

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRAHAM SCHOOL**

Scarborough

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121675

Headteacher: Garry Hancock

Lead inspector: David Morton

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 258641

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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### ***Terms used in this report***

*Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth-form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).*

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievement** judgement reflects whether pupils are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1258
School address:	Woodlands Drive Scarborough
Postcode:	YO12 6QW
Telephone number:	01723 366451
Fax number:	01723 364102
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Christopher Coole
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Graham School is larger than most secondary schools and has 1258 students on its roll. It is a mixed comprehensive school with students aged 11 to 16. It is situated on the northern fringe of Scarborough. Most students come from a wide range of primary schools nearby and from the centre of the town. Students are mainly from White British backgrounds although there is a very small number from Asian or Chinese backgrounds. The percentage of students with their mother tongue other than English is low and believed to be two per cent. Of these, only one student is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is average. The school has formal links with the community.

The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2000 and Investor in People status in 2002.

On site is Scarborough Graham Table Tennis Centre of Excellence.

The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is below average at 8.7 per cent and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Most students that have the need for extra support have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. The social background of students at the school is broadly typical of the national average. Standards of attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 are above average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13154	David Morton	Lead inspector	Citizenship, drama
19374	Wendy Sheehan	Lay inspector	
33019	Stanley Aspinall	Team inspector	Business education, health and social care, nautical studies, religious education
30512	Margaret Bailey	Team inspector	Science
11190	Winifred Burke	Team inspector	Art and design, design and technology
33229	Carole Clancy	Team inspector	
13155	John Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages, English as an additional language
2141	John Oxley	Team inspector	Physical education
19214	Geoffrey Price	Team inspector	English
17923	Michael Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics, special educational needs
10564	John Tomlinson	Team inspector	Geography, history
13189	Pamela Walton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, child care
8744	Russell Whiteley	Team inspector	Music

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Graham School is an improving school that provides a good education for its students. It has many good features and gives good value for money.**

**The main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- ? Teaching, learning and achievement are good or better in three out of four lessons. In one lesson in three, teaching is very good and occasionally excellent.
- ? The overall achievement of students is good.
- ? Links with the community are excellent and help make Graham a school that provides opportunities for everybody.
- ? Students with special educational needs achieve well.
- ? Students' attitudes to school and their work are very good; students feel valued by the school.
- ? Achievement is unsatisfactory in mathematics and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.
- ? The monitoring and support of teaching is insufficiently systematic at all levels of management.
- ? A minority of teaching lacks the qualities of the good and better teaching in the school.
- ? Results in tests and examinations are improving and were well above average in 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9.
- ? Standards in Years 10 and 11 art and design, design and technology, history, science and religious education are well above average.
- ? Provision for the visual and performing arts is very good.
- ? Relationships between members of staff and students are very good.
- ? Planning for the future lacks rigour; governors do not make sufficient demands of management.

**Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.** Standards have risen steadily and teaching has improved. Many students achieve well. Some issues raised have been satisfactorily tackled. Religious education now meets requirements and is amongst the successful subjects in the school. Performance management is now in place. Permanent exclusions have fallen but the number of fixed-term exclusions has increased and there are still too many. The monitoring of teaching is still not sufficiently systematic. Governors still play too uncritical a part in strategic planning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	B	B	B	B

**Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average**

*Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**The overall achievement of students is good.** Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 showed good improvement and were well above average. As students move through Years 10 and 11 achievement is improving on past performance and is also good, with results at above average. Results of students achieving five or more of the higher A\* to C grades is well above average when compared with similar schools; results in science, using this comparison, were outstanding. However,

similar comparisons show that lower-attaining students' results are average for five or more A\* to G grades and well below average for one of more A\* to G grades. The achievement of lower-attaining students, therefore, was not as good in 2003 GCSE examinations as that of which they are capable. However, the achievement of students with special educational needs is good, but that of students identified as gifted and talented is satisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics and modern foreign languages. The achievement of the small number of students from ethnic minority backgrounds is good. Results in national tests at the age of 14 in 2003 were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. In GCSE examinations in 2003, art and design, drama, electronics, English literature, history, nautical studies, product design, science and textiles were the most successful subjects. Least successful subjects were child development, French and mathematics.

**Students' personal development and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Their attitudes to school are very good and their attendance is in line with national averages. Behaviour, too, is good. Students arrive at school punctually and are rarely late to lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education.** Learning is effective since **the quality of teaching is good.** In just over a third of lessons teaching is very good or excellent. This ensures that students' achievement is good or better in around three-quarters of lessons. However, in the remaining lessons, teaching, the majority of which is satisfactory, lacks the energy, imagination and pace of the better lessons. As a result, in these lessons achievement is no better than satisfactory and helps to explain in part why the school over the years has not managed to shift the overall achievement profile to very good and has not produced results in GCSE examinations that are consistently well above average. The best teaching is in art and design, design and technology, drama, history and physical education.

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets requirements. The school makes very good use of excellent links with the community. Students enjoy the opportunities available through a good range of enrichment activities after school. The school provides very good care and shows concern for the welfare of students. Sound guidance is given about students' progress towards achieving their individual targets and the reports of students' progress for parents are good. A good partnership is developed with parents. Links with the main primary schools are good and new students and their parents value the good introduction given at the start of Year 7. Links with the sixth-form and further education colleges are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** Governors know the school well and ensure that statutory requirements are met, with the exception of collective worship. The leadership of the headteacher has many good features and this sets the tone for the development of the school that seeks to improve on its previous best. Senior managers support the headteacher in translating this sense of purpose into reality, but strategies to improve teaching and learning and students' achievement need to be pursued more rigorously. There is scope for further improvement through more consistent and rigorous management of the school's future development so that it can achieve its potential to be a very good school. Governors do not always put pressure on the school to improve known areas of weakness. The governors need to play a more significant role in strategic planning and to ensure that agreed objectives for future development are met

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

*Comments are based on those of students and parents who completed the questionnaires and the parents who attended the parents' meeting.* Throughout all years students show that they enjoy coming to school. They say they are generally taught well and are expected to work hard. Whilst most feel behaviour in the school is good, a few disagree. Parents' views show that they are pleased with how well the school provides for their children and only a small minority have concerns, usually about unacceptable behaviour or frequent staff changes in some subjects.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

### **The most important things the school should do to improve are:**

- ? improve all teaching to match the best found in the school, especially in Years 10 and 11,
- ? raise achievement in mathematics and modern foreign languages,
- ? managers apply monitoring and support of teaching more systematically,
- ? managers and governors plan more rigorously for the school's future development;

### **and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- ? ensure that an act of collective worship is provided daily for all students.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Students begin in the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science that are above average. In several other subjects attainment on entry is no better than average. Achievement is good or better in most subjects. Achievement is sometimes very good and this is necessary to raise above average standards to well above; where this is the case it is the result of very good teaching. However, teaching and learning in one in four lessons are no better than satisfactory, and there is underachievement in mathematics and modern foreign languages.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Achievement in the 2003 national tests and GCSE examinations was good; overall results were well above average at the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11.
- ? Achievement is very good in drama and music in Years 7 to 9 and in history, art and design, design and technology, drama and science in Years 10 and 11.
- ? Students' very good attitudes to their work help them to achieve well in most subjects.
- ? Students with special educational needs achieve well.
- ? Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11, where standards, too, are below average. This is the result of teaching that is no better than satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Achievement in modern foreign languages is also unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
- ? Students' skills in literacy are above average and helped by the successful implementation of national initiatives in Years 7 to 9. Mathematical skills are average. Skills in the use of ICT across the curriculum are average.

#### Commentary

1. By Year 9, standards overall are above average. There has been steady improvement in recent years and the 2003 national test results were the best ever and well above average. These reflect the best work seen in lessons. Results in English were significantly better than in previous years and were well above average when compared with schools with similar attainment at the start of Year 7. Similar comparisons indicate that results in science and mathematics were above average. The difference between the performance of boys and girls is marginal, although overall, boys do better in relation to gender national averages than girls. The trend of improvement over the last five years has been at the same, rather than more rapid, rate as national improvement. Overall achievement in the three basic subjects is very good.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.0 (34.2)	33.7 (33.3)
Mathematics	36.3 (36.1)	36.0 (34.7)
Science	34.4 (34.3)	34.3 (33.3)

*There were 233 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The school is tackling requirements to focus on improving basic skills in Years 7 to 9. Throughout the school standards of literacy are above average. Most subjects ensure

that technical terms and language are properly understood, used and spelt. In a range of subjects, including English, history and religious education, students have the chance to complete extended pieces of writing. Presentation is usually good. The standards of students for whom English is not their first language are carefully checked, even though most are fluent in English.

3. Standards in the use of mathematics across the curriculum are above average. There is room for more development, but students' skills are sufficient to meet the needs of most subjects; notable use is made of mathematical skill in English, geography, history, science, and design and technology.
4. Standards in the use of ICT across the curriculum are average overall. The ICT suite is in heavy demand for examination courses and ICT lessons in Years 7 to 9. The small number of computers in subject areas are not readily used in systematic ways. Several subjects encourage word processing, and older students use computers at home to present their work in an attractive format.
5. The achievement of students is better than at the time of the previous inspection since teachers plan lessons more systematically and with a clearer view of what they want students to learn. This includes attention to basic skills as well as the content of subjects. This approach is not always adopted by teachers, especially those who do not seek carefully to match the work planned to the learning needs of individuals or small groups of students. In these circumstances, students do not achieve as well as they should. In part, this explains why standards have only improved at a rate similar to the national average.
6. By Year 11, standards are also above average overall and in most subjects. Most teaching challenges students to think for themselves. Some good achievement is sustained during Years 10 and 11, but it is not good enough to attain results that are well above average rather than above average overall. Throughout the school students respond to consistently good and especially to very good and imaginative teaching. In a significant minority of cases, notably mathematics, teaching is not as good as this and causes standards and achievement overall to be not as good as they should be.

### **Overall achievement of students**

Achievement	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Very good	Drama	History, design and technology, art and design, drama, nautical studies, science
Good	English, science, ICT, history, religious education, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education, citizenship	Science, ICT, religious education, physical education, health and social care, citizenship
Satisfactory	Modern foreign languages, mathematics, geography	English, geography, music
Unsatisfactory		Modern foreign languages, mathematics

7. Students with special educational needs learn and achieve well. Special reading classes provide very well for students in Years 7 to 9. All students attending these classes make greater progress than might be expected. Many reach levels that allow them to read materials in other subjects and so no longer need to attend these classes. In no subject do students with special educational needs make less progress than other students.

8. Results in GCSE examinations for 16 year olds in recent years have been consistently above average overall. When comparing the average points score of students with those from schools where attainment in the tests at the end of Year 9 were similar to those of Graham School, in the best eight subjects, results were above average overall in 2003. However, there was some underachievement, especially amongst some lower attaining and some gifted students. Improvement in results in GCSE examinations in recent years has been broadly in line with the national trend. In 2003 the school achieved its best ever average points score and this is above the national average when compared with all and with similar schools. Although art and design, drama, history, humanities and science are exceptions, higher attainers in the recent past have not achieved the national average in the higher A\* and A grades. Lower attainers underachieve in some subjects, notably mathematics and modern foreign languages. This in part can be explained by difficulties in recruiting teachers and therefore maintaining longer-serving teams of teachers in these subjects. There is also often a lack of learning support for older students. Overall, girls perform better than boys in GCSE examinations.

### **Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003**

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	63.5 (57.0)	52.6 (50.0)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91.3 (94.1)	88.6 (91.0)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95.0 (96.3)	94.6 (96.0)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	38.0 (36.5)	40.5 (34.6)

*There were 219 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

### **GCSE % results at A\*-C in 2003 by subject:**

Subject	School result 2003	National average 2003	Comment
Art and design	86.7	67	minor dip, but still well above average
Business studies	67.7	56	above average
Double award science	75.1	53	outstanding
Design and technology	66.1	54	improvement
Drama	72.3	67	dip – above average
English language	63.1	60	some improvement
English literature	73.1	65	improvement
French	38.1	49	still struggling
Geography	59.2	61	significant improvement
German	51.6	54	significant improvement, about average
History	<b>100</b>	63	<b>outstanding</b>
Humanities	66.5	43	significant improvement above average
Mathematics	42.7	51	– still not as good as it should be
Music	55.5	68	(dip, but small numbers)
Spanish	52.2	55	Dip – but about average

Statistics	61.6	n/a	constant
Child development	41.9	n/a	improvement
Nautical studies	68.4	n/a	dip
Religious studies	53.1	61	significant improvement

9. Standards seen in lessons usually match examination results. For example standards in art and design and design and technology are well above average and reflect very good examination results; standards in mathematics are below average, as are the results in the examination. There are exceptions to this coherent pattern; standards seen early in the year in Years 10 and 11 in history are above average, but results in 2003 were high; standards seen in modern foreign languages are average, but results in 2003 were well below average in French. Although procedures for performance management are in place, senior managers and heads of department have not yet embedded a systematic programme of support for teaching and learning and sharing good practice. As a result, satisfactory teaching has not generally moved up a notch to good teaching, or good to very good. An ethos of seeking consistent improvement is not apparent in some subjects. As a result, standards and achievement in a minority of lessons are not as good as they should be. The effect of regular and systematic processes of support and the sharing of good practice is usually the improvement of standards and achievement as teaching more clearly draws out the best from different groups of students in a class.

### **Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

10. The quality of students' attitudes to school, the values and behaviour they show around school and their overall personal development are very good. They enjoy coming to school and levels of attendance are satisfactory. The school supports well the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Students are enthusiastic, helpful and co-operative in lessons and about the school.
- ? Behaviour is usually good.
- ? Students are insufficiently involved by teachers in assessment and self-evaluation.
- ? Monitoring of attendance is very good and ensures students maximise their learning opportunities.
- ? There is good gender mixing in group work.
- ? Students have the confidence to share personal matters, values and beliefs, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- ? Some members of staff have a negative approach to managing occasional inappropriate behaviour.
- ? There are too many fixed-term exclusions, although there are less permanent exclusions since the previous inspection.

## Commentary

11. In formal discussions with students before and during the inspection it is clear that they are proud of the school and value the efforts made by staff on their behalf. They talk of teachers being extremely helpful and they value the range of extra-curricular activities available to them. They want to be successful at school.
12. These attitudes are reflected in behaviour and approaches to learning that are almost always positive. There is a tendency for a small number of staff occasionally to respond inappropriately to mild misbehaviour; shouting at students in assembly, for example, for minor disruption does not serve as a good role model. Most inappropriate behaviour occurs when teaching is boring and fails to engage students. Movement about school is orderly. However, sometimes sanctions are necessary for inappropriate behaviour. The ultimate sanction of exclusion is used by the school to manage inappropriate behaviour. Although there is now less use of permanent exclusion, the number of fixed-term exclusions is too high and has increased since the previous inspection.

## Exclusions

### *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	1185	73	2
White – any other White background	14		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		

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

13. Students respond well to responsibility, whether it is serving at Reception or acting as a form representative to discuss school issues. In lessons, they are active and sensitive to aspects of work that require maturity – for example responding to a teacher giving testimony about being a smoker or in their appreciation of other cultures in modern foreign language lessons, life skills, English or religious education. In dance and art and design they are respectful of different cultural traditions and value opportunities to consider the lives and beliefs of people from different backgrounds to themselves. With such matters in mind, they are active in supporting school charities. Some teachers significantly provide opportunities to exercise and fashion these positive attitudes. Reflection, for example, is used effectively in English and religious education. Examples are found in lessons involving issues of citizenship, such as energy conservation, of students taking the moral high ground but then showing a willingness to modify their views in the light of further enquiry. As a result of innate qualities that are developed by sensitive teachers and form tutors, by Year 11 students have become mature and responsible young men and women. Their sense of moral and social values is well developed, they are sensitive to the needs of others and their competence as independent learners and thinkers is generally good. The excellent links with the community encourage the development of such values.

14. Relationships between students and between students and staff are very good. Students listen well to each other in discussions and are tolerant of the views of others. For example, they were sensitive when talking about personal matters in religious education and in an English lesson when considering loss of life in preparation for studying a poem. They work well together in mixed gender groups in drama, showing respect for the different nuances boys and girls bring to social situations.

### **Attendance**

15. The school has many varied strategies to promote positive attitudes to attendance. The attendance officer, through a first-day contact system, is diligent in alerting parents to any non-attendance. Punctuality is satisfactory and prompt arrival at lessons ensures maximum use of the learning time available.

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	8.1
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	1.2

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good overall.** Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but good overall. Community links are excellent and a good curriculum provides all students with the opportunity to take full advantage of all the school has to offer, including a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good. Students' care and well-being are very good; students receive good guidance and support and an opportunity to state their opinions. Links with parents and other schools and colleges are also good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good overall. In three out of four lessons teaching is good or better; in one in four lessons teaching is no better than satisfactory and sometimes unsatisfactory or poor. The assessment of students' work in lessons and as part of teachers' planning is satisfactory. The teaching of mathematics overall is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Teaching and learning are good in three out of four lessons.
- ? Teaching in one in four lessons is not as good as it could be and prevents some students achieving as well as they should.
- ? Teaching and learning in mathematics are unsatisfactory overall.
- ? Teaching and learning are very good in drama throughout the school and in art and design, design and technology and history in Years 10 and 11. The teaching of physical education in Years 7 to 9 is also very good.
- ? Most teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to plan, set targets and meet students' needs in Years 7 to 9 and good use in Years 10 to 11.
- ? Marking of work for some students gives a less clear understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve in Years 7 to 9 than it does in Years 10 and 11.

## Commentary

16. Students say that teaching in the school is good; parents feel the same. By and large inspectors agree. However, if results in examinations at Year 11 are to rise to well above the national average and students achieve standards that fully match their potential, this will only be because of even better teaching than at present, especially where teaching is no better than satisfactory.
17. Teachers are committed and work hard. In the best teaching the needs of individuals or groups of students are matched carefully to the planning and organisation of the lesson. Teachers know their subjects well and are enthusiastic and energetic in their efforts to ensure students' learning is effective. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson about the Koran, the teacher organised a ritual where students washed their hands before looking at a copy of the Koran and wondering that any one person could learn it all by heart. This teacher recognised the value of direct experience in students' learning. Planning in some subjects makes efforts to discover students' standards when they start in Year 7; programmes of work in art and design, drama, music and physical education seek to check where the starting point should be. Tests taken in primary schools are useful guides in the same process for most other subjects; this means that, throughout teachers' planning, considered efforts are made in the best teaching to match work to students' learning needs. The value of active learning as part of learning is a feature of the best teaching. Very good relationships, with a sensitive touch of humour, create an environment for effective learning.
18. Throughout all age groups, the principles of approaches to teaching and learning that are part of the national initiative currently being applied to Years 7 to 9 are proving useful in the best teaching. This is a key reason why teaching is better now than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, teachers have a clearer understanding of their role whilst students are working independently or in groups. The most successful teachers have developed approaches that help them intervene purposefully to extend and challenge higher attainers and support those who are working more slowly. They have clear objectives for their lessons that often include some that are specific to individuals or groups of students. At best, these are shared with students so that they, too, know what they are seeking to achieve in lessons. The very good attitudes to their work, especially in Years 9 and 11, reflect the sense of purpose that students in most lessons feel about their work. Members of staff with an overarching responsibility to improve teaching and learning through use of national initiatives have played a significant role in the improvement of teaching.
19. Students with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. These assistants have a good knowledge of the needs of students. Good training leads to them knowing when to provide support and when to encourage independence. This is one reason why a good number of students no longer require additional help as they progress through the school. However, support is not always consistently available. For example, one student's learning is better in geography in the lesson when a teaching assistant is present than in the other when no support is available. The special education needs co-ordinator is highly skilled and experienced. He has extensive knowledge. The information he has made available to staff through the school's computer network is of high quality and provides very good information to teachers. This information includes individual education plans.
20. The best teaching observed was of lessons that went at a cracking pace that kept students on their toes and set them appropriate challenges. Higher attainers were stretched either through different tasks or extended ones that required more of them. Teachers know the requirements of examinations and prepare students well for them, in most cases, however, not coaching exclusively to the detriment of broader learning. Classes are managed well with firmness, purpose and humour. Students are involved

in their own learning and can work independently. Lessons have a clear focus on learning and on how students' achievement can be maximised. A feature of the best lessons is the variety of activities and change of pace found. Teachers take account of students' energy and concentration span.

21. At first, then, all seems very positive and in most instances this is the case. In a minority of instances the focus on effective teaching is not systematic enough to bring about improvement. Whilst the headteacher, and the school's improvement plan, put teaching and learning as a central focus and priority, senior management and some heads of department do not take systematic steps to monitor and support teachers and raise the quality of their work. In mathematics, 72 per cent of teaching in 11 lessons seen was no better than satisfactory. Even in subjects where the overall judgement of teaching is that it is 'good', a significant proportion of teaching that was less than good was seen:

3 out of 5 lessons in geography	[60 per cent]
2 out of 6 lessons in history	[33 per cent]
5 out of 17 lessons in modern languages	[29.4 per cent]
3 out of 12 lessons in English	[25 per cent]
4 out of 17 lessons in science	[23.5 per cent]

22. Although in some cases the number of lessons seen is too small for the percentages to be taken too seriously [for example in the 2003 GCSE examinations, 100 per cent of students taking history achieved A\*-C grades, in science 75.1 per cent achieved similar grades and this result is well above the national average, most of these subjects perform no better than around the national average or below it. On entry to the school, students' standards were generally above average. The indication is that weaker teaching is leading to underachievement. A school that puts improving teaching and learning at the heart of its planning needs to translate into more systematic implementation of such planning. Monitoring and support need also to encourage good teaching to be better still; a higher proportion of it needs to be if the school is to achieve the goal of achieving results that are well above the national average.
23. In less successful lessons, inspectors found that teachers' expectations were too modest, especially those of lower attaining students who sometimes were doing work that was far too young for them. Individual education plans are not always used when teachers of subjects plan work for students with special educational needs. In most weaker lessons the learning needs of individuals or groups were not taken sufficiently into account in the planning and teaching. Sometimes, teachers dominated and talked too much, not giving students the opportunities to work independently; this was sometimes because teachers sensed their class control was on a knife-edge, but they used the wrong tactic to overcome this uncertainty. Lack of pace, change of direction and variety of teaching methods was a concern in a number of less effective lessons.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 132 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 [4.5%]	40 [30.3%]	53 [40.2%]	26 [19.7%]	6 [4.5%]	1 [0.8%]	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

24. An occasional lack of consistency in teaching is something for the school to tackle. There are examples in some lessons of low expectations, where students were doing



work more suitable for a much younger age group. Not enough effort is made in weaker lessons to match work to students' learning needs, with the result that students often fail to achieve levels of which they are capable. This can also lead to boredom amongst students and the occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour were often the result of a lack of engagement in the lesson. Not all teachers seek opportunities in most lessons to underpin and develop basic skills. For example, the regular use of ICT is hard to find in some subjects.

25. Nonetheless, the positive overall picture is the one that prevailed during the inspection. In the majority of the best lessons there was evidence of students learning something new or consolidating that which was already known and understood. Teachers use questions skilfully to extend thinking and check understanding. This was clearly seen in a lesson with Year 11 about alternative forms of energy. The teaching itself was energetic and had a clear purpose – a metaphor for the lesson's objectives of exploring alternatives to fossil fuel. It recognised the energy levels of students and changed the emphasis from listening, to doing, to annotating through the course of the lesson. As a result, students remained engaged and challenged; the objectives of the lesson were well realised. The achievement of students was very good; teaching such as this leads to higher standards being attained over a period of time.
26. Some of the best teaching has such inspirational qualities. In an art and design lesson with Year 7, excellent use was made of ICT and DVDs to help students view paintings of rain from different cultures. An excellent snippet from students' own film interest, such as *Bug's Life*, engaged and amused students whilst raising awareness of how animation uses colour to create mood. The best teachers think creatively how different groups of students learn effectively. They are aware of the variety and range of teaching and learning styles they can bring to their work. For example, they realise the value of practical activity, lively presentation, working in groups and sometimes working with students "with their heads down and getting on with it".
27. The school has responded well to a key issue for action, identified in the previous report, by making better use of assessment data. It has established a system of target setting. Performance management procedures have been used well to embed this target-setting habit into the working practices of most departments. Regular monitoring by the co-ordinator and review by tutors have also ensured that the system is working and that students have better understanding of their targets for improvement against National Curriculum levels or GCSE objectives.
28. Assessment, however, is also about how diagnostic information is gathered through daily interactions in classrooms or from marking students' work. This is used:
  - to ensure that planning is more appropriate for students' needs; and
  - for informing students about a gap in their learning and the steps they need to make in order to improve.
29. ***This form of assessment was highlighted by the school, prior to the inspection, as an area for improvement and focused upon by all inspectors, during the inspection, as a means of helping the school to improve its practice.***
30. A prescriptive model was found to underpin assessment policy and practice in the school. This has served the school well by kick-starting the better use of assessment data. There is now a whole-school approach to using assessment for gaining good levels or for performing well against GCSE criteria. Limited involvement by other teachers in decision making about assessment processes, however, has hindered the development of thinking about 'assessment for learning' in lessons.

- ? Inspectors recognise that this is a complex form of assessment since it covers issues to do with motivation and academic work but that it works best if planned for by those who use it in terms of a subject's unique requirements.
- ? They recognise that for further improvement to take place, in the 25 per cent of lessons identified as satisfactory or below, an opening up of discussion about appropriate practice in different subject areas is needed.
- ? Inspectors report that the best assessment practice is in special educational needs, art and design, drama, history, ICT, music and physical education.

31. Assessment for planning and learning is under-developed in Years 7 to 9 in marking, as in the previous report, not always giving students sufficient guidance on how they can improve their work. Students are not sufficiently part of the assessment process. Too few opportunities exist, in some subjects, for students to feedback to teachers what they recognise they have learned in lessons.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision made by the school is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

The curriculum is accessible to all students, irrespective of their capabilities.

- ? The school provides a wide range of well-supported enrichment activities.
- ? There are very good links with the community to support learning in the school.
- ? The planning of the work in most subjects of the curriculum is good.
- ? The time-tabling of subjects to provide good continuity of learning is unsatisfactory in places.
- ? The vocational curriculum is improving, but is still lacking in breadth.
- ? The school does not provide adequately for a daily act of collective worship.

## **Commentary**

32. The curriculum of the school satisfies statutory requirements for the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a breadth of relevant curricular experiences for all students. Younger students who show potential in languages can study two languages from Year 8 and can continue through to age 16 if they wish. In science older students can choose the applied science course to GCSE level instead of the traditional dual award course. The school's vocational curriculum is growing, but is still rather limited in scope. It includes nautical studies and the recently-introduced health and social care course. An alternative work-related curriculum is offered to students for whom it is appropriate, and they follow vocational courses in other establishments as well as the basic subjects of the curriculum in the school itself. There is appropriate attention for all students to sex education, and to alcohol and drugs education. The personal, social and health education programme provides well for students' personal development and prepares them well for adult life.
33. In all subjects the curriculum is well-planned to provide access for all students and to ensure that all students can reach their potential. In music, there is a range of activities to ensure that all students can take part, and in English a number of effective strategies have been introduced to engage and develop the performance of boys. In art and design, a wide range of interesting and inspiring curriculum experiences incite the enthusiasm and curiosity of all students and lead to high achievement. However, in physical education, dance is only available to girls, and a student with English as an additional language has some difficulty in design and technology.

34. There is a wide range of enrichment opportunities for students and for supported study outside school hours. The library is open throughout the school day and after school each evening; it is well used by students who appreciate the attractive environment and the help they receive from the librarian and her staff. In sports, music and drama, large numbers of students of all ages have the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities. The school organises trips and excursions to support learning and the personal development of its students, but in geography there are not enough opportunities for fieldwork.
35. In many areas there are constructive curricular links with other institutions: there are good links to ensure continuity of learning, and drama productions are taken into some of the feeder primary schools. The links with the community to support learning and prepare students for the next stage of their education and for the world of work are a strength of the school.
36. There are some weaknesses in the time-tabling of subjects across the two-week timetable cycle: in some cases, the subject is not time-tabled evenly across the two weeks, which can mean that there are large gaps in time between lessons. These could adversely affect curricular continuity and the effectiveness of students' learning. In most subjects the use of ICT to support learning is good, although there are some areas of the curriculum where computers are not used to their full potential to provide richer learning experiences.
37. Good provision is made for students with special educational needs. New buildings allow full access to students with physical handicaps and older buildings have been well adapted. There is only one small area of the school inaccessible to any such student. Special literacy classes effectively raise standards of reading and, equally importantly, develop students' confidence. In Years 10 and 11, several students with special educational needs take one subject less at GCSE than other students, using the time very well for further study in their remaining subjects. Because these students have difficulties with writing, this additional time allows them to produce work that reflects their capability and so they achieve more. The teacher of this course has good knowledge of other examination courses and so offers valuable support. Lunchtime clubs provide well for younger students, developing confidence and social skills. The work-related studies course for students in Years 10 and 11 is appreciated by students with special educational needs and prepares them well for leaving school.

## **Staffing**

38. Staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum, although non-specialist teaching in physical education is not ideal and some classes have more than one teacher for a subject which is sometimes a barrier to continuity. In recent years, there has been a considerable turnover of teaching assistants supporting special educational needs. This level of change of staff has meant there have been a number of times when vacant posts have reduced the amount of support available and new appointments cannot always provide the same quality of support as more established assistants. The co-ordinator of special educational needs has had to spend a large amount of his time in appointment procedures and training. This has meant a considerable reduction in the effectiveness of support.

## **Accommodation and resources**

39. The quality of accommodation and resources is good. Accommodation is safe and attractive; provision of resources is good. However, there are no ICT resources in modern foreign languages and one of the classrooms in music is inadequate for large classes. There is lack of technical help and inadequate storage in art and design. There are no yellow lines marked on workshop floors in technology to denote safe queuing distances for students when machines are in use. There is a good level of resources, including ICT, to help students with special educational needs in their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school provides good quality care for all students.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Procedures for induction are good and help Year 7 students settle in well.
- ? Procedures for child protection and health and safety are very good.
- ? Students know their targets to help them improve but in some departments not enough is made of them for teachers' assessment of learning.
- ? Careers guidance is good but lack of accommodation for a careers library and guidance suite affects the nature of the counselling role.

## **Commentary**

40. Good procedures for induction ensure that students settle quickly into Year 7. The overwhelming majority of parents agree. An opportunity for parents to meet tutors prior to students' joining reflects the caring values of the school. In discussions, Year 7 students were particularly pleased with the support they obtained from older students during their first few days. Pastoral support is fundamental to the caring, trusting relationships that exist.
41. Child protection procedures are very good. All staff are constantly alert to any concerns or to changes in students' attitudes. Very good arrangements for health and safety are in place and are very carefully managed by senior staff. The carefully planned induction programme for new staff ensures they are all made fully aware of the school's procedures. The school is well maintained and offers a safe, clean and welcoming learning environment. The physical education department has published its own guide to health and safety, reflecting its rigour in ensuring safe practice. The school's arrangements for ensuring students are aware of the dangers posed by the Internet are well controlled. Students' own awareness of health and safety is sensitively developed. For example, a life skills lesson on smoking began with an honest autobiographical account by a member of staff. As a result the discussion that followed was a frank and relevant debate on addiction.

42. There are satisfactory procedures to monitor students' progress and to use assessment information to help students set targets for improvement. However, systems of marking and assessment do not always achieve equal consistency across departments to sharpen students' achievement. Regular reviews monitor students' progress against targets and are helpful in identifying any concerns.
43. Students are consulted sufficiently about ideas to improve the school through form representative meetings. Some students have also been involved in community projects such as interviewing candidates for the post of Restorative Justice Worker, and this helps students understand the value of their opinion.
44. The careers programme provided by the school is good. Career advice starts in Year 7 through a planned personal and social timetable. Opportunities for work experience in Year 10 and interviews with careers advisers help students prepare for the next career step. Careers information is currently stored in a classroom and this does not provide sufficient access for students to research any options independently. In compensation the school provides considerable careers guidance and support through the school's Intranet website.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school works well with parents and has excellent strategies for involving the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Parents have positive views of the school.
- ? There is an excellent relationship with community education that helps to support students' learning.
- ? Overall information provided for parents is good and helps them support their child's development.

### **Commentary**

45. The outstanding response to the parents' questionnaire reflects the high level of interest parents have in their children's education. Analysis of the parents' questionnaire shows that almost all parents agree that the school expects their child to work hard and do their best, and consequently that they make good progress. Inspectors agree. Some parents felt that they are not sufficiently well informed about how their child is getting on. However, opportunities for parents to meet with teachers are similar to those found in other schools and the quality of written information with target summaries and annual reports is good.
46. The quality of documentation is good overall. The prospectus is well written and provides clear, helpful information. Termly newsletters celebrate well the many varied activities; articles include community education reflections upon the integrated approach to learning. Parents' views are sought informally through responses to letters or parent-governor feedback, but the school has yet to provide a more systematic method of consulting parents.
47. The school reaps the rewards of the work it has invested in developing relations with parents of students with special educational needs. Nearly all parents attend meetings to review the progress of their child.
48. There are good links with other schools and colleges in the area. For example, many sporting fixtures are held with other schools. Links with the sixth form colleges are very

close and students are provided with good opportunities to learn about all colleges in the vicinity through post-16 options presentations.

### **Community links are excellent**

*The school's links with community education are excellent. Together they provide a wide variety of extra support services that serve both the school and the community. There is a strong commitment to removing or supporting any young person who may for whatever reason have reached a barrier in their learning. These include mentoring projects to refocus students who have disengaged in learning, peer mentoring, projects to offer work-related training to identified students, and study support centres within local communities to provide homework support for students near their homes. Meetings for students that cause concern tap into a wide variety of support services and may include Connexions, youth offending teams, youth workers, youth action officers, clinical psychologists and restorative justice workers in the Scarborough area. The partnership is energetically managed and is constantly seeking out innovative schemes to support the whole community. There is a strong commitment to developing life-long learning and many adult education classes are held in the school to promote a centre of learning for all. The North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership fund the Year 10 Bridge Project by paying for specific students to attend vocational college courses. A particularly strong feature of this partnership is the ability to support students throughout their education and to promote an outstandingly supportive learning culture to help young people.*

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

49. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Both have a number of good features, but not enough is done to improve systematically that teaching which is not as good as the best in the school. Improvement is not clearly planned with authority and purpose.
50. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory since the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students. Governors are insufficiently involved in planning for improvement and do not take steps to ensure that the school improves in those areas where governors recognise improvement to be necessary. This shortcoming was recognised at the time of the previous inspection and insufficient improvement has been made.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? The headteacher is approachable and respected by staff, students and parents. He has a clear vision of how the school needs to develop as a constantly improving school. His energy and commitment are recognised by all who talk about him.
- ? Much good practice results from the efforts of managers at senior and head of department level, but more needs to be done to improve teaching, learning and achievement to very good, and raise results in GCSE examinations to well above average.
- ? Heads of year co-ordinate very good pastoral care for students. However, they should raise their horizons to appreciate their role in whole-school development.
- ? Strategic planning lacks rigour and implementation. Governors are insufficiently active in the planning processes. The headteacher's vision for the future development of the school does not illuminate the school improvement plan.
- ? The governing body does not fulfil its statutory duty to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

### **Commentary**

#### **Leadership**

51. The leadership of the headteacher has many good features. He knows what needs to be done to improve the school further. He has given a clear focus for the need for satisfactory teaching to be even better than it is if the school is to achieve its objectives. Managers at senior and head of department levels need to make this their priority.
52. The headteacher gets about the school and has a good presence. His strength is that he knows the school well and makes sure that successes are celebrated. He is right to place importance on students knowing what he expects of them. The headteacher has a clear sense of the sort of school Graham should become; his immediate task is to take governors and management at all levels on an active journey with him. For example, he has been successful in establishing the central principle, accepted by staff, parents, governors and students, that Graham School is a place where all individuals are important. He has led the school to recognise that what it has to offer is for everybody. The excellent community links that have been established bear testimony to this realised vision. This is a great starting point for further energetic development that has the goal that the achievement of every student is to be very good or outstanding. The necessary ingredients are there amongst the students who bring very good attitudes to their work. The need now is to focus all managers and individual teachers to his vision and set in motion practices that will realise it. Managers understand the goal and their role in achieving it. Management must now put in place the change and development that will ensure that this essential goal is realised. Results are now above schools with similar prior attainment nationally; this school has the capacity to attain even better results.

### **Governance**

53. Governors are committed to the school. Meetings are usually well attended and key governors know the school well. They want it to be successful, know its strengths and have a good sense of where improvements might be made. However, from the evidence of the inspection, governors do not intervene sufficiently and challenge management to improve in areas where governors know improvement is needed. They accept too readily what is put before them and when they do question they do not pursue their concerns sufficiently to a satisfactory outcome. The wealth of experience amongst governors should alert them to the need for existing vision and purpose to have coherence in the school improvement plan. They should be aware of the benefits of longer term planning than one year – for a sense of the direction of the longer journey but also to plan for possible contingencies. Whilst the differing responsibilities of governance and management must always be understood, governors must realise that it is they who have responsibility for the strategic direction for the work and improvement of the school. Governors have a statutory responsibility to support, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and to hold it to account. At present, this is not happening with sufficient rigour.
54. The school meets the requirements of statements of special educational need as it does for those designated as requiring 'school action' or 'school action plus'. There is compliance with the Code of Practice for students with special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is highly experienced in this topic and the school makes very good use of this expertise.

### **Management**

55. One of the strengths of the school, mentioned by several staff, is that its procedures run smoothly. The staff handbook is a working document understood and acted upon by all. The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection in its use of data. This has led to individual target setting, and although there is talk amongst staff and students for refinement in some subjects, especially of the minimal first target, the

initiative is giving staff and students a focus and check on their week-by-week individual achievement. Tutors follow this trail well in tutor time. Departmental leadership and management are very good in art and design, design and technology, history and religious education.

56. The school has established a thorough system of performance management. This, too, is contributing to the notion of a constantly improving school. Induction of newly qualified staff and others new to the school is very good and valued by those who experience it. There is scope, however, to consider what steps might be taken, additional to performance management, to help all teachers to become better at what they do. Key to such development is observing each other in the classroom, sometimes teaching and planning collaboratively and seeking out and sharing good practice. Scarborough is, in a sense, geographically challenged. Good practice in other schools and experience of courses further afield could be taken account of more. Comparison only with other county schools does not give a true reflection of the school's potential for growth and development as a centre of quality. Different ways of managing change, development and improvement should inform the school's practice more than at present.

### ***Administration***

57. The school runs well as an efficient organisation. Members of the general office give very good support to teachers and are readily accessible. The headteacher receives excellent support and confidentiality is respected. The quality of the school's environment is mentioned by students as something that they value; as a result they respect it and little litter is thrown down carelessly as most students appreciate the effort the site staff put into making it a good place to be.

### ***Finance***

58. The school is currently operating a deficit budget. This has come about partly because of higher than expected costs resulting from staff illness and partly because of an unforeseen circumstance. The school's plan to return to a balanced budget in three years has been approved by the local education authority. The success of this plan is dependent upon growth in student numbers. There has been insufficient analysis of the impact of this plan on the quality of education.
59. Governors keep a watchful eye on expenditure but take too much on trust from school managers. Governors should play a greater part in determining the school budget. The links between the school development plan and the budget are not sufficiently strong to ensure that the best use is made of finances. Some of the principles of best value are met. The school seeks comparative quotes for major expenditure but governors have not undertaken consultation with stakeholders. The school provides good value for money. It spends an above average proportion of its income on teaching but achievement could be even higher.
60. Governors have determined that the school should spend more money on educating students with special educational needs than it receives for this purpose. This money is well spent but governors have not established a way to determine whether this additional allocation is at an appropriate level.
61. Expenditure is monitored carefully and finance staff has good knowledge of procedures. Practices to guard against mis-use of money could be tighter. For example, governors do not specify a limit above which the signature of a governor is required upon a cheque. Arrangements for transfer of cash to the bank, although the school takes sensible precautions, create potential risk to staff involved.



**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3488242
Total expenditure	3587860
Expenditure per student	3038

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-37938
Balance carried forward to the next	-137556

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

##### English

Overall the provision in English is **good**.

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? By Year 11 students make better than expected gains on their attainment when they join the school.
- ? Good teaching and their own positive attitudes in lessons help students to learn well.
- ? Good leadership is helping to raise standards of teaching and learning.
- ? Inconsistent marking of work and assessment of progress leads to varying levels of support for students in different classes.

##### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Good	
Management of the subject	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

##### Commentary

62. When students join the school they have above average standards of English. Current work of Year 9 students and the most recent test results show that they build well on these standards. Performance in English is well above average compared with other schools where incoming Year 7 students have similar levels of attainment. The proportion of students gaining level 6 or above is also higher. This represents good achievement. Results are high compared with similar prior attainment schools for students attaining grades of level 6 or above. Students talk sensibly about their work in class when working in pairs or small groups. Students of all attainment levels are usually keen and effective readers. They appreciate, for example, how writers build character through dialogue. By Year 9 they can analyse humour in media texts. Most written work is accurate and well structured. Students' enthusiasm is often evident in their fluent and thoughtful writing.
63. In Years 10 and 11 students show in their group work and individual presentations to the class that they have above average speaking skills. Higher attaining students write with confidence about Shakespeare's plays. Personal writing is good across all attainment levels. Analysis of poetry is methodical and thorough, making good use of textual support. The writing of lower attaining students is often unstructured and less well punctuated. Only occasional use is made of ICT to help them with accuracy and organisation.

64. Teachers plan lessons carefully to provide good work on language topics. They manage students well so that there is no bad behaviour to hold back students' learning. In the best lessons teachers have excellent relationships with students. Their enthusiasm for English helps all students to make very good or excellent progress. In other lessons teachers do not always challenge higher attaining students to cover as much ground as they should. Students with special educational needs are well supported in lessons so that they also make good progress.
65. Year 9 students gained above average results in national tests for 2002. Provisional results for 2003 show further improvement. In the 2002 GCSE examinations for English and English literature results were also above the national average. Results in 2003 were again a little higher. Both test and examination results indicate that standards in English are improving, although given students' attainment on entry, their achievement in examinations is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
66. Good departmental leadership helps teachers to work well together. Initiatives to support students needing better basic skills in English are working well. Teachers are revising programmes of lessons for students in each year to ensure appropriate and balanced coverage of recent national guidelines. However, procedures for marking students' work and tracking their progress are not fully effective across the department. Since the previous inspection standards of work have risen so that improvement has generally been good.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

67. Standards of literacy are above average. Students are competent speakers and participate well in many lessons. Their reading levels are generally above average so that they readily meet the demands for reading in all subjects. In English, modern foreign languages, ICT and religious education, students are encouraged to read widely. The learning resource centre also helps to stimulate the interest of students in books through reading clubs and library lessons. Students write with greater accuracy and fluency than is usually the case. Lessons in English, history, modern foreign languages, art and design, religious education, ICT and physical education provide good support for students' writing through help with structuring, through focus on important vocabulary or by providing opportunities for a range of written work. As a result in these subjects students develop their basic skills well. Plans are in place for further development of literacy initiatives throughout the school. Overall the teaching of language and literacy across the curriculum is good.

### **English as an additional language**

68. The school is well supported by the local education authority in providing support for the small number of students whose first language is not English. This enables these students to make good progress and achieve their potential.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? The school provides a good curriculum for modern languages.
- ? The ablest students achieve high standards in lessons.
- ? GCSE results are below average.
- ? Average and low attaining students underachieve in Years 10 and 11.

- The department does not make appropriate plans to address its main weaknesses.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitudes of students towards their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory Satisfactory Unsatisfactory	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the last inspection		

### Commentary

69. The work seen during the inspection reflects the way students perform in external examinations: most higher attaining students achieve very well and reach high standards both in Year 9 and in Year 11, and whereas the achievement of lower attaining students in Year 9 is generally satisfactory, it is well below what it should be in lessons seen in Year 11. Speaking skills are not always as well developed as they should be. In some lessons, where the teacher moves swiftly into passive listening activities without substantial active revision and rehearsal of what students know and can say in the language, students' speaking is not up to the required standard. In most lessons seen, however, working in pairs is often used too soon, before the students have fully grasped the range of language to be practised. In other lessons, where the teachers' expectations are high and where students are constantly challenged to produce accurate spoken and written work at a high level, achievement is markedly higher.
70. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good; a quarter of it was very good. Overall, however, teaching is satisfactory and in keeping with the national average. The best lessons were well planned, conducted in the appropriate foreign language and challenged the students to achieve well. Some teachers have developed very good strategies for involving all students in their learning and for promoting high levels of achievement. Most teachers employ effectively the national strategies to develop learning in Years 7 to 9. However, insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning in languages.
71. In the assessment tests taken by students at the end of Year 9, the performance of students in the school is above average. Attainment in the 2002 GCSE examinations in French and German was well below average, but in Spanish it was above average. Boys' performance was particularly poor in French. In French, twice as many girls as boys achieved higher grades, and in German, the difference between girls' and boys' performance was even more marked. Overall, students underachieve in public examinations in modern languages, and this underachievement is more marked amongst lower attaining students, especially boys.
72. The teachers of modern languages work well together as a team. The work of each teaching group is analysed carefully by the department to identify where improvements can be made, but closer analysis by gender should have given rise to a more concerted departmental effort to raise the achievement of boys. Teaching is monitored by the subject leader, but insufficient opportunities are made for teachers in the department to share their expertise and learn from one another. This is a lost opportunity since over two-thirds of teaching is good or better. Management of the department needs to share

this good practice more effectively. Many of the weaknesses of the department identified at the time of the previous inspection still persist: improvement over the last four years has been unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is good or better in 68 per cent of lessons. The management of the department has not been successful in raising the quality sufficiently in almost a third of the teaching.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Students have good attitudes to mathematics.
- ? Teaching is not good enough.
- ? Students in Years 10 and 11 do not achieve as well as they should.
- ? Students do not have sufficient understanding of what they are learning.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Below average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory	
Management of the subject	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

### Commentary

73. Students, including those with special educational needs, achieve more in Years 7 to 9 than Years 10 and 11 because they are better taught. Results in 2003 national tests were good compared with similar prior attainment schools. This represents good achievement. Younger students are given more opportunities to explore ideas. They enjoy and benefit from this type of work. For example, Year 8 students enjoyed testing properties of groups of five numbers. Individuals' needs are better met in Years 7 to 9. In a very good lesson for Year 7, the teacher skilfully used an extensive range of task sheets to teach about perimeters. Higher attaining students were given more demanding work but all students knew they were learning the same topic so none felt that they were losing touch with the rest.
74. Too much of the teaching to Years 10 and 11 does not challenge students sufficiently. Excessive time is spent checking that students remember previous work. Too often, students simply replicate examples given by the teacher. This is not demanding enough. Students can do the exercise but many do not understand the mathematical ideas. Consequently, students are not good at applying their learning. One effect is that higher attaining students are not skilled at formulating and testing ideas. This is why a smaller proportion gain the highest grades than is the case in other subjects. Overall, students do less well in mathematics than they do in other subjects.
75. Speaking and listening skills are above average. Students generally speak with confidence and clarity when answering questions. Year 8 students expressed imaginative ideas when asked to draw conclusions from a probability experiment. However, teachers do not use discussions sufficiently. Many students cannot plan their

work well. If they were asked to write more frequently and at greater length, their planning skills and mathematical understanding would improve. The department has a well-equipped computer room. Good use of this was seen when students used spreadsheets to learn about formulæ. Some teachers make more use of this room than do others. Students do not always have the ICT skills needed for their mathematical work.

76. In most lessons students have good attitudes towards their work. Occasionally, a minority of students disrupt the learning of others and the teacher does not always deal effectively with this bad behaviour.
77. Work is marked regularly. The best comments are evaluative and tell students how to make further improvement. Some are too general or comment on effort only, not achievement. Reports do not tell parents what their child has learnt and many targets are too general to help bring about improvement.
78. Results in GCSE examinations hover just below the national average. Given students' attainment on entry results should be better than this.
79. In recent years, the school has had difficulties recruiting and keeping mathematics teachers. Advertisements for well-paid posts have attracted no suitable applicant. This has taken a large amount of management time. The school's increased involvement in teacher-training is partly to help attract teachers to the school. Currently, all classes have an appropriately qualified teacher. However, the quality of teaching has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. Since that time, standards have not kept pace with the national rate of improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

80. Students have above average levels of mathematical skills. These skills are well used in subjects including English where students analyse the structure of poems, and in science where there is good development of graphical skills. In history, students use statistical information to make comparisons. It is rare that a lack of numerical skill hinders progress.
81. Only very recently has mathematics across the curriculum started to develop in a co-ordinated way. A group of teachers drawn from all subjects is seeking to develop consistency, for example so that different teachers do not cause confusion by using different terms for the same idea. The work of this group has yet to have an effect on students' learning.

### **SCIENCE**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Standards are improving, particularly at GCSE.
- ? The marking of work does not give students enough information on how to improve.
- ? Higher attaining students are not sufficiently challenged and underachieve in Years 7 to 9.
- ? The introduction of Applied Science gives students more choice in Years 10 and 11.
- ? Good new leadership and management are beginning to move the department forward.

### **Summary of key inspection judgements:**

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

82. Students achieve well in science due to good teaching and students' positive attitudes to their work. GCSE results in 2003 were a significant improvement on previous years; this represents very good achievement. In most lessons, stimulating teaching motivates students to work hard so that they learn well. Objectives for lessons are clear and students understand them. Teachers use their subject expertise to good effect with clear explanations. Students' concentration is maintained by a variety of tasks, involving them in practical activities. This was evident in a Year 10 lesson investigating the percentage yield when copper sulphate crystals were heated. A very well planned and organised lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. Students were challenged to think, enjoyed the experimental work and achieved well.
83. There is a good practical emphasis in the teaching, with structured development of skills. By the end of Year 9, students can discuss the nature of independent and dependent variables. However, the 2003 national test results were average compared with similar prior attainment schools; this represents satisfactory achievement in the tests, although the achievement seen in lessons was good. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining students can describe and interpret patterns in their results and evaluate their reliability. Lower attaining students have difficulty in using their scientific knowledge to explain patterns. Literacy skills are developed soundly with an emphasis on the correct use of key scientific words. Students have good opportunities to develop their oral skills in class presentations but are given few tasks involving extended and creative writing. Students' skills in handling and analysing data, including graphs, are developed well. ICT is used effectively to enhance learning. Students with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and support assistants and generally make the same progress as other students.
84. Teachers' expectations are generally appropriately high, but too often teaching strategies tend to be teacher dependent. They need to challenge and extend students' thinking with more independent learning. In some lessons in the lower part of the school, teachers do not select the resources and activities to best match the learning needs of the high attaining students. Marking is conscientious but comments do not show students how to improve. The new national initiatives in Years 7 to 9 have only recently been introduced in science and have yet to have a significant effect on learning.
85. A strength of the teaching is the thorough preparation for tests and examinations. Teachers give extra revision classes in their own time. This resulted in improved results in both the national tests in Year 9 and in GCSE in 2003. There was a significant rise in the attainment of girls at GCSE. Teachers manage their classes well, ensuring good behaviour. Where tasks are different for different attainment groups in a class, learning is good. In a Year 11 lesson the teacher provided four different activity sheets. Students chose the worksheet appropriate to their learning needs. They took responsibility for their own learning, working hard, persisting when they found difficulties, and gaining

satisfaction from achieving success. Students made very good progress in their learning during lessons.

86. The department has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards, teaching and learning, investigative skills and the use of ICT have all improved. In the last year, a thinking skills course has been introduced in Years 7 and 8 and an Applied Science GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. The greater emphasis on coursework in Applied Science has increased motivation; consequently students' achievement has improved. A new head of department was appointed in 2002 and many approaches have been introduced since then to improve learning. More sharing of good practice is needed to provide consistency and improvement across the subject.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching is good and as a result learning and achievement are also good.
- ? Standards are above average.
- ? Students know what to do to improve. This is a result of the good assessment methods used.
- ? The relationship between students and teachers makes for a productive environment.
- ? Students have very positive attitudes to work. This has a positive effect on their learning.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		



## **Commentary**

87. Achievement in ICT is good overall. The standard of current work seen in Year 9 is above average. Students achieve well. They enter the school in Year 7 with different experiences of ICT; their levels of attainment overall are average. By the age of 14 they make consistent well-paced progress. They show confidence and skill in handling information, developing ideas and making things happen.
88. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are also above average. Students are challenged by the demanding nature of the problems in different situations. Talented students respond positively and produce very detailed and creative responses. However, all students think about and critically reflect on the tools they have used and how they can improve their future work. Effective teaching with these more demanding older students leads to good achievement.
89. The very effective and constructive methods of assessment used by teachers help students understand what they must do to improve. Lessons are effectively planned. The objectives for basic skills teaching are firmly rooted in planning in Years 7 to 9. Learning objectives are clear. They are threaded throughout the session and constantly raised by the teacher. Students respond positively. In a Year 8 class for example, when considering what is the purpose and who is the audience for their work, students are constantly challenged to think about these two questions. As the lesson progresses they begin to realise the importance of what is asked of them. Consequently they become more confident with the new software and are delighted when they succeed in handling layering techniques for designing CD covers.
90. Similarly in Year 9, in control, in a deceptively relaxed environment, teaching is constantly challenging. For higher attaining students knowledge of information and communication technology is extended. All have to think very hard. As a result of imaginative teaching and excellent planning, students achieve well. Learning is good and students are thrilled with the results when using commands in programming.
91. There are very high expectations of all students. Relationships are good between students and teachers. In Years 10 and 11 for example this provides a productive environment in which students confidently show their skills in designing new information systems, providing evaluations and suggesting improvements. Lessons are exciting and interesting. As a result students are very well motivated, make good progress and achieve well as independent learners. Mathematical skills are good and used effectively in ICT lessons.
92. The first GCSE examinations are planned to take place in 2004. Present standards compare very favourably with the national average.
93. Improvement has been good since the previous inspection. Members of staff now have higher expectations of students. The effectiveness of the assessment procedures is a particular aid to raising achievement and standards further.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

94. Cross-curricular ICT overall is satisfactory. However, students are not always given regular opportunities to use ICT. Art and design, design and technology and music make very effective use of ICT to extend students' understanding of these subjects. Science has made significant improvements in its application and use of ICT, but modern foreign languages does not use it effectively.

95. The learning resource centre, with the aid of the ICT technician and the systems administrator, provides valuable support for students. The skills of working independently with a variety of ICT information sources and tools are effectively extended.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? There has been an improvement in the GCSE results in 2003 as teachers become more confident with syllabus changes.
- ? A small proportion of students in Years 10 and 11 do not achieve as well as they should because of insufficient monitoring and lack of challenge.
- ? The introduction of new approaches to learning in geography is having a positive effect on standards.
- ? Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not effective in helping students to extend their learning.
- ? There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT to stimulate students and help them to carry out research and handle data.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership of the subject	Good Satisfactory Satisfactory	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

#### Commentary

96. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average. By the end of Year 9 students have a good knowledge of the geography they have studied. They examine climate data for patterns and they compare the development of a variety of countries using a range of information. The average and lower attaining students give good descriptions of places and know about the processes of river erosion. The higher attaining students use Ordnance Survey maps intelligently. The higher attaining students in Year 11 have produced clear and accurate studies of the River Seven, demonstrating their ability to carry out an investigation competently. The lower attaining students are less confident and find it difficult to structure their work and reach conclusions.
97. All students achieve to a satisfactory level in geography lessons throughout the school. The lower attaining students do not achieve as well as they should, in part because the in-class support is insufficient and not available in every lesson. Given that students are above average when they arrive in Year 7, achievement should be higher.

98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is because of the sensible attitudes and good behaviour of the vast majority of students and the caring and committed teachers. The teaching is sometimes good, for example when it involves all the students in positive active learning. A Year 9 lesson on Kenya was a good example of interesting, lively learning. The marking and assessment of work are regular but do not take sufficient account of the national curriculum levels and students do not know how to improve their work. Assessment is not satisfactory. Whilst teachers are aware of the need to improve basic skills there are insufficient planned opportunities to extend the literacy and numeracy of students. The department, whilst generally well resourced, does not have adequate access to computers to provide enough opportunities for students to use ICT to improve their learning. There is no equipment for data logging in weather studies.
99. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average. Students performed less well in geography than in their other subjects. Boys, whilst still well below average, performed better than girls. In 2003 the GCSE results improved considerably, rising to the national average. This examination result is more typical of previous years. Standards of work seen in lessons are not reflected in examination results.
100. The leadership of the department is good but its management is satisfactory. The head of department provides clear support for staff. However, the monitoring of students and the analysis of assessment data does not lead to a rise in students' achievement. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The GCSE results in 2003 were outstanding; all students attained the higher A\*-C grades, capping a long period of very high results.
- ? The quality of teaching, especially in Years 10 and 11, ensures that students enjoy history and achieve well.
- ? The leadership of the department is very good; it ensures that students' constantly improving standards are a focus for teachers.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Leadership of the subject	Very good	
Management of the subject	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

## Commentary

101. The standards of work seen were above average. By Year 9 most students have a good sense of the past and understand the idea of chronology. They use sources well and are aware of problems of bias and reliability. In Year 11 many students produce high quality coursework. The higher attaining students write with confidence and maturity, weaving together a variety of sources and reaching balanced conclusions. Their work would not be out of place in a sixth form.
102. The achievement of students is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In lessons, students achieve because of the careful planning, attention to detail, high expectations and support provided by teachers. One student commented that it was easy to learn in history because his teacher made it fun. Students retain what they have learnt because of the well-constructed revision lessons. A Year 11 lesson on the rise of Hitler was an example where previous learning was carefully checked and reinforced in a way that kept students thinking of the democratic implication of Hitler's regime and rise to power. Better teaching in Years 10 and 11 results in students' achievement being better than it was in Years 7 to 9.
103. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 11. Very occasionally teaching does not excite and challenge students enough. A Year 9 lesson on developments in textile machinery in the industrial revolution was unimaginative and slow moving and students did not achieve enough, whereas a Year 9 lesson on nineteenth-century housing conditions was clear, well illustrated and made good use of students' imagination and sense of humour. Teachers provide very good models and their love for their subject is infectious. They carefully establish the needs of the students and set out to challenge them. There is a willingness to try new ideas, for example in a Year 7 lesson on Roman towns, which ensures that teaching is interesting and learning is good. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is better than in earlier years as teachers respond well to the interest and enthusiasm shown by students in the mature subject matter tackled as part of the course. Better use is made of day-to-day assessment in Years 10 and 11.
104. GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average and there was a very high proportion of A\* and A grades. Boys perform better than girls. In 2003, GCSE results were outstanding as all – 100 per cent – students achieved the higher grades A\*-C. Very good use is made of material from the examination board to hone the skills of students and give them confidence when tackling examination questions
105. The leadership and management of the department are very good. This is a caring, gentle department that values students and staff and ensures that all are part of an active learning community. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is regular but still need to be sharper. Since the previous inspection the high standards have been maintained and at times exceeded.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Standards are good and continuing to improve; the subject is becoming an increasingly popular option for students in Years 10 and 11.
- ? Teaching methods are very effective.

- ? Plans for lessons are not always adapted for lower attaining groups and there is a need to match materials prepared for students in Years 7 to 9 more closely to their differing learning needs.
- ? The department makes excellent use of display, visual aids and artefacts.

### **Summary of key inspection judgements**

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Very good Very good Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### **Commentary**

106. Students do well and the subject is a popular option in Years 10 and 11 as a result of energetic, imaginative and skilful teaching. This leads to learning in religious education that is good and often very good. Students throughout the school are excited and engaged by the varied nature of the teaching and respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment. For example, in a lesson for Year 8 students, the teacher used their favourite books to show why the Koran is so special to Muslims. Year 11 students were absorbed by a lesson that used evocative music and lyrics to introduce Martin Luther King's stand against discrimination in 1960s' America.
107. Teaching is very effective and characterised by teachers planning lessons in three key parts, each with its particular focus for learning and clear learning objectives shared with the students. The use of assessment to inform teaching is effective. Teachers also ensure that students use key words and concepts correctly. Very good use is also made of classroom display, visual aids and artefacts to create a good learning environment in which students feel encouraged to express their views in a very open way. Students respond well to the relevant and varied styles of teaching across topics that students find interesting, especially as they are well presented. Occasionally, these attributes do not apply; teachers do not always recognise the learning needs of students and choose activities that best suit these needs.
108. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has succeeded in creating a shared vision that religious education should be an interesting and accessible subject of equal appeal to both boys and girls. Management of the department is also very good with clear policies in place, a development plan that sets clear yet challenging targets and good induction procedures for new staff. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, given the failure of the school at that time to meet statutory requirements in the provision for religious education.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

The focus subject was **design and technology**.

**Child development** was sampled. Standards in Year 11 are below average and in Year 10 are average. This reflects students' levels of capability and motivation. The irregular attendance of some students in Year 11 has a direct effect on their achievement and the

standards they attain. The teacher's careful planning and the provision of interesting and varied activities keep the majority of students working well. Learning and achievement are satisfactory.

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? High quality teaching and learning lead to the good or very good achievement of most students.
- ? Above and well above average standards in lessons are reflected in above average GCSE results in 2003.
- ? The quality of design in Years 7 to 9 is less strong than the making strand of design and technology.
- ? Opportunities are missed for using assessment more effectively to improve students' learning.
- ? Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Well above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Leadership of the subject	Very good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### Commentary

109. Teaching of electronics inspires the higher attaining students to think beyond the requirements of the GCSE examination and to enjoy problem solving for personal satisfaction. This was evident in the current Year 11 work. An ex-student, who did exceptionally well in the 2003 GCSE examinations, being one of the top five students in the country, visited the school during the inspection. He said that the electronics course, especially in Year 11, gave him a sense of ownership of his work, high expectations looking towards the sixth form, and overall enjoyment in becoming involved in an open-ended project.
110. Students enter the school in Year 7 with their skills developed to an average level. As a result of careful planning, very good resources and access to highly skilled teachers, most students make good progress and achieve well. Teachers' assessments confirm this. By Year 9 most have attained above average standards in knowledge and understanding of electronics and materials. They have also acquired the skills necessary to develop their ideas within all technology areas. The all-embracing approach to learning, adopted by the department, works well, provided that classes are not split between two teachers, as in Year 8 where progress suffers, particularly for students with educational needs. The emphasis on learning key words is reinforced well by regular testing. Homework booklets contain lists of relevant words for the task in hand but no support for words which fall outside the current focus. ICT is a strong

feature of the provision, adding significantly to students' achievement. Most students enjoy technology because they work in an atmosphere of mutual support. Numeracy skills are adequate for the tasks undertaken. By the end of Year 11, with students working in their chosen areas, standards are well above average. Achievement is particularly good in electronics but less good in Year 10 food technology, where girls perform well on set tasks but are very reluctant to engage in discussion. At the time of the inspection this had not been picked up, or tackled, by the two teachers sharing responsibility for the class.

111. In 2002, all students entered for the GCSE examination gained a grade at A\*-G with above average numbers achieving the higher A\*-C grades. Students in this subject did significantly better than they did in their other school subjects. Except for a slight drop in 2001 the trend over the past four years, including 2003, has been upwards. Girls perform better than boys, although boys achieve well against boys' averages nationally.
112. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is very good. Good progress has been made in supporting teachers in agreeing levels for Years 7 to 9 but the same support has not yet been provided for students so that they can understand how they are judged and where they can improve. Written comments on students' work are often evaluative, with no explanation of the quality appreciated by the teacher which made it good or better. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained. Some accommodation is first class. The use of ICT has continued to grow. Expectations are high and resources are very good. Opportunities for using assessment to guide learning in lessons have still to be developed in Years 7 to 9 and used more consistently in daily practice. The quality of design, in Years 7 to 9, is an area for improvement.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Very good teaching and learning lead to very good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- ? Results at GCSE level, over the past three years, have been well above average.
- ? Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- ? There is a lack of technical help, and inadequate storage space for three-dimensional work.

#### **Summary of key inspection judgements**

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Well above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Leadership of the subject	Very good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### **Commentary**

113. Students enter the school with average knowledge and understanding of artists, processes and skill development. As a result of the very good teaching they receive, most students, including those with special educational needs, enjoy the subject and achieve well. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average. In a Year 7 lesson on colour, for example, weaknesses identified by the teacher in lower attainers' work from the previous lesson were used to feed back areas for improvement to students. Their work improved significantly because they knew the qualities they were aiming for. In both Year 7 and 8 lessons seen, students learned to analyse works of art and then to apply new understanding to their own work. Opportunities for discussion and the use of technical words are strong features in lessons. Use of ICT is very good. In a Year 9 lesson concerned with one-point perspective, however, whilst middle and higher attainers thrived and coped well with the numeracy skills involved, the task was too difficult for lower attainers and motivation declined significantly. In Years 10 and 11 students are encouraged to draw from first-hand experiences. The benefits of this approach are evident in the current Year 11 work on the seaside. Motivation is high, with boys taking digital images of surfboarders and girls studying crabs or donkeys with riders on their backs. All use these images well as the basis for large-scale pictures.
114. In 2002 all students entered for the GCSE examination gained a grade at A\*-G, with well above average numbers achieving the higher A\*-C grades. In this subject students did significantly better than they did in most of their other school subjects. Over the past three years the trend has been upwards although the percentage of the cohort taking the subject is lower than the national average. Results are slightly lower in 2003. Numbers of boys, studying at this level, have significantly declined.
115. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is very good. Monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in the establishment of a very good team approach, particularly to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the use of digital images. Systems for assessment are good. This is an area that is currently being developed within teaching. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards are much higher and teaching has improved. ICT is a very strong feature. The lack of technical help and inadequate storage limit the development of three-dimensional studies.

### **Outstanding teaching in art and design**

*This very effective art lesson focused on portraying distortion of the human face. The link to an artist is through Giacometti's work. The material used is clay and the technique is slab construction. Drawings of their own faces have previously been made by students and grids used to distort the images. The students were required, in this lesson, to roll out an even thickness slab of clay, transfer their drawing of their distorted face onto the clay, cut it out and then build up a relief image using small pieces of clay. The lesson began with a very clear demonstration by the teacher with reasons offered for the advice given, such as the direction of rolling and the rule of thumb guide to check depth. Although students were attentive, and judging by their body language keen to succeed in this task, there was evidence even during the demonstration of a number of students lacking confidence in their ability to do what they were asked. Higher and middle attainers moved purposefully from the demonstration, appearing to know what was expected of them and confident that they could build on previous learning and achieve well. Lower attainers, including some with special educational needs, were too self-critical and this prevented them from risk-taking and slowed their approach to the task. This was where 'assessment for learning' was effective in moving learning forward and ensuring that students did not underachieve. This teacher did not accept 'learned helplessness' by way of "I can't do..." or "I'm no good...", but focused on the fact that the best learning comes from making mistakes and rising above them. He praised specific activities and always offered reasons for doing so. Praise used sparingly raised self-esteem. The pace of the lesson quickened, with evidence of students imitating their teacher and offering similar*



encouragement to one another. The lesson time flew by and students were disappointed when they were asked to stop working. This lesson, the last in the day, had gone very well. All students, including lower attainers with special educational needs, had achieved well. The homework set brought new challenges as students were offered a website address and encouraged to do research for the following session.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? Teaching is energetic, assured and imaginative so that students achieve well.
- ? Very good use is made of available resources, especially lighting.
- ? Students have very good attitudes to drama and work independently when appropriate.
- ? Reflection and evaluation are strengths of lessons.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Very good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good
Quality of learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership of the subject	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

116. Students' attitudes to their work are very good and they achieve very well because of their own efforts and particularly skilful teaching. The teaching has an excellent grasp of theatrical forms and the ways in which students can apply them in their pursuit of plot and character. Work on Greek myths with Year 10, for example, was notable for the speed with which students understood the notion of Chorus as character as well as narrator; this convention was applied almost naturally by higher attaining students in their interpretation of *The Trojan Horse*. Another Year 10 class worked in a similar way on *Jason and the Argonauts* and in this case, lower attaining students, too, had a good grasp of the style demanded by this work. Very good questioning by the teacher evoked lively responses. Attention is given to basic skills of literacy and an awareness of appropriate spoken language. For example, heightened language such as "He goes by the name of Paris" is a result of the student's high level of engagement in his drama. In one Year 10 class a student from an ethnic minority background responded to such stimuli through skilful leadership of his group to an innovative presentation. Another skill exercised well by the teacher was the use of intervention during the main body of the lesson. This helped students to approach their tasks with an open, curious and imaginative focus. Girls and boys worked well together and achieved similar standards in work that showed excellent promise at an early stage in their GCSE course. All students did well, whether in Year 9 or Year 11, when asked to evaluate how well their scenes were being performed at this stage in their preparation, even to the extent of discussing in Year 9 how successful one gifted boy was in developing a role of an invisible character using narration, voice-over and asides to the audience. In this Year 9 class one student's understanding was such that in the final evaluation at the end of the

lesson he was able to offer a summary of the lesson's objectives in his own words as, "A narrator narrates whilst narration is a process".

117. The teaching takes account of the facilities available. Safe lighting controls and rostrum blocks are available for imaginative use by students during lessons. Teaching also helps students understand some of the technical demands of performing such as vocal appropriateness, spatial relationships and the effect of different heights on a portrayal of power within a drama. As a result, learning in the drama studio is lively and effective, and stretches young performers technically and emotionally. These qualities are the result of very good teaching that consistently encourages students to do their best and achieve well. Standards of most of a Year 11 group were no better than average, for example when working on a complex scene from *The Crucible*. However, in relation to their starting point following changes of staffing in the subject, their work developed over the hour of the lesson to the extent that one group of girls with good reading skills pushed their rehearsed reading to the level of an accomplished performance. The teacher also made good use of the drama assistant and a group of former students as group leaders in this lesson.
118. Over recent years, results in GCSE courses have reflected standards seen in lessons and have improved gradually year by year. There was a dip in 2003, for the 2002 results were well above average. Results in 2003 are likely to be in line with the national average since 72.3 per cent of students attained A\*-C grades and all who entered achieved a grade A\*-G.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The quality of teaching is good.
- ? Lessons are well planned, go at a fast pace and include appropriate challenges for all students.
- ? Students have very good attitudes to learning and are well behaved.
- ? One music room is too small for larger classes.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

119. On entering school the students are assessed to establish their levels of musical competence; results prove to be variable and generally below what is expected by the national curriculum requirements. Since lessons are designed to develop musical skills,

skilful teaching ensures that learning is effective so that by the end of Year 9 standards are average and the achievement of students is good. They display good control of performance techniques on both keyboard and percussion instruments, use the elements of music accurately in their compositions and sing together with confidence.

120. In Years 10 and 11, students compose music confidently in different styles and analyse set works accurately. In a Year 10 lesson the students created compositions designed to distort the opening atmosphere of the film *Jaws*. They performed successfully on guitars, flute, keyboards and percussion. They were effective in their use of texture, crescendo and diminuendo which illustrated their skills as instrumentalists and their capability in working together in small ensembles.
121. Teaching is always good, and sometimes very good. Learning is effective because lessons are well planned, go at a fast pace and include appropriate challenge for all students. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher called the register while playing *Entry of the Gladiators* which created a happy, exciting atmosphere in the classroom. This led securely into a lesson about composing music for a section from the Charlie Chaplin film *The Tramp* and illustrated, very successfully, the impact that music can have in creating a variety of moods. As a result of this, the above average compositions produced by students, using minor and major chords, were successful in underlining both action and ambience. In a Year 7 lesson on the elements of music a variety of activities were used, including performances by the teacher, the integration of rhythm cards, whole-class clapping, solo performances, tempo changes and a strong emphasis on the use of dynamics. All these techniques were used later by the students in their compositions. Planning of this quality ensures that students are engaged, have very good attitudes to work and behave very well.
122. Over the last three years standards at GCSE have consistently matched the national average. Girls have slightly outperformed boys. Students respond to the requirements of the examination specification with commitment and enthusiasm.
123. The leadership and management of the department are good. Detailed schemes of work that contain realistic teaching and learning strategies underpin the work of the department. Assessment is used rigorously to inform both students and the department of progress, and to set targets for the future. Approaches to many of the topics are matched to students' learning needs and ensure that both higher and lower attainers are challenged and working to capacity. ICT music programs are used regularly to promote students' understanding of issues being studied and the vibrant displays of musical terms around the classrooms help to reinforce and develop the students' use of musical vocabulary. The resources in the department are good but one of the music rooms is too small and inadequate for large classes.
124. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is consistently good and often very good and the re-designed schemes of work provide help and support to the teachers; this helps to ensure consistency of standards. However, teaching needs to improve even more in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that students achieve standards that improve on their past performance.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ? Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 7 to 9.
- ? Students achieve well throughout the school.

- ? At present, boys and girls do not have equality of access to the physical education curriculum.
- ? Extra-curricular sport is very good.
- ? There is not enough specialist teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- ? A GCSE option course is a developmental priority.

### **Summary of key inspection judgements**

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Good
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good
Quality of learning	Very good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Good Satisfactory Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### **Commentary**

125. Students achieve well in the subject because most enter the school with skills that are below average. By Year 9, students reach an average standard and by Year 11 are above average. Standards are above average in hockey, rugby and gymnastics by Year 9 and in netball by Year 11. There is well above average performance in football by Year 11 boys; their skills are at an advanced stage. There is concern that a few groups do not achieve their potential in Years 10 and 11 because of a lack of specialist teaching. It is also difficult for a male non-specialist teacher to organise girls' groups in changing rooms; as a result there is sometimes a late start to the lesson. Assessment by teachers at the end of Years 9 and 11 match the findings of the inspection. The department needs to use national curriculum levels, however, when judging standards.
126. Teaching is never less than good if the teachers are specialists in physical education. It was usually very good in Years 7 to 9. A Year 7 gymnastics lesson was excellent because the students handled large apparatus well, the support teacher assisted students sensitively and the class teacher challenged students and gave them the opportunity to work co-operatively in pairs. As a result, their sequence work showed excellent achievement through the lesson and they used synchronised movements on the floor and the apparatus. Students knew how to improve their performance and how to prepare for the next lesson. Other lessons in football, rugby, hockey, badminton, dance and orienteering helped lower attainers to participate and make progress since tasks matched their learning needs. There are very few non-participants, and most of these play a role as umpire or assistant to the teacher. Relationships are very good and students' positive attitudes help lessons go well. Very good teaching and students' enthusiasm cause achievement to be good.
127. The curriculum meets requirements. It shows breadth and balance across a range of activities. All students have access to all activities except for dance; this is only provided for girls. There is a very good and wide range of extra-curricular sport offered at lunchtime and after school. These are very well attended by students. Many students extend their skills by attending these sessions. Some go on to county and regional level. Many members of staff help run these activities.

128. A pilot GCSE course has been introduced as it is planned for there to be a full GCSE course offered in the near future. Another female member of the department will help make this possible in a range of girls' group activities.
129. The department is well led and its documentation well presented. A health and safety booklet has been produced that has been bought by schools from across the country. A graduate trainee is mentored effectively and contributes well to the department's activities. Performance management is in place and team leaders monitor and support lessons. It is important, however, that the department sees itself as one and does not split into two along gender lines. Currently there is no all-weather surface where sports such as hockey would benefit. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection; standards are higher and the achievement of students is now good.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The main focus subject was **health and social care**.

**Nautical studies** and **business studies** were sampled through two lessons each and a scrutiny of students' work. Nautical studies offers students in Years 10 and 11 the opportunity to take a vocational subject appropriate to this seaside town and in the tradition of the school which, when it first opened, was Graham Sea School. Standards are well above average and achievement by students is consistently good. Teaching includes practical seamanship and students show a very good knowledge of rope-work, radio-telephony procedures and the use of sea charts. These skills are reinforced during a sea passage that is undertaken in Year 10 and included in the assessment for the course. Standards reached by students at 16 in business studies are in line with the national average and represent good achievement. Teachers use assessment well and students have a clear knowledge of how to improve their grades. A supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere allows students to contribute to class discussion. For example, a lesson contrasting sole ownership of businesses with partnerships generated a lively debate and resulted in good learning by all students.

### Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is **good**.

- ? Teaching gives students control over their own pace of learning.
- ? Case studies enable students to identify with those in need of care and they suggest appropriate solutions to real-life situations.
- ? The course has a very clear scheme of work and an ambitious future programme of visits and placements planned.
- ? Line management for the subject could be improved and procedures on marking tightened.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	n/a	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	n/a	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	n/a	Good
Quality of teaching	n/a	Good
Quality of learning	n/a	Good
Leadership of the subject	Satisfactory	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

130. Health and social care is a recently introduced option for students in Years 10 and 11. It represents a further widening of choice for those wanting to select a vocational subject. Work seen and lessons observed confirm that standards in the subject are above average and that the present achievement of students will lead to A\*-G grades at GCSE that are at least in line with the school average and probably better. Students are already able to define the types of care on offer to those in need, to summarise the types of jobs in the health and social care services and to illustrate the work of voluntary bodies with some confidence.
131. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching tends to give students control over their own pace of learning and students respond well to this. A supportive framework in lessons also enables students to contribute to class discussions. Case studies presented by the teacher allow students to identify with those in need and they are able to suggest appropriate solutions to real-life situations. For example, a group discussion about a young girl facing problems at home quickly decided that she needed to talk to someone she could trust, seek help from the Connexions service or telephone Childline (the number of which was in the school planner!).
132. The scheme of work suggests that the subject will offer very practical experience of real-life care situations in the first and second year of the course. Students will be given the chance to visit or take part in placements at a local hospice, the Cerebral Palsy Help Centre and a local senior citizens' residential home, and this should reinforce the learning experience.
133. Health and social care is taught by a specialist teacher from the local sixth form college. The school has a good induction programme and has ensured that the member of the college staff is aware of the school's procedures and expectations. However, line management for the subject needs to be improved so that health and social care becomes an accepted part of the vocational range of subjects in the school.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- ? The school has established an effective and engaging approach to the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- ? Good teaching leads to good learning and students develop well their understanding of the importance of decisions they make in their own lives, and evaluate decisions made by leaders and governments.
- ? Students are well motivated and enjoy discussing issues and forming points of view.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good

Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Leadership of the subject	Good	
Management of the subject	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	n/a	

## Commentary

134. Key elements of the citizenship requirements within the national curriculum in Years 7 to 9 are taught in personal, social and health education lessons. The timetable for these lessons did not allow any of them to be seen during the inspection. However, citizenship was seen in life skills and humanities lessons in Years 10 and 11, as well as being part of a range of other subjects. This approach to the provision is the result of some long-term planning that has taken account of the strengths of the school's staff and the overall timetable design of the school. Commercial and professional schemes have been interwoven thoughtfully by the subject's lead teacher following considerable research and are designed to extend students' thinking about citizenship issues across the wide range of attainment in the school. Clearly, the concept of community is a key feature of the school, as is the school's commitment for students to feel all the school has to offer is available to each of them. This belief places principles of citizenship at the heart of the school. Its success can be measured in part by the very good attitudes that students bring to their work and relationships. A key focus of the work is to encourage students to develop as thinkers and exhibit well thought out views on their immediate and the more distant world. By Year 11 students have developed significant skills of debate and expression of their views. This is the result of a careful focus on these attributes in the best teaching. Form representatives meet to discuss issues about the social life of the school; they take this seriously and work out how best to use a £1000 budget.
135. Standards of work are above average overall in this new subject. Achievement found in lessons after one year running the course throughout the school is, therefore, good. Students discuss significant issues thoughtfully and work well together in groups. Year 11 students were moved by a starter activity in which a teacher gave 'testimony' to his experience as a 'smoker in remission'. Group discussion following this input was sensitive and thoughtful. Students' willingness to face the cut and thrust of working in groups in many subjects, from music and drama to humanities, English and modern languages, is marked. They learn, perhaps without always realising it, the nature of democracy during the give and take of points of view, the need to assert themselves yet also to listen to others. For example, older students had a lively discussion about racial prejudice and justice linked to their reading of *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Similarly, in very good teaching about alternative forms of energy with Year 11 students, the teaching encouraged talking – "Not much talking going on, guys. We need to talk to check what we need to learn from each other." This use of assessment and awareness of learning needs was a feature of this lesson; students were constantly asked to share their ideas and draw conclusions on moral and environmental issues. The teacher pressed for quality in group discussion.
136. The leadership of the subject has given a clear focus for colleagues to explore important issues within their own subject. It is not always the case, however, that teachers make it clear to students when issues of citizenship are part of lessons in other subjects. For example, in geography a group considered issues surrounding an ageing population in Britain and the cost of pensions and health care without responsibilities as citizens being discussed. In history, work on Hitler included discussions about democracy but the teacher did not help students make connections with their own perception of citizenship.

137. This new requirement as part of the statutory curriculum is becoming effectively embedded in the school's broad and balanced curriculum.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	3

<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well students learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for students	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*