There has been no pattern in the attainment of boys and girls. In 2002, all students passed but with slightly fewer attaining the higher grades.
193. Results at AS Level are improving with more students attaining both a pass grade or the higher grades in 2002 than in the previous year. The number choosing the subject has been low resulting in one group of under ten students but is now increasing. Most students complete both years of the course.
194. The standard of work of current students is average overall but often above average. Students make good progress during the course given their starting points at GCSE. Above average attainment by Year 13 students is demonstrated as they correctly put in order the steps in the chemical transmission of nerve impulses. Students in Year 12, in the first term of their course, reach average standards, as they identify different parts of the ultramicroscopic structure of cells and perform complex experiments using enzymes. Coursework elements done both as fieldwork and in school show a range of attainment from good to satisfactory, with several students attaining higher levels of data collection, analysis and evaluation of their results.
195. In the last 18 months there has been a change in the staff teaching the subject. This is having a positive effect on the standards attained by students. Both staff are experienced subject specialists and the standard of teaching is very good overall in both years. Teachers use a variety of methods to stimulate and interest students and this results in good or very good learning. The use of practical activities or the acting out of the stages in the complex chemical transmission in nerve fibres are both used very effectively to help students develop their understanding of theoretical concepts. Teachers set a good pace and fill the hour sessions with different activities to make students think and develop their ideas. Often examination questions are used either within lessons or set for homework. Marking of students' work is thorough and informative so students know how to improve. Whilst the best use is made of the available resources, there is a shortage of suitable textbooks and computers required to enhance the teaching of the subject.
196. All students demonstrate very good application to work and relationships are very good. Files are well kept and organised. Students are very appreciative of the

dedication and commitment of the teaching staff and the feedback and help they receive.

197. The subject is well co-ordinated by the deputy head-teacher who has recently taken on the role. He works well with the other member of staff who is part time. Both are extremely committed to raising the standard and profile of the subject. However, the subject is short of high quality resources such as good microscopes, computers, remote data-loggers, all needed to teach the subject to high level. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

198. The focus was on product design but food technology and textiles technology were also sampled. In both subjects the standard of work seen was good. Results in AS food technology were better than the unconfirmed national figures in 2002. Textiles technology has only become available since September 2002. In the lessons observed, teaching was very good, supporting students' learning very well. In food technology students showed a very good grasp of product analyses. Year 12 textiles students showed a good awareness of production methods and associated costs.
199. The main emphasis was on resistant materials and graphics as the option of textiles was only introduced in September of 2002. In the lessons observed teaching was very good, supporting students' learning effectively. Students taking food technology had a very good grasp of product analysis.

Design and technology

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

Strengths

- Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject.
- There are good relationships both between students and with teachers.
- Students' ability to work independently contributes to their good achievement.

Areas for improvement

- The range of opportunities for students to develop their technological skills is limited.
- Students do not get enough opportunities to participate in lessons.
- Computer-aided design facilities are limited.

200. Attainment in GCE A Level examinations in 2001 was marginally above the national averages. The performance shown in the unconfirmed results for 2002 shows an upward trend. In relation to their GCSE results students did well.
201. The standard of work of current students is above average. In the lessons seen students are achieving well as a result of the good teaching, which challenges them and guides their learning. Students studying resistant materials and those doing graphics make very good use of information and communication technology to test their designs. The majority of students show a good degree of competence with computer-aided design, which they are capable of using independently. Their understanding of materials and their properties helps the realisation of designs. This applies equally to the students in the early stages of their work in textiles. Year 12 students are developing their research and design skills as expected at this early stage in their course. Their research into learning aids has moved them on from GCSE. They recognise the importance of understanding end user requirements and have linked

good research evidence to design development. Evaluation of the research instruments used is less secure in some of the Year 12 students on the course.

202. Students learn well because teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which is combined well with a very good understanding of the examination specification. As a result, students are given clear guidance and prepared effectively for all assessed components. Teachers make good use of demonstrations, helping students to consolidate their learning and experience the application of theory covered in lessons. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subject does at times result in over-direction and prevents students from testing their knowledge and understanding through discussion with peers and teachers.
203. Thorough assessment of students' coursework ensures that they are clear about their performance and what is needed to improve it further. Students are very positive about the course and the support they receive from teachers. They are appreciative of the time, additional to normal lessons, that teachers are prepared to give in order for them to reach their full potential.
204. The good leadership and management of the department are a major factor in the successful teaching and learning. Members of the department are committed to continual improvement. The introduction of food technology and the textiles dimension is indicative of the desire to provide for the needs of students entering the sixth form. Through the regular analysis of student performance, adjustments are made to the teaching programmes. Resources are adequate, although computer-aided manufacturing facilities are limited for the more advanced aspects of the curriculum. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

BUSINESS

The focus of the inspection was on the A Level business course and the Advanced GNVQ in business.

Business Studies

Overall provision for business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Attainment by both advanced and intermediate students is above national expectations.
- Teaching is enhanced by the very good procedures for assessment, marking and tracking of students' progress.
- Information and communications technology is used effectively by teachers as an administration tool, and by students for research and for the presentation of their work.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work lack detail of a range of teaching and learning styles to meet the needs of different abilities of students.
- Business links are few and there is insufficient access to real life business contexts.

205. Standards overall are good. In GCE A Level business studies, and in the Advanced GNVQ, the 2001 examination results are above national averages and represent good achievement. The unconfirmed results for 2002 show continuing high standards of

attainment in the new advanced vocational business. In the intermediate GNVQ, 2002 results show an improvement on the previous year with all students attaining at least a pass, and a significant minority of them achieve a merit grade.

206. The standards achieved by current Year 13 students are good, with the majority of students on track to meet their predicted grades in both examination and coursework. In their coursework, students make good progress, and they applied contingency plans well when they met unforeseen difficulties in their planning for a sponsored walk. Students use knowledge of motivation theory and human resources well to show the impact of training and other methods that a company adopts to motivate its employees. Year 12 students are developing as good independent learners. They use the Internet to research different products and marketing techniques. However, there is a lack of planned access to local business for primary research into real world contexts. Work is presented to a high standard using information and communication technology.
207. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are deployed well in the delivery of different units and students' learning is enhanced from the specialists' subject knowledge. Theory is developed systematically, for example in a lesson on double-entry book-keeping the teacher re-worked examples in a practical activity to ensure students consolidated their learning. There are very good procedures for assessment and marking of student work. An interim assessment of each student's work is made which is then discussed with the student. Marking provides positive encouragement, it shows students what has been achieved and clearly explains how work can be improved in order to raise attainment. Students thus benefit from both written and verbal guidance. Teaching is less effective when the learning objectives are not clearly explained and developed, and there is no final review of learning at the end of lessons.
208. Students have positive attitudes to business studies, they are keen to do well, and motivated by access to the assessment criteria which they use to identify tasks and present work.
209. Leadership and management are very good. There is an effective introduction to new students, and special arrangements ensure that students with time-tabling difficulties have access to business studies. The procedures for assessment and tracking students' progress are very good. Schemes of work as yet lack detail on a wide range of teaching and learning methods, especially to meet the needs of the differing abilities of students. Access to information and communication technology by staff and students is good. The department has improved well over the last few years.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The three, six and 12 unit Vocational Certificates of Education were inspected. In most classes there were students from different courses. Additionally, one Year 12 key skills group was inspected. They are reported under the same heading.

Overall provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Much of the teaching is good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities that develop skills and build knowledge and understanding.
- Attainment in lessons is good.
- Students are extremely confident, competent and independent users of information and communication technology.
- The departmental monitoring system is very effective.
- Students speak very highly of the school's facilities and the quality of teaching.

Areas for development

- The timetable arrangements adversely affect the attainment of a small number of students.
- Some opportunities for higher order work are missed.
- Some information and communications technology rooms lack ventilation, natural light and are too cramped.

210. The results of the 2001 examinations were unsatisfactory. A very small number of candidates, predominantly boys, took post-16 vocational qualification courses. The highest-achieving student was a girl. The unconfirmed results of 2002 are significantly better with a higher number of entries and above average results.

211. The current work of students is very good, especially at Year 13, where the group is all boys. These Year 13 students are particularly skilled in the use of information and communication technology. In one lesson they were working together scripting a multimedia presentation. They worked co-operatively, taking advantage of individual strengths to ensure that the work produced was of a high standard. The opportunity to use moving images or sound was missed. A hearing-impaired student played a full and active part in the group work. In a different lesson they were working independently, designing a compact disk case. The students were secure in their subject knowledge and had well-developed skills and understanding which supported the development of some excellent designs. The most able had produced a very complex design with graphics and text. Students were well aware of differences between software packages and understood how these might be appropriate in different circumstances. They were able to switch between packages. Students clearly enjoyed their lessons and were aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

212. In Year 12 more girls take the subject. Girls particularly speak about the value of the key skills course. As with all current students girls are confident, competent and independent users of information and communication technology. Year 12 students are aware of the need to annotate their work, to be concise in their reporting and produce work for different audiences. They are encouraged to be independent users of information and communication technology. They can make and justify choices of software packages. Students can create appropriate design specifications for a spreadsheet. They understand the need to identify fully the requirements of the task before they begin their practical work. Task sheets support learning and students are

allowed to progress at their own pace. Deadlines are clearly prescribed. In the key skills lesson, students at both Levels 2 and 3 are taught together. They appreciate the relevance of information and communication technology and are particularly keen to learn about applications that they do not meet through their other subjects. They can create a database to their own specifications. Two students with English as an additional language work very successfully as part of the key skills group. As a result of the timetable some students miss a third of their lessons.

213. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and are extremely effective when working with individual students. In some lessons where the work is teacher-directed, teaching is less effective. In these lessons insufficient opportunity is given for all students to take part. The opportunity for students to develop their own learning and to participate fully is missed. Monitoring and assessment is a particularly strong feature of all lessons. Teachers see students individually and together they assess the quality of the work. This encourages students to assess their work themselves. All assessment is clearly linked to the examination board's criteria that the students fully understand. An excellent tracking system which is available on-line, allows students to monitor their progress over time and assess the impact of future marks on the final grade. These features of monitoring and assessment have the potential to have a very positive effect on student grades.
214. There have been significant improvements in leadership and management since the last inspection and it is now good. The number of students now taking the subject post-16 has increased markedly. The on-line monitoring and assessment system is an excellent example of improvement introduced in the last two years. All students speak particularly highly of the facilities, the way they are given independent use of them and the way they are taught. This contributes to a very mature relationship between staff and students and encourages students to be responsible for their own progress. There is also open access to equipment for any member of the school's sixth form. This supports the overall philosophy of inclusiveness in the school. An overseas student uses the Internet on a weekly basis to read news bulletins in her own language. She also e-mails her parents who still live in her country of birth.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The only subject seen in this area was health and social care.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Overall provision **is good**.

Strengths

- Attainment at advanced, intermediate and foundation levels is above national averages.
- Students benefit from the range of teacher expertise and knowledge, as well as planning for key skills development.
- Teaching and the high quality of marking and assessment helps build student confidence, and learning is improved.
- The very good range of outside agencies and work experience extends teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- Every teacher of health and social care is part-time to the subject, and there are insufficient planned opportunities to meet together to share good practice and to meet training needs.
- Schemes of work are inconsistent in the planning of teaching and learning activities to fully support new teachers.

215. Standards of attainment are good. In 2000, in the last cohort to take advanced GNVQ, all students attained at least pass standard, with some merit and some distinction; the average points were well above national expectations, and well above predictions based on their prior attainment. In 2002, unconfirmed results show that the high pass rates have been maintained in the new advanced vocational course. In 2001 and in 2002, all intermediate and foundation level students achieved pass or merit level, which is well above expectations based on previous attainment.
216. In lessons, advanced students in Year 13 were too passive when listening to each other's presentations and a visiting speaker; however, in a follow-up revision lesson they all readily took part, showing confidence and strong knowledge of psychology. In portfolio work, students describe different methods of communication, and are starting to analyse their findings on different forms of communication following a visit to a local nursery. Year 12 advanced students are learning how different groups of people are affected by barriers to access of the National Health Service. They used textbooks to provide a theoretical understanding, and then carried out research on the Internet for up-to-date developments. Intermediate and foundation students took on the role of a health care adviser to offer positive encouragement to a friend in order to prevent long-term dietary and health problems, and give high quality verbal presentations to their peers.
217. Overall, teaching is good. All teachers are either part-time or have responsibilities in other subjects, thus the range of subject expertise, including psychology, sociology, biology, and health care provides for a broad knowledge base which meets the needs of students with different interests. Learning objectives are shared, and this provides a focus for review at the end of lessons to consolidate learning. Relationships between teachers and their students, and between students, are very good. As a result of thorough marking of work, teachers give positive encouragement to students and there is a clear indication of what has been achieved, and what can be done to improve further. Teaching is less effective when there is insufficient interaction with students who listen but do not respond positively and lessons are not adapted accordingly.
218. Health and social care teachers receive positive support from the head of faculty. Although teachers are part-time there is a strong commitment to high standards. However, the lack of planned meetings to share good practice, or to meet training needs of new teachers, is unsatisfactory. Schemes of work vary in the presentation of teaching and learning methodologies, and teachers do not benefit from the knowledge of others when tackling a new unit. There is very good use of outside agencies to support both teaching and learning with this rapidly changing subject. Students benefit from work experience, and from opportunities to carry out primary research into real world activities, which helps them understand the diversity of health and social care contexts.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

219. No subject in this area formed the focus of the inspection. Art and design, music and the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (performing arts) were sampled. Students in A Level art and design in 2001 achieved average levels of attainment. In the unconfirmed 2002 results they achieved at well above average levels of attainment. The trend over time shows achievement at above average levels of attainment. Achievement is supported overall by very good teaching with input matched very well to the individual needs of the students. As a result of this, a large number of students go to study art very successfully at universities and institutes of higher education.

220. At present music is only taught in Year 12. Results attained by students in 2002 at A2 were satisfactory but their results for performance were lower than expected. Teaching is very good, generating an effective learning environment where students demonstrate critical reflection and evaluation of their work. Continual, probing questioning ensures that students can give clear explanations and musical reasons for their work.
221. Students study an AVCE course in performing arts which is taught in conjunction with staff at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. One excellent lesson was observed where students reviewed the progress of their project work. Discussion was wide ranging and mature, covering different facets of stagecraft, during which time the teacher guided and ensured that all areas were considered in depth. This ensured that all students were responsible for their own independent learning and understanding of the tasks involved.

HUMANITIES

222. History was the focus subject. Geography was also sampled. In geography, a small group of students gained above average examination results in 2001. School data indicates that results in 2002 were in line with national averages. Two lessons were observed and both were good. In one lesson, challenging questioning by the teacher led to students developing their answers in depth and showing a very secure understanding of the relative merits of different methods of waste disposal.

History

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

Strengths

- The GCE A-Level examination results are above the national average.
- Teaching is very good; the use of key questions in each lesson is particularly effective in helping students to focus on their learning.
- Students' very good attitudes and maturity of approach to study results in no significant difference in performance between boys and girls.
- Recruitment from Year 11 into Year 12 is high; the popularity of the subject is increasing annually.
- Leadership and management ensure that high quality teaching and learning remains the priority for the department.

Areas for improvement

- The way in which data gathered on students is used to improve their individual performance is not yet refined enough.
- Opportunities for students to undertake more detailed research in lessons through Internet access are limited.

223. Students' performance in GCE A Level examinations over the past three years has shown a rising trend, particularly in the number of students gaining the higher A/B grades. This shows an improvement compared with examination performance at the time of the last inspection, when results were above the national average, but the majority of grades achieved in the C-E range. All students who took the examination in 2001 achieved an A-E grade and 44 per cent gained grades A or B; a success rate that was above the national average. The unconfirmed 2002 results indicate that whilst all students who took the examination achieved an A-E grade, no student was awarded an A and 34 per cent gained B grades. In September the school made a request to the OCR examination board that the papers be remarked as the grades awarded to the 15

students were significantly lower than those predicted by the department based on end of Year 12 examination results and performance over Year 13. Over the last three years there have not been any significant differences in the attainment of male and female students. For the last two years over 70 per cent of the students who completed the one-year GCE AS Level course in Year 12 have continued onto the GCE A Level course in Year 13.

224. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of the samples of students' work confirm that standards are above average and achievement is very good. Attainment is above what might be expected at this early stage in the Year 12 GCE AS Level course. The performance of the current Year 13 GCE A Level group is well above average. This represents higher standards than in the unconfirmed 2002 results and an improvement on those achieved for 2001. There are a number of reasons for this. A very high percentage of the students achieved grades within the A*-C range at the end of Year 11 and continue to achieve in line with the department's rising trend of success. GCSE results for this group of students indicated a significant difference in the attainment of male and female students but the department has worked hard to minimise this differential and based on the work seen during the inspection week there is no significant difference in the performance of either group. The introduction by the department of using key questions to start each lesson has also improved learning.
225. Students in the Years 12 and 13 analyse historical sources critically and evaluate a wide range of evidence effectively. This results in the production of well-balanced and convincing arguments both orally and in writing. Students are able to articulate their views with confidence and persuasion in whole-class debate, which was clearly demonstrated in a Year 13 class where students debated the reasons why Philip II of Spain failed to suppress the revolt in the Netherlands. Their written work does not include sufficient use of information and communication technology and as a result students are very dependent on the printed word, when alternative sources of information are available.
226. Students learn very well in their history courses and they show clear progress in their quality of thinking and writing. The very good learning results from the very good teaching they regularly receive. The very good teaching is characterised by very good planning, which uses time in lessons well and provides all students with the opportunity to increase both the range of their knowledge and the depth of their understanding. For example, in a Year 12 lesson students worked in pairs to present the findings of their research to other group members, using information and communication technology to make a PowerPoint presentation. This introduced the rest of the group to a variety of different views on what technical advances promoted success in exploration and empire building.
227. The rapport between teachers and students is very positive. Students recognise they are well taught and respond accordingly. Evaluation of their work is thorough and they receive clear guidance on how they can improve their written work. Students and teachers would be in a better position to monitor progress if more formal assessment opportunities were included in the schemes of work for each unit to enable specific minimum acceptable grades to be set for each student.
228. The very good achievement and very good teaching can be attributed to the fact that the subject is very well led and managed by a very experienced head of department. High quality schemes of work have been developed and regular reviews ensure that changes introduced by the examination boards are quickly adopted, so that students are not disadvantaged.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

229. English and French were the focus subjects but Spanish, German and media studies were also sampled. In media studies the quality of provision is very good. Students make good progress and most attain grades in the A-C range at A Level. Within the modern languages faculty, French was the focus subject, however, Spanish in Year 13 and German in Year 12 were also sampled. These languages are only taught in these years. Attainment in Spanish is good. Students have developed good speaking and listening skills as a result of their teacher using Spanish for most of each lesson. Teaching is good with well-planned activities and up-to-date resources. In the last few years only small numbers have taken Spanish at A Level and there is therefore insufficient evidence to make comparisons with national data. Attainment in German is good. Students read advanced texts with good comprehension. They give confident answers with accurate pronunciation. They progress well from GCSE, extending their range of vocabulary and language structure. Teachers speak fluent German for most activities, establishing very good relationships. They plan a good range of practice activities and support individual students well. Teaching is very good overall. Attainment in German varies from year to year, with numbers usually too small to make valid national comparisons.

English

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

Strengths

- The standard of students' work is above average.
- Students make good progress because of the consistently good teaching.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and assessing students' attainment and progress and the support and guidance they receive is of a high order.

Areas for development

- Some students need to extend their reading of the works of critics to help them in forming their own judgements of set texts.
- Some Year 12 students have yet to develop confidence in their ability to form independent views of what they read.

230. Standards achieved in GCE Advanced Supplementary and Advanced level examinations in English Literature are above average and have improved markedly at both levels over the last two years. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with course expectations and so results have risen significantly. The proportion of students attaining at grades A and B at AS and A Level in 2002 was higher than in 2001. Students are therefore achieving well. The numbers of students staying on are good, as is attendance. Students also attain above average standards in media studies and in 2002 nearly all achieved in the A-C grade boundary. Their progress in this subject is very good given their levels of prior attainment on entry to the course.

231. The quality of the work seen during the course of the inspection confirms these standards. In English Literature at both AS and A Level, standards are above average and achievement is good. Students are analytical and their extended critical writing is well structured and informed by detailed textual references. They are forming an independent view of what they read and many students make good use of critical works to help shape their judgements. This practice is not widespread, however, and there are students who need guidance on how to do this. There are also a few students in

Year 12 who are not yet sufficiently confident in their knowledge of the set texts to venture that independent critical view. All students make good use of the language of literary criticism and many produce research material of a high standard.

232. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good because the teachers convey their own enthusiasm for literature and their respect for the young men and women before them. Students work with effort and concentration and they make good use of their own time to develop independent study skills. They are helped in this by their effective use of computer technology.
233. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they are able to meet their students' academic needs because of the rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluating progress. They also offer help and guidance outside lessons and this inclusive approach is appreciated and valued by students who need additional support. The result is that all students, no matter what their competencies and background, make good progress. Lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of students. Varied teaching approaches are used, including role-play and student presentations. This was seen to good effect in a Year 13 lesson on William Congreve's 'The Way of the World' where the students' ability to evaluate their own acting of sections of the play gave them practical insights into the play's dramatic structures. Such brisk and lively teaching was characteristic of the work seen.
234. The head of subject provides very good leadership and direction and there is a strong sense of team commitment. The teachers' professional approach owes much to the supportive culture established in the department and to the effective sharing of teaching tasks and opportunities. The developments in teaching strategies which will improve the work of the department have been identified and the team has the capacity and will to raise standards further.

French

The provision for A Level French is **very good**

Strengths

- The teachers have excellent subject knowledge and spoken fluency.
- Students use the Internet well to research up-to-date information.
- There is a wide range of learning opportunities to develop students' confidence.
- Teachers set high standards by using only French in lessons.

Areas for development

- French is not used consistently by all students in Year 12.
- There are too many basic grammatical errors in some students' written work.

235. Over the last few years insufficient numbers of students have entered for A Level French to allow valid comparisons with national data on attainment.
236. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in students' files demonstrates that standards are above average. In Year 13, the attainment of one student taking French is well above average. She speaks French very confidently with accurate pronunciation and accent. She expresses opinions using a range of sophisticated language with humour and enjoyment. Understanding of her teacher who is a native speaker, and of recorded cassettes is very good. As a result of skilful support effective key skills are developed in summarising ideas on advanced texts and in taking notes whilst listening to French.

237. In a lesson on the topic of transport this student confidently translated expressions such as 'park and ride', and 'car free day'. She demonstrated a good grasp of French expressions including 'rush hour' and 'traffic jam'. Working closely with her teacher, she accessed the French government Internet site on transport. With a good understanding of appropriate terminology she answered questions online drawing conclusions from key statistics and written information.
238. In Year 12 most students attain good standards. They progress well from familiar GCSE topics to the broader range of language required at A/S Level. They use wider vocabulary and more complex expressions with increased confidence. Most understand new texts on relatively unfamiliar topics. They respond orally to their teacher's questions without too much hesitation. They read aloud with confidence although some have anglicised pronunciation. A few students, however, do not use French instinctively as a means of classroom communication. They are not always sure of some basic grammatical structures in their written French and require more frequent practice.
239. In Year 12 a lesson on job interviews and the preparation of CV's was conducted totally in French. This challenged students to listen very attentively and follow the teacher's instructions carefully. In this lesson students were provided with a wide range of opportunities to practise new language. They were motivated by the teacher's imaginative use of role play. They took on the role of an applicant applying for a job as a director of a Club Méditerranée holiday camp, for example, and were provided with a variety of language reference sheets to support their independent research. This enabled them to speak with growing confidence and accuracy.
240. Teaching in the sixth form overall is very good. Teachers have a high degree of knowledge and understanding of their subject. There are examples of excellent lessons and when this is the case achievement is very high in relation to students' overall ability. These lessons are also characterised by challenge with an emphasis on improvement by pinpointing difficulties and intensive practice of new language. Very good relationships encourage students to participate well. Most students are mature and show a keen interest in their French studies.
241. Teachers are well supported by clear policies and procedures set out in departmental handbooks. Schemes of work give good guidance on course content. Planning and co-ordination of work is well managed and benefits both teachers and students.