

## ERRATUM SLIP

### Joseph Rowntree School

**Unique Reference Number:** 121711

**Contract Number:** 259183

**Date of inspection:** 29/09/2003

**Reporting inspector:** Terence Parish

### INSPECTION REPORT - the following paragraph should read as follows:-

7. Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is broadly above average. Overall standards in combined A-level and VCE examinations in 2002 were well above average as they had been for several years before and will most likely be for 2003 (national analysis is not yet available). Both male and female students, overall, fare equally well. The overall high grades do mask broadly average performance in most subjects, ranging from **average** examination standards in art and design A-level to well above average examination standards in biology. The most significant reason for overall results being so high (see the A grades in the table in the Summary) is that two thirds or so of students at Joseph Rowntree do four advanced subjects rather than the more common three elsewhere. The extra subject is general studies in which standards are good overall, female students achieving significantly higher results than male students. Overall results in VCE examinations are better than those in A-level, lifted by exceptional performance and very high standards in business and health and social care. In 2002 all students in the examinations for these two exceptional subjects were female. The quality of teaching and learning in these subjects is very good and obviously fosters a very high proportion of A and B grades. Overall, however, the proportion of higher grades in A-level subjects is below average and performance is lifted by average or better proportions in biology, business, design and technology, general studies, mathematics, physics and sports studies. For students to achieve the highest grades requires a commitment from them to study in their own time. The school reports that significant numbers of students at Joseph Rowntree take opportunities presented by the all year round York tourist industry to work part time for up to 20 hours each week. Some would most likely achieve better and attain higher standards if they struck a better balance between academic and other commitments.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **JOSEPH ROWNTREE SCHOOL**

New Earswick, York

LEA area: York

Unique reference number: 121711

Head teacher: Mr Hugh Porter

Lead inspector: Mr Terence Parish

Dates of inspection: 29 September – 3 October 2003

Inspection number: 259183

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1326
School address:	Haxby Road New Earswick York
Postcode:	YO32 4BZ
Telephone number:	01904 768107
Fax number:	01904 750458
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Stuart Roberts
Date of previous inspection:	17 November 1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a designated Technology College. The school reports that, unusually, it received only half the funding that is generally available for development as a technology college. The school provides a centre for adult learning, run by the LEA, and is used by community groups as a venue for events and regular meetings. Pupils are broadly average overall both in their backgrounds and ability when they start school. Most pupils are from White backgrounds. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups, a few of whom still have limited use of English. The number of pupils with special educational needs is about average for the size of school, with about half having learning needs and half behavioural difficulties.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15465	Terence Parish	Lead inspector	
31243	Pat Dodd-Racher	Lay inspector	
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	Religious education Business studies Business education (sixth form) Economics (sixth form) Work related curriculum
22685	Natalie Moss	Team inspector	English Drama Theatre studies (sixth form)
31850	David Nevens	Team inspector	Citizenship Music
16950	Caroline Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
22906	Barry Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) ICT (sixth form)
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	History History (sixth form)
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	Geography Geography (sixth form)
27503	Marie Foulds	Team inspector	Science Biology (sixth form)
23891	Peter Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology
31100	Geoff Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics Mathematics (sixth form)
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art and design Art and design (sixth form)
12825	Niall Carr	Team inspector	Physical education
7958	Gina Lewis	Team inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs English (sixth form)

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The main school (Years 7 to 11) provides a good quality of education and gives satisfactory value for money.** Pupils' achieve well overall and standards are above average. Achievement fluctuates from year to year, however, and GCSE results in 2002 did not represent satisfactory achievement. 2003 results are much better and are likely to represent at least satisfactory achievement. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Sports provision is very good and community links are valued by adults and pupils. Leadership is good. School management provides good systems to help the school function but a few are not as effective as they should be.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good overall.
- Pastoral care is good overall and very good in the sixth form.
- Many subjects are led and managed well or better.
- Work experience is very good.
- Younger pupils value the mentoring they receive from older ones.
- The school works hard to ensure all pupils are equally able to benefit from lessons and other activities.
- Many teachers work effectively with pupils who have behavioural problems but the co-ordination of support for such pupils is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for ICT within many subjects and for independent learning is unsatisfactory.
- There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7-9.

Since the last inspection, the school's GCSE results have declined slightly whilst national results have improved significantly. However, the overall ability of the school's pupils, when they start in Year 7, has also declined a little. Pupils generally achieve about as well now as they did six years ago and the quality of teaching and learning is about the same. Points for improvement raised then have partly been addressed: Provision for ICT is certainly much better now but is not yet good enough; independent learning still has to be developed; the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils still disrupts some learning. The use of data to help assess and monitor pupils' progress is much better but is not consistently well used. How pupils are grouped by ability, or not, has changed, but the range of ways this is done now needs further review. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	B	C	D
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	A	A	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils are currently achieving well overall. Standards are broadly average in Years 7-9 (Key Stage 3) and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards are above average in Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4) and in the sixth form and pupils and students achieve well. Achievement is good in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English are average in Key Stage 3 whereas they are above average in mathematics and in science. Standards in all three subjects are above average in Key Stage 4. Achievement in geography in Years 10 and 11 is very good whereas in ICT it is unsatisfactory, due



largely to poor ICT provision when these pupils were younger. Pupils in Years 7-

9 are now achieving satisfactorily in ICT. Standards in the sixth form are broadly above average. The well above average standards indicated in the table above include general studies results which most pupils take.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory.** Most show good or better behaviour and good attitudes, but this is tempered by the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of a small minority. Attendance is average overall. Punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and in most subjects. Teaching is good in mathematics and in science in all years and in English in Years 10 and 11.** Overall, pupils learn new knowledge and skills, and how to apply them, well. In history pupils develop very well as independent learners – they seek out information effectively. Language teaching challenges the most able pupils effectively. Teaching in physical education is planned very well and involves pupils so that they learn well co-operatively. Teaching is very good in design and technology, geography and history in Years 10 and 11, whereas it is satisfactory in art and design and in religious education in Years 7-9, and in ICT in all years. Short focused activities, opportunities for independent learning and teachers' high expectations are features of very good lessons. Throughout Years 7-11, but more frequently in Years 7-9, pupils' learning is sometimes adversely affected by the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils which is not managed well enough by a few teachers. The curriculum is good and the impact of Technology College status is evident in the wide range of successful design and technology courses and the presence of successful 'express' groups in mathematics. The care and support of pupils are good, the partnership with parents is satisfactory and links with wider community are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** Leadership is good and helps make teaching and learning effective. Management is satisfactory overall. Some school systems are inconsistently followed and whole school planning for pupils with behavioural needs, in particular, is not as effective as it should be. The work of the governing body is good and governors both support and challenge the school to do better.

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

Parents find teachers approachable and value their commitment to pupils' welfare. Some parents would like more information about the curriculum, homework, and their child's progress. Inspection found that the school offers parents relevant information about the school, but in Years 7-11, reports to parents are not sufficiently focused on what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils think that teaching is good and that staff are helpful. They value the range of sports. They complain about pupils who disrupt lessons. Inspection supports pupils' views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to raise standards are:

- Improve aspects of the management of pupils with behavioural problems.
- Tackle the reasons for the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7-9.
- Improve the provision for information and communication technology further.
- Improve the monitoring of attendance in the sixth form and punctuality in all years.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian nature, and meet requirements for religious education in the sixth form.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**Overall, the sixth form provides a good quality of education and is cost effective.** The curriculum is wide and appropriate to students' needs. On entry students have above average attainment overall. Their skills in literacy and numeracy are competent but they have below average skills in ICT. Students achieve well, including the few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Examination results have improved since the last inspection. In 2002, the overall point score, when including general studies, was well above average, but the point score pupils achieved per subject was average. Teaching and learning are good overall. The new head of sixth form has made an effective start in leadership and management. She has identified appropriate priorities for development.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve well in their A-level and advanced vocational courses.
- Teaching is effective and students learn well as a result.
- The advice and support for students are very good, and much appreciated by them.
- The general studies and enrichment courses are valuable additions to students' experience.
- Procedures for monitoring absences and punctuality are not rigorous enough.
- The short time allocation for religious education does not allow the requirements of the local agreed syllabus to be met.

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected fully, some not at all.

Curriculum area	Evaluation of provision
English, languages and communication	<b>Good</b> in A-level English. Teaching and learning are good and students make satisfactory progress.
Mathematics	<b>Good</b> in A-level mathematics. Teaching is good and often very good with very experienced teachers. Students achieve well.
Science	<b>Good</b> in A-level Biology. Teaching and learning are good and students learn and achieve well.
Information and communication technology	<b>Good</b> in AVCE and ECDL courses. Students make good progress because of effective teaching. Standards are below average, because of poor background knowledge.
Humanities	<b>Very good</b> in A-level geography. Teaching and learning are of high quality. Students achieve very well. Independent learning is a strength. <b>Very good</b> in A-level history. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good and students learn well.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Very good</b> in A-level art and design. Teaching and learning are very good. Good relationships encourage students to achieve well. <b>Very good</b> in AVCE art and design with high achievement. <b>Very good</b> in A-level theatre studies. Teaching of high quality results in very good learning and achievement by well-motivated students.
Business	<b>Very good</b> in A-level business studies. Teaching and learning are very good and achievement very high. Leadership and management are very strong. <b>Good</b> in AVCE business.
General education	<b>Good</b> in A-level general studies. Standards are above average.

Teaching and learning are effective. Students achieve well and find the course valuable and of interest.

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*The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.*

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The school provides very good advice, guidance and support. The stable and experienced team of tutors cares very well, both pastorally and academically, for all students throughout their courses. However, monitoring of attendance and punctuality is not yet up to standard. A few students have found it difficult to come to terms with the temporary lack of a common room, but the school is making great efforts to support students over this. Through the enrichment programme most students contribute voluntarily to helping pupils in primary schools or younger pupils in the main school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The new head of sixth has already established good relationships with students, tutors and the senior management team. She has identified priorities for attention, for example the monitoring of attendance and punctuality and the extension of the enrichment programme. Links with the community and parents are strong. The curriculum is appropriately broad. Many students find general studies to be an interesting and valuable addition to their programme, because the school takes the subject seriously. The allocation of time to religious education, however, does not meet statutory requirements.

### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students enjoy life in the sixth form. They appreciate the teachers' expertise and the help they receive from staff who know them well. Students agree that they are encouraged to study and research topics independently. Many mention the lack of a common room, but most have found other rooms for socialising. A few would like more computers and more feedback on their homework.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Standards of work are above average and pupils achieve well.** In Years 7-9 standards are average and pupils' achievement satisfactory. Standards are above average and achievement is good in all other years. Standards are above average in mathematics and in science in Years 9 and 11, whilst they are average in English in Year 9, rising to above average in Year 11. There are no significant differences between the overall performances of boys and girls.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Pupils and students achieve well by the time they leave school.
- Standards of achievement in numeracy are good.
- Standards in design and technology and in geography in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and pupils achieve well; in the sixth form, standards in business and in health and social care are high and students achieve very well.
- Standards in ICT in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are below average and neither pupils or students have achieved satisfactorily.
- Standards in art and design in Key Stage 3 are below average but represent satisfactory achievement as pupils skills in art are below average when they start school.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.9 (37.4)	33.3 (33.0)
mathematics	35.3 (37.3)	34.7 (34.4)
science	34.2 (36.9)	33.8 (33.5)

*There were 226 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

#### **Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002**

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	53.8 (62.7)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91.6 (92.9)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (98)	94.6 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.9 (n/a)	34.7 (n/a)

*There were 225 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

### Commentary

1. GCSE standards have declined since the time of the last inspection; they have moved closer to average from well above average then. However, test results and inspection evidence show the overall ability of pupils entering the school has also declined and is above but close to average now, whereas it was close to well above average then. Consequently pupils are generally achieving as well now, at least by Year 11, as they were six years ago. Parents agree with this as they said their children, overall, make good progress. In 2002 pupils did not make good progress overall in GCSE. They underachieved in relation to their prior attainment in Year 9 and in Year 7. This situation was turned round in 2003; pupils did much better at GCSE than their peers in the previous Year 11 even though the 2003 pupils began with a lower prior attainment, when they started in Year 7, than the 2002 Year 11 pupils did. Results fluctuate from year to year and the 2002 and 2003 results indicate that neither ups nor downs necessarily relate to the ability profile of the cohort. The school relates changes in performance to pupils' attitudes. The LEA reached no firm conclusion when asked to consider the matter. Inspection revealed no obvious factors either but one can say pupils' achievement, by Year 11, is good at this point in time based on those pupils prior attainment at the end of Year 9.
2. Parents did express concern about progress in Year 7 (the current Year 8) and the apparent hindrance to achievement resulting in rather unclear and variable 'setting' arrangements in some subjects (how pupils are grouped by ability, or not). The inspection found no problems with the current Year 7, though it is early in the term, but the team does comment on the need to rationalise how pupils are grouped. Unsatisfactory progress in lessons was noted only in the few lessons which were taught unsatisfactorily; certainly, good or better teaching, whatever grouping arrangements are used, is effective in promoting learning. The separate grouping of very able pupils in mathematics is very effective in supporting those pupils' learning. Some parents also suggested that academic targets set for their children did not seem to be effective or even logical sometimes, given their understanding of their children's ability. They thought that their children did not achieve well enough. Inspection found that the use of targets remains of variable quality, but that assessment is good and that targets should evolve and be more effective in this year, the second year of their use. Pupils did achieve much better by the end of 2003 than they did by the end of 2002, both in Year 9 national tests and in GCSE examinations, and improved assessment and target setting undoubtedly played a part in this improvement.
3. School statutory targets for GCSE examinations are generally not met and targets set in conjunction with the LEA for the end of Year 9 tests are not either. However, teacher assessments are mostly fairly accurate and results, particularly at the end of Year 9, are in line with school expectations.
4. Language and literacy skills in general are of an average standard across Years 7-11, whilst competence in mathematics is above average. Pupils' achievement in ICT, or lack of it, is a concern expressed by parents and the inspection agrees with them. Competence in ICT is satisfactory overall, but more secure in Years 7-9 than elsewhere. Provision is better for younger pupils now than it was for older pupils when they were younger; consequently older pupils are still catching up and their standards of work are still below average.
5. In Years 7-9 the only subject with standards below average is art and design and this is due to standards being below average when pupils start in Year 7; furthermore, the work they do is not correctly aligned with National Curriculum requirements. Except for ICT, standards in all established subjects in Years 10 and 11 are average or above, and well above average in design and technology and geography. Well above average standards in design and technology and above average standards in science and in mathematics are particularly important for a Technology College; standards in ICT obviously need to rise to meet them. Standards are below average in citizenship, which was introduced as a subject a year ago; work is not yet as well advanced as is expected nationally.
6. The standards of achievement of pupils with special educational needs are good in most subject areas. Pupils make good progress in lessons where support is available or teachers provide extra support. They also make good progress over time. Many achieve grades at

GCSE and in end of Year 9 national tests their results are above expectations based on their prior attainment. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well; they are challenged more often than is often seen and the most able pupils in mathematics and talented pupils in games achieve very well. Few pupils have to learn English as an additional language but those who do achieve well in Years 7-9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11.

## Sixth form

### Standards in GCE A/AS level examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.8 (90.8)	94.8 (n/a system changed)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	34.1 (41.5)	39.4 (n/a system changed)
Average point score per student	295.2 (n/a system changed)	263.3 (n/a system changed)

*There were 69 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

### Standards in VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.9 (n/a system changed)	87.4 (n/a system changed)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	31.4 (n/a system changed)	18.5 (n/a system changed)
Average point score per student	74.0 (n/a system changed)	62.1 (n/a system changed)

## Commentary

- Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is broadly above average. Overall standards in combined A-level and VCE examinations in 2002 were well above average as they had been for several years before and will most likely be for 2003 (national analysis is not yet available). Both male and female students, overall, fare equally well. The overall high grades do mask broadly average performance in most subjects, ranging from very low examination standards in art and design A-level to well above average examination standards in biology. The most significant reason for overall results being so high (see the A grades in the table in the Summary) is that two thirds or so of students at Joseph Rowntree do four advanced subjects rather than the more common three elsewhere. The extra subject is general studies in which standards are good overall, female students achieving significantly higher results than male students. Overall results in VCE examinations are better than those in A-level, lifted by exceptional performance and very high standards in business and health and social care. In 2002 all students in the examinations for these two exceptional subjects were female. The quality of teaching and learning in these subjects is very good and obviously fosters a very high proportion of A and B grades. Overall, however, the proportion of higher grades in A-level subjects is below average and performance is lifted by average or better proportions in biology, business, design and technology, general studies, mathematics, physics and sports studies. For students to achieve the highest grades requires a commitment from them to study in their own time. The school reports that significant numbers of students at Joseph Rowntree take opportunities presented by the all year round York tourist industry to work part time for up to 20 hours each week. Some would most likely achieve better and attain higher standards if they struck a better balance between academic and other commitments.
- Standards of current work are above average overall, well above average in business and in geography (all subjects were not inspected fully). The only subject where standards are below average is ICT. This follows on from the situation described above; students had little experience of ICT when younger so they are working from a low base. In consequence, less

use is made of ICT by all students than is found in most sixth forms. General literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory or better, able mathematics students most often benefiting from 'fast tracking' when younger.

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

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are **satisfactory**. Their attendance is also satisfactory, but too many arrive late in the mornings, possibly due to problems with buses.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good behaviour in lessons when pupils are engrossed in their work.
- Confidence and co-operation from sport and extra-curricular activities.
- Year councils and the school council develop pupils' tolerance and awareness of others' points of view.
- Exclusions for poor behaviour are rising.
- Sometimes, disruptive behaviour – often low-level but persistent – occurs, especially in lower sets in those subjects where pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment, or in mixed-ability classes when teaching does not inspire all pupils to concentrate and work hard.
- Lateness to some lessons.

### **Sixth form**

- Students' ability to evaluate their own progress honestly is very good.
- Students are often late to morning registration and to some lessons.

### **Commentary**

9. The majority of pupils are polite, friendly and confident. When they are interested in their work, they are curious and concentrate intently.

### **EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE**

#### **Outstanding practice in promoting very good learning and behaviour**

"Wicked", "Ye-ess!" spontaneously from two boys affirms the keen interest taken by the whole of a Year 7 class in their new history project – to write a tourist guide to Ancient Rome. They watch a snappy, information-packed video, which the teacher frequently 'pauses'. As she questions the pupils, and answers their questions, key facts emerge. She summarises them on the board to help pupils' note-taking. The teacher tracks between Ancient Rome and pupils' own experiences, for example comparing the Circus Maximus to the Millennium and Wembley stadiums, and explaining that chariot racing drivers had devoted fans just as star soccer players do. By the end of the lesson the pupils have a corpus of information for their tourist guides, and a firmer grasp of the sources of historical evidence. They have been so engrossed that they have not thought about misbehaving.

10. However, a small minority of pupils disrupt their own and others' learning. Around ten lessons had some level of unsatisfactory behaviour during the inspection and in five of these pupils' learning was unsatisfactory because of it. The rate of exclusions is rising, reflecting the difficulty of motivating disaffected pupils, mainly boys, to moderate their behaviour. More than one pupil in every 13 in Years 7 and 11 was excluded at least once in 2002-03. Behavioural issues take up considerable amounts of senior teachers' time. Pupils complain about the extent of misbehaviour, including bullying and name-calling; the school deals well with these incidents.
11. Personal development is satisfactory overall. Independence, co-operation, and self-evaluation are fostered very well in a small number of departments including history and business



studies. In English, pupils' progress is hampered by a small number of disaffected individuals. The potential of citizenship, to develop pupils' awareness of the rights and responsibilities of living in a community is beginning to be tapped. Out-of-school visits for curriculum subjects, and extra-curricular activities including a wide range of sports, engage pupils' enthusiasm and their awareness of school as preparation for future life and work. Year councils and the school council foster tolerance but also a sense that although staff listen carefully to pupils' suggestions, there is sometimes insufficient feedback. Pupils enjoy visiting the school's residential outdoor centre at Stape, and during their stays learn how to live harmoniously in a small community.

12. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' moral and social development is well promoted through assemblies and tutor time where they consider the rights and wrongs of everyday situations and the effect of their actions. In lessons, moral issues range from fair judgements in peer evaluations to developing an understanding of the holocaust and slavery. Social development is encouraged through residential visits, work placements and partnerships with the local community. Cultural provision is good. Visits to art galleries and theatres are available to pupils of all ages and arts workers visit the school. Multicultural aspects are also strong with close links to a school in South Africa through pen friends and fund raising. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is delivered adequately through assemblies and personal and social education lessons and history trips to battlefields prove a moving experience for pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is uneven across subjects.
13. Attendance is satisfactory overall. In 2002-03 attendance was good in Year 7 but poor in Year 10. Many pupils are away for short periods especially in Key Stage 4. Less than one per cent of absence is unauthorised but the pattern of increasing absence as pupils move up the school suggests that older pupils do not always strive to attend school in all circumstances. The school follows up unexplained absences immediately, and receives good support from the education social work service, within the limitations of the 11 hours a week allocated to the school.
14. Many pupils do not arrive punctually for morning registration, and drift in during the 15-minute period; late buses possibly contribute to this. Consequently, the intended programme of personal and social education is interrupted. The daily timetable does not allow for travel between lessons, and because the campus is large, pupils often arrive five minutes or more after the start of the lesson.

### Sixth form

15. The majority of students in the sixth form are responsible learners. They can study independently, organise their work, and reflect critically on their progress towards the targets they have set in collaboration with their teachers. They have constructive relationships with each other and with their teachers. Students' time management is less good. Many students are late to morning registration, possibly due to the late arrival of buses, and sometimes late to classes. Some tutors become accustomed to treating morning registrations as arrival time, and do not make effective use of the quarter-hour period. The school reports that students often have paid work outside school; and that those who work for more than five to ten hours a week often allocate insufficient time for private study.

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	0.7

National data	7.8
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National data	1.2
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*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1308	88	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	3	1	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Teaching and learning are good overall, the curriculum provided is good and pastoral care is good. The school communicates very well with partners and other providers in the community and has satisfactory links with parents.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Assessment is used at least satisfactorily to inform both pupils and teachers in almost all subjects. Parents also think teaching is good, though they raised some concerns over religious education and ICT.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in design and technology, geography and history in Years 10 and 11, and modern languages in Years 7-9.
- Assessment is often used well and is at least satisfactory in all subjects except art and design in Years 7-9 and in citizenship.
- Teaching and learning support for pupils with special educational needs is most often good.
- Teaching and learning for the few pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- The most able pupils achieve well because teaching challenges them to do so, particularly in mathematics.
- Some teaching in Years 7-9 is unsatisfactory or poor due to inexperience or lack of specialist knowledge and consequently pupils do not learn well enough.
- Some pupils do not readily apply themselves to work; nor do they work with their peers collaboratively and these unsatisfactory attitudes sometimes disrupt others' learning and make teaching harder than it should be.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support both teaching and learning.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching in Years 7-11 observed during the inspection in 132 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2%)	26 (20%)	55 (42%)	41 (31%)	5 (4%)	2 (2%)	0 (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.*

16. Teaching is weaker in Years 7-9 than in Years 10 and 11 because, during the inspection, there was a greater use of supply teachers in these years and the school has some non-specialists teaching some classes of younger pupils, for example in mathematics. Whilst not ideal this is not unusual. A minority of pupils do not readily settle down to learning in all situations and take advantage of the inexperienced when they can. This particularly, but not always, happens when grouping of classes leads to a very wide spread of ability, for example in music, or large class sizes, as in religious education, or both. In classes where the ability range is narrower teachers find it easier to focus techniques and resources. The extreme case of this is the mathematics express group where very able young mathematicians are able to get very good support and learn without distraction from their peers. As they get older teaching time for these groups has to diminish due to cost but they have independent study time (monitored) which improves this aspect of learning in preparation for the sixth form.
17. Most aspects of teaching and learning are strong. Most significant are teachers' knowledge of their subjects, and their planning, encouragement and challenge to pupils. Consequently, pupils most often acquire new skills and knowledge and learn how to apply them. Their independent working is of reasonable quality also, but this is restricted, to an extent, by insufficient access to ICT. Teaching methods are less varied than they might be due to inadequate access to computers in the classroom. The difference good access can make is clearly seen in science; an ICT suite there is well used and a group of pupils containing a high number with special educational needs was seen learning very well. Relatively weaker areas of teaching are the provision of homework, which is inconsistent, and the use of time in the lesson, which sometimes means the pace is too slow. Teaching and learning are relatively weaker, though not unsatisfactory, in art and design and religious education (Years 7-9), ICT, music and citizenship (all years). During the inspection staffing issues accounted for some of the weaknesses in ICT and religious education, though long running staffing and resourcing problems are also linked to ICT. Music is obviously recovering from recent inadequacies and poor attitudes of pupils to the subject are still affecting current teaching and learning to some extent. A more embedded reluctance for some pupils to learn religious education is also apparent and reinforces the generally poor attitudes of a few. Citizenship is still a new subject and needs more application by teachers and a better pace to lessons. Art and design teaching for younger pupils is not well enough matched to the needs of the National Curriculum or to the requirements of the GCSE course many take later.
18. Assessment information is well provided by the school to help teachers set academic targets for pupils. Such target setting has been in place for a year and caused some parental concern at the inspection meeting; last year some targets were, apparently, inaccurate or conflicting. More teachers are now using them better though there is still inconsistency across subjects and some reluctance by a few teachers within subjects; there is, therefore, still room for improvement. Pupils sometimes know their targets and sometimes not; the link here is obvious and relates back to the interest and belief teachers have in targets. Day to day assessment, marking of work and providing most often helpful comments is not a problem and pupils assured inspectors this was so. Pupils achieved much better in GCSE examinations in 2003 than they did in 2002 and they did so when there was more focus on assessment because of the unsatisfactory performance in 2002. Whether there is a link is speculation but it is the only significant difference in the application of school systems that came to light in the inspection.

## Special educational needs

19. Teaching and learning in most lessons where there are pupils with special educational needs are good. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in a few lessons in which the behaviour of a minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and there is an absence of adequate support and / or unsatisfactory teacher management of the situation. Some teachers make very good use of the support provided. There are good, effective working relationships within science, mathematics, English, French, geography and history lessons. Where support staff are well informed about the subject or topic for the lesson and well employed, pupils make good progress. However, there are occasions where support staff have little impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs because the support assistants are not well informed or well deployed by class teachers. Where individual or small group withdrawal is made from lessons, this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Few pupils are withdrawn from lessons; those who are benefit from the help they receive and make good progress. The behaviour of some pupils improves considerably in these groups contrasting with their behaviour in some of their other lessons. However, on occasions where no support is available or it is not adequately utilised, this results in disruption in the flow of lessons by a vocal, small minority. Some teachers have excellent class management techniques and the effect of this disruptive behaviour is minimal; these teachers also utilise support assistants well.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are regularly assessed through a variety of tests for literacy and numeracy in addition to whole school and subject testing. Learning support assistants feedback to teachers any issues which arise during lessons. Regular reviews are carried out of pupils' targets, whether within a subject or with regard to behaviour. A recent review by the LEA educational services made recommendations to simplify the way in which Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are presented and targets communicated. This advice is now being followed. Pupils do appreciate having some guidance and discuss their success in meeting the targets set with some pride. The targets provided both for pupils and teachers are not sufficiently sharp at present and this is being reviewed.

## English as an additional language

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the tuition provided by the LEA is effective.
  - Support for pupils in class is limited but effective where it occurs.
  - A lack of support for older pupils for whom academic language is not as fluent as their 'social' language disadvantages a very small number of pupils.
21. Few pupils use a language other than English at home. During the inspection two more pupils at an early stage of learning English joined the school and are receiving one to one tuition. In all, there are four pupils who receive support from an external tutor; partly individually and partly through in-class support. All the support received is limited to the specialist provision made by the local authority.
  22. Teaching and learning are good. Thorough preparation by the peripatetic language specialist teacher ensures that pupils progress well. A structured approach to the work also allows flexibility to deal with issues which may arise from lessons in the time between support sessions. Homework is set and checked and reinforces the work completed in the individual tuition time. Pupils supported in ordinary classes receive good guidance which enables them to participate in work at a similar level to the rest of the group.

23. The LEA recommends that pupils have intensive exposure to the English language – they join in with everyone else rather than being kept isolated for intensive tuition. Teachers use their time well in providing extra support for pupils at the earliest stages of English language acquisition.

## Sixth form

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in business education, theatre studies, history, geography and health and social care (note: all subjects were not seen in depth).
  - Assessment is most often used very well to support teaching and learning.
  - Too many students spend too little time reading around subjects and pursuing independent study; the school reports that part time jobs take up much ‘spare’ time.
24. There were no significant weaknesses apparent in sixth form teaching. Though only nine subjects were inspected in depth most others were dipped into and the summary below shows that teaching was most often good or very good. Teachers are well versed in their subjects, have good relationships with students and enjoy the work. Assessment is most often thorough, especially so in history, geography and business education and students have a good understanding of how they are faring. Students have good attitudes in lessons but too many are lackadaisical about arriving to lessons on time and this reduces learning. There was no sign of intense private study during the inspection, either on a computer or with a book. Some do use the library for work and many did complain of the current lack of a common room. However, few rooms elsewhere are used for study by sixth formers. It became apparent in a Year 12 general studies lesson that reading books is not common practice and it also became evident in other lessons that many students have part time jobs for 5-20 hours each week. Whilst such enterprise is commendable less ‘reading around’ a subject is done than is necessary and some conflicts with coursework occur. Consequently acquisition of knowledge and productivity of work are less effective than they should be; teachers and the school in general cannot do everything for sixth formers; they need a great capacity to work independently, which requires time outside lessons. Whilst overall A-level results are average or better for most subjects there are fewer A-B grades overall; higher grades require substantial dedication and time devoted to learning as well as very good teaching.

#### *Summary of teaching in the sixth form observed during the inspection in 57 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	19 (33%)	23 (40%)	12 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.*

## The curriculum

Curricular provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is innovative.
- There are very good opportunities for work-related learning and work experience.
- There is good enrichment of pupils’ experiences through extra-curricular activities.
- The provision of ICT across many subjects in Years 7-9 is unsatisfactory.
- The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.

25. The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is suitably broad and balanced, and enables all pupils to achieve well both academically and personally. Statutory requirements are met except for the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian nature. The curriculum has been evaluated and modified to take account of new developments, and to improve its relevance to pupils in Years 7-11. The fast-tracking scheme which enables high-attaining pupils to take GCSE mathematics in Year 9 and progress to AS work in Years 10 and 11 is a very worthwhile innovation. The pupils are not taught for all their AS mathematics lessons, however, and have to spend some time working independently in other groups. In science a new course for lower attainers is being piloted. Provision of ICT across the curriculum in Years 7-9 is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils take a short course GCSE in ICT. Pupils cannot, however, take a full GCSE. This means that those pupils who go on to take ICT advanced courses in the sixth form begin the course with a restricted knowledge base.
26. The work-related learning scheme is well-planned and well-organised. It gives a small number of potentially disaffected pupils' good opportunities to work away from the school site for one or two days a week. The scheme leads to very good learning and achievement. However, their time back in school is not sufficiently well co-ordinated and time is wasted. The school provides very good opportunities for all pupils in Year 10 to spend two weeks on work experience; pupils' evaluation of their time at work is externally recognised as a good feature of this work.
27. The overall curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. In Years 7–9 it is good, as the number of lessons in which there is extra support is substantial. The curriculum needs of all pupils with statements of special educational needs are effectively met.
28. The school has invested substantially in extra learning support assistants and has recently appointed a well experienced and well qualified head of the support centre to work with pupils with behavioural and attitudinal difficulties. There is insufficient ICT support for learning; there is little software available to all pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The accommodation for individual tuition and very small group work is limited within the main school. Accommodation in the support centre does provide extra computers and space but given the number of potential candidates for the support centre this may also prove inadequate.
29. Despite the recently shortened lunch break the school offers a good range of clubs and activities at lunch-times and these are well attended. Participation in sport at lunch times and after school is good. The school also enriches the curriculum through events such as an Industry Day and a day aimed to raise the awareness of opportunities in higher education, both for Year 9 pupils. There are foreign language exchanges and a three-day residential experience for pupils in Year 8.

### **The sixth form**

Curricular provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The early start to AS mathematics has a beneficial effect on provision for high attainers in Years 12 and 13.
- There are good work shadowing opportunities.
- A broad range of A-level courses is offered.
- The requirements of the local agreement on the provision of religious education are not met.

30. The school offers a broad range of largely traditional courses at AS and A2 levels, which meet well the needs of its students. It has taken a considered decision not to offer a large number of vocational courses, in the light of the likely low demand for these from its students; appropriate provision is made in a local college. The curriculum does not meet the requirements of the local agreement on the provision of religious education for students in Years 12 and 13.
31. The fast-tracking scheme which enables some pupils to begin to take AS mathematics in Years 10 and 11 has especially benefited those students in Years 12 and 13 who wish to take further mathematics, by providing them with more time for study.
32. The well-planned and well-organised work-shadowing scheme provides students with very good opportunities to experience a range of work situations for short periods of time. The school uses its links with local businesses very well in order to provide a wide range of experiences.
33. The opportunities for enrichment in Years 12 and 13 are limited for some students because timetabling requires that they should be taught their AS or A2 courses at times when courses such as physical education, for example, are offered. The general studies course, which almost all students take, provides good diversity and enriches the curriculum. The course is planned effectively and well-structured. A small number of students extend their school curriculum by taking evening class courses in the school, by agreement with their teachers. A few Year 13 students have to do this to complete courses started in Year 12; the school pays when this happens and it is a cost effective use of resources. All students in Year 12 have an opportunity to take modules in ICT, leading to an ECDL (the European ICT 'Driving Licence') if they are not taking an advanced vocational course in ICT. This is very good provision and indicative of the good practice expected in a Technology College.

#### **Staffing, accommodation and resources Years 7-13**

34. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Accommodation for theatre studies post 16 and 11-16 drama is poor whilst that for English, mathematics and ICT is unsatisfactory because there are not enough teaching rooms and many are too small for the size of class groups. In other subjects such as design technology and science some specialist accommodation is below standard, but the school has a building programme in hand. Nine 'temporary' classrooms should be replaced with a new building. Playing fields are not up to standard as they are affected by flooding and uncut grass. These inadequacies restrict the learning opportunities available to pupils and students. There is currently no common room for sixth form students and this causes some of them annoyance; a new, larger, one is being built and is due for completion in the spring. Alternative rooms made available for students are sometimes in use because of the general shortage of rooms in the school. There have been improvements in the refurbishment of science laboratories, design and technology workshops, ICT rooms, and in creating the support centre for pupils at risk of exclusion. Accommodation is very good in history and geography where rooms are large, pleasant and stimulating, and good in physical education, modern foreign languages and art.
35. Resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in mathematics, science, history and physical education and would be so in many other subjects if ICT resources were more readily accessible. While the school has placed much funding in the development of ICT, there are still insufficient computers to meet the needs of both ICT lessons and other subjects. The amount of specialist ICT resources is low, particularly for a school with Technology College status. There are no video cameras or editing facilities for media studies for example. Little software is available to support pupils with learning difficulties. The library is better stocked for some subjects than others.



36. The school does not have particular difficulties in recruiting good quality teachers. Staffing is very good in geography and history and good in all other departments except ICT where problems have existed in the past and are set to continue. There is a generally a sufficient number of good quality support staff but a long-term illness has caused difficulties in science. Staffing is generous for special educational needs but deployment of assistants is not sufficiently well targeted and some classes with behavioural problems have insufficient support.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Pastoral care is good throughout the school.** Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory overall in the main school and very good in the sixth form.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care for all pupils. Year heads and their deputies, and form tutors, work hard to help pupils achieve their potential.
- Young pupils value the support from older pupils who are mentors.
- The support centre is a sanctuary for pupils who are not coping in the main school.
- Staff are willing to listen to and act on pupils' views.
- Long-term educational support for pupils with difficult behaviour is inconsistent.
- Monitoring of overall academic progress, though satisfactory overall, is inconsistent.
- While attention to health and safety is good, the systems for reviewing departmental health and safety audits and risk assessments need strengthening.
- Pupils would like more feedback from staff about the suggestions made by the year councils and students' council.

### **Sixth form**

- One-to-one tutorials give students very good support and advice.
- Advice on further and higher education is wide-ranging. Students are encouraged to broaden their horizons.
- The current lack of a sixth form base is perceived as uncaring by a vocal minority of students.

### **Commentary**

37. The year heads and their deputies, and many tutors, are strongly committed to helping each pupil to flourish in the school community. Pupils value the help and advice that staff give them. Pupils in Year 11 and Year 12 are trained as mentors for children in Year 7, and help them settle confidently into the school. Adult mentors from outside the school give valuable support to pupils who face particular hurdles in their lives. Staff listen to pupils and to the views of the year and school councils, but limited feedback gives pupils the impression that little changes as a result of their suggestions.
38. Educational guidance given to pupils is often good but is inconsistent. Tutors vary in the extent to which they monitor pupils' progress. Tutors' monitoring is sometimes restricted by pupils' late arrival at the morning registrations, when most of the routine monitoring of achievements and progress takes place. The support centre is a reassuring place for pupils who, temporarily, are not coping well with life in the main school. The centre has an important role, but its future development as part of the overall provision for pupils with special educational and other needs has yet to be clarified. The educational support for disaffected pupils who are excluded or are at risk of exclusion is constrained by weaknesses in long-term strategic planning for the support of pupils with special educational needs, including those resulting from antipathy to learning.

39. Many health and safety responsibilities are delegated to departments, who are careful to make the school as hazard-free as possible. The systems for informing senior managers about health and safety and risk audits undertaken in departments need to be strengthened. Pupils would like cleaner toilets.

### **Sixth form**

40. Sixth-form staff support students effectively. The rolling programme of individual tutorials helps build good relationships between staff and students. Students increasingly monitor their own progress towards the goals they wish to achieve. There are many opportunities for students to visit centres of further and higher education, including Cambridge University. The academic and personal enrichment programmes are carefully planned to offer students choice and to give them valuable life skills. The lack of a sixth-form centre was a major drawback at the time of the inspection. The loss of a sixth-form base, albeit temporarily during rebuilding works, made many students feel less valued than the Year 11 students, who were given sole use of the Youth Annexe.

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

The school collaborates **very well** with organisations in industry and the wider community, benefiting pupils' understanding of the society they live in. Links with parents are **satisfactory** and include good aspects, such as telephone calls from school on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Industry and community links are strong and relevant to pupils' learning and personal achievement.
- Information evenings are arranged in response to requests from parents.
- Informal communications between staff and parents are good.
- Parents are telephoned on the first day their child is absent without a good explanation.
- The 'Friends' association is small but effective at fundraising.
- Reports for parents of pupils often lack sharp and measurable targets, and are not specific enough about pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Some parents would like the school to respond more positively to suggestions and concerns.
- Few parents take an active role in the life of the school.

### **Sixth form**

- Reports to parents of sixth-form students are detailed and informative.
- Links with further and higher education are well organised and wide-ranging.

### **Commentary**

41. Links with parents are satisfactory with good aspects. Parents find staff approachable and they value teachers' commitment to supporting and advising pupils. Several parents would like the school to pay more attention to their suggestions, and they seek more information about the curriculum, their child's progress, and the school's expectations for homework. The school is responding to parents' wishes, for example by staging information evenings. Reports for pupils in Years 7-11 have plenty of information on pupils' personal development, but sometimes do not spell out clearly enough the gains in knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils have made, or state specific targets for future learning. Pupils' planners are potentially a good communication medium between home and school, especially for homework, but are under-used. The initiative to telephone parents on the first day their child is absent without explanation is a speedy and constructive link. Parents receive regular information and have opportunities to speak to teachers, but only a few are actively involved in school life. The 'Friends' association,

which depends on staff and a small number of parents to keep it going, raises funds for the school by running a café for adults attending evening classes in the school.

42. Links with parents of children with special educational needs are satisfactory. There are school and home contracts, which involve all parties, and parents may use the school planner, which each child has, to liaise with staff. A recent pilot scheme introduced by the LEA will bring parents into a literacy scheme that will help them to understand better the Key Stage 3 Strategy and how to help their children with homework.
43. Many good links with primary schools help smooth pupils' transition into Year 7. Teachers responsible for Year 7 try very hard to organise tutor groups in which pupils will socialise happily with each other. Parents agree that children settle well and quickly into life at Joseph Rowntree. The school's links with industry and the community are extensive, well organised, and geared to raising standards of attainment and to helping pupils develop as individuals contributing to the communities in which they live. Each department pursues and maintains industry and community links. A senior member of staff, who maintains strong links with the North Yorkshire Education Business Partnership, brings major international companies and organisations into school, for example for the annual Industry Day. As a result pupils can gain a good overview of the range of careers that are open to them.

### **Sixth form**

44. Reports to parents are every good. Teachers prepare them in collaboration with students, and they reflect open dialogue between school, parents and students.
45. Links with universities are strong. Students have an opportunity to sample some aspects of life at Cambridge University, and can take part in a programme at York University for students from families with little experience of higher education. The school takes part in schemes such as 'Women into Surgery' and 'Women into Engineering' which encourage girls to consider non-traditional careers. Students benefit from the expertise of outside speakers on life skills such as financial survival, and work with charities like Age Concern to improve the quality of life for the elderly.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** Leadership is good at head teacher, senior management and middle management levels. Good relationships amongst staff support good achievement by pupils. School reviews by senior managers lead to improvements. Management is satisfactory overall; good systems are in place and aspects such as finance are run very well. However, some policies and procedures are inconsistently followed and the management of pupils who are likely to misbehave is not always effective. Governors do a good job and help shape the development of the school and want to improve standards further whilst seeking to ensure that the school provides a rounded education for all pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well and are committed to making the school inclusive.
- The leadership of the head teacher and senior team is committed to improvement and provides good role models for others.
- Middle management and leadership are good and promote good teaching and learning.
- Though leadership of special educational needs provision is good, overall school management of this area is unsatisfactory.
- Though both leadership and management have enabled provision for ICT to improve in recent years, not enough has been done and improvement in this area needs to be more prominent in strategic planning.

## Commentary

46. The head teacher and leadership group provide good role models for other staff and pupils as they take responsibility for being on duty at all times before, after and between lessons. They are fastidious in seeking to ensure that pupils are behaving as they should; they know pupils well and are well informed when they ask them about work, remind them about something that needs doing, or congratulate them on success. Leaders at all levels are more often than not good leaders and managers and good or better teachers; this includes the head teacher who teaches several different subjects from year to year, as needs arise. This allows him to see at first hand how monitoring and evaluation procedures work and to get a good understanding of pupils' achievement, to support the good analysis of examination results. The analysis is organised by a deputy head teacher and the resultant information provides a good tool to help heads of department establish whether pupils are achieving as well as they should. Another deputy head teacher leads on pastoral care, which is good. Her excellent knowledge of staff and pupils inspires both groups to get relevant work done. Strategic planning is satisfactory. It focuses on school improvement with relevant details about such things as improving the use of data linked to the staff leading on it, when the work should be checked and how much time and money is likely to be involved. Financial costing is not as rigorous as it could be and needs to be supported by better monitoring. Planning has recognised the need to change the curriculum and it has recently expanded to include subjects such as drama and media studies. However, extra management requirements to support this expansion have not yet been fully met.
47. A well-planned and effective programme operates for newly qualified teachers and other new staff on their appointment to the school. Newly qualified teachers feel well supported formally by subject mentors and informally by staff colleagues generally. The school has a sound staff development policy appropriately linked to the school's improvement plan, performance management scheme and subject needs. There is a good system of monitoring the staff development programme, but there is no formal evaluation of the effects of staff training on teaching and learning. The school has been successful in its resubmission for the Investors in People Award that recognises the emphases given to good quality staff relations, communications and training. Many trainee teachers are placed in the school over a year, though none was seen during the inspection. Being an important partner in training should help the school maintain the good level of staffing it enjoys.
48. Reducing the workload of staff is a feature of recent developments and there are very good processes to ensure that non-teaching staff and the site are well managed through a business manager. Finances are made available to middle managers whilst being controlled through a finance officer. Mundane matters such as logging and pursuing non-attendance are also now taken off teachers hands. A few staff comment unfavourably on the lack of urgency in dealing with unruly pupils, but acknowledge a system is in place, which senior managers follow closely.
49. Governors are fully aware of weaknesses in the school's provision and standards, for example in ICT, and art and design GCSE results, and have supported actions to improve these situations when money and staff have become available, or they have pursued the reasons behind the weaknesses. They know what the school strengths are, for example in aspects of the pastoral system and in modern languages, and understand how effective leadership and management of these areas make them work. The Governors have taken more than average trouble to learn about technical aspects of what happens in school, for example how the finances work, what target setting is, and how inclusion can be improved. They take significant interest in the provision for pupils with special educational needs; take exclusion of pupils from school very seriously – and work hard to support pupils, parents and the school. New legislation has not wrong footed them and particular pains have been taken by the Chair to see that the race relations policy has been embedded carefully and successfully into the school's structures and practice. He attended significant training seminars to ensure the work on this is appropriate. All other statutory responsibilities are met except the requirement to provide pupils

and students with a daily act of collective worship of broadly Christian nature, and sixth form students with a religious education curriculum. Governors fully support the head teacher and senior managers and appreciate their hard work and commitment. Due to the strong links forged with curriculum leaders through meetings with them and visits to their subject bases, governors are well informed about day to day operations and the longer term aspirations of teachers. Consequently, they are in a very good position to question senior managers about how their planning and decisions will affect the operation of the school.

50. The leadership of the school is committed to inclusion; that all pupils will have opportunities available to them in forms that they find accessible. The leadership of the coordinator of special educational needs (SENCO) is good. The governor with responsibility for monitoring special needs is also well informed and well qualified in special education, adding to the available expertise. The SENCO has involved all departments in the initial deployment of learning support and there is a flexible and dynamic system for responding to changes in need. At present the SENCO teaches within a subject area and, as a result, the co-ordinator cannot always be available to provide support for teachers and pupils. A limited amount of time is available for discussion and consultation with staff or the head of the support centre, to advise and discuss with them how the requirements of different pupils with special needs can be met. Each department has a representative, this groups meets only once per term.
51. The management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory. There is no whole school planning for special needs provision which brings together effectively all the resources, particularly staff, available. The new head of the support centre is not at present involved in the deployment of support staff. In a report written by the previous post holder (now an assistant head of year) it was recognised that if pupils are to be reintegrated successfully into classes there needs to be support in class until these pupils are fully able to behave appropriately. Insufficient coordination of resources leads to some classes with larger numbers of pupils with behavioural or attitudinal difficulties not being adequately supported. Teaching and learning in some of these classes, during the inspection, was unsatisfactory. The last formal review of special educational needs was in March 2001. Several of the issues raised in that review have not been addressed.

### **Technology College management**

52. The school is in the fifth year of its status as a Technology College. The very unusual joint bid with the LEA resulted in only 50 per cent funding for the school for three years, and only in the last year has the school had full funding status. The focus was across four areas, ICT, science, mathematics and design and technology. Considerable change in networked ICT facilities across the school has taken place from a very low starting point, and science now has its own ICT suite. ICT facilities in the school as a whole are still inadequate. Because of the limited funding, few of the expensive 'smart' boards for instance have yet been installed, although data projectors are in use. The school has less well developed technological features, such as computer aided design and manufacture (CAD CAM) in design and technology, than might be expected. The community focus has been largely successful, and the school works with partner schools in a 'primary team leaders' programme. Currently a teacher works one day a week to develop design and technology in a number of feeder schools, and there are a number of successful programmes such as accelerated learning in science, summer schools and master classes. Substantial equipment has been provided or loaned to partner schools to support programmes. The programme designed to help develop ICT in the public community failed to attract participants. However, community links such as those with Rowntree / Nestlé and their social club are well developed, as are those through departments with industry. The curriculum has broadened to include vocational options and work related education placements.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,279,281
Total expenditure	4,304,519
Expenditure per pupil	2,962

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	274,706
Balance carried forward to the next	249,468

## Sixth form

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good overall. Leadership by the new head of sixth is of high quality. She has already managed effectively the first few weeks of the autumn term. The involvement of governors is good and financial planning soundly based.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of sixth form has already established clear priorities for development.
- The introduction of more rigorous procedures for monitoring absences is a main priority.
- A substantial rise in student numbers on entry to Year 12 has been accommodated well.
- The enrichment programme provides very well for students' voluntary service to the school and is to be broadened further.
- The head of the sixth already has very good relationships with students and staff and provides firm and principled guidance and a clear drive for improvement.
- Some students are still concerned by the temporary lack of a common room.

## Commentary

53. The sixth form has increased considerably in size this year. At the same time, a new head of the sixth form has moved into post. She has already established effective working relationships with the senior management team, tutors and students, and identified areas for development. These rightly include closer monitoring of attendance and the broadening of the enrichment programme of voluntary activities expected of each student. The inspection took place just five weeks into the autumn term at a very busy time for the management, particularly in dealing with new Year 12 students. Clear expectations and procedures, already understood by students, have already been established for attendance and punctuality. The head of the sixth has been a sixth form tutor in the school and knows Year 13 students well. Sixth formers temporarily have no common room because of building work. With good guidance, most students have coped well with the resulting constraints on opportunities for socialisation, and they look forward to new accommodation in late spring. The head of sixth has made every effort to ease the concern of those who remain dissatisfied. Students use the large library well as a silent study area. The school has allocated additional rooms for students to use, but should attempt to ensure that these are consistently available from week to week.
54. Financial planning to support the growth of the sixth form is soundly based. Currently the sixth form is subsidised to a limited extent from the main school budget, partly as a result of a sensible decision to support worthwhile courses where numbers are initially small.
55. Governors and staff share a clear vision for the development of the sixth form. Very good links have been established between several departments and governors who come regularly into the school. The sixth form governor has contributed greatly to the development of the enrichment programme of activities.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The commitment of the coordinator and support staff to raising standards.
- The level of support provided in Years 7 – 9 is good.
- Limited use of withdrawal of pupils from normal classes means there is an ethos of inclusion.
- There are effective systems in place to inform staff of pupils' status on the special educational needs register and their targets.
- Departments can get support reasonably easily.
- There is a lack of coordination of all staffing resources available to the special educational needs department and behavioural difficulties support centre.
- The time table of the special educational needs co-ordinator does not provide sufficient time to advise and guide staff in preparing different materials for pupils.
- A lack of adequate resources for pupils to access ICT programmes independently to improve their literacy and numeracy skills restricts their achievement.

## **WORK RELATED LEARNING**

Provision for work related learning is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wide programme of off-site learning.
- Pupils are very well motivated.
- There are very good relationships with external partners and agencies.
- A school co-ordinator for the work is needed.
- There is no appropriate re-integration programme when students return to school.

### **Commentary**

56. The school has linked up with several outside partners and agencies, including York Training Centre and two local further education colleges (York and Askham Bryan). Potentially disaffected pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered places on courses with these partners. This 'link' curriculum operates as a two year project. The first year is called the Bridge project and gives up to 20 pupils sampling or taster placements on a day release basis. In the second year, students use their experiences from 'tasters' to choose a day release programme in Year 11. This has aspects of appropriate study skills and life skills, such as how to attend interviews and write curriculum vitae (CVs), together with a range of vocational work including retail work, child care, plumbing, motor vehicle engineering and hairdressing.
57. Pupils learn well and make good progress. They mature in both their attitudes towards work and in their behaviour generally. They gain confidence in themselves. Some Year 11 pupils have already convinced some of the companies, in which they have worked, to consider them as potential full time employees after they have finished their studies at school.
58. However, limited follow-up to day release by the school reduces the overall effectiveness of the courses. The school has not yet grasped the nettle posed by the returning pupils to school after their day release, and they return not to a specific options timetable, but rather to the normal timetable, from which they were taken in the first place. This causes lack of continuity in their school work and can disrupt other pupils. There is no appointed co-ordinator in school; links have been run over the last few years by the assistant heads of Years 10 and 11. The likelihood of such courses burgeoning is high and current management time will not be enough to run more diverse courses for higher numbers of pupils.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Adult education classes in the school provide useful additional options for a small number of sixth formers every year. The school is an important education centre serving north York and nearby villages.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adult education evening classes help sixth-formers take GCSE 'resits' and expand their A-level programmes.
- Income from letting rooms for adult education augments the school budget.
- Guidance for other schools under the Specialist Schools Community Plan helps improve the quality of science and technology education in York.
- Staffing and resource restrictions in ICT limit this department's contribution to community education.

### Commentary

59. The community education officer is also a teacher in the school. This dual role means that he can represent the school to the LEA, which runs the evening classes, and is also a link from the LEA to the school. The evening education programme benefits school students, who can resit mathematics and English GCSEs and study additional AS and A2 levels. Each year about half a dozen students, on average, resit GCSEs and achieve a high success rate. Currently four students are taking A-level courses that could not be fitted in to their normal timetables. The school budget benefits from over £10,000 a year in income from letting rooms for community education.
60. The school has a community education role itself, as a Technology College. Under the Specialist Schools Community Plan, Joseph Rowntree assists other schools to improve their expertise in science and technology. The head teacher of a school that benefits from the initiative praises the data monitoring equipment and technical support supplied by Joseph Rowntree for work in science. There is scope to expand further this successful aspect of community education. At present the information and communications technology department does not have enough staff or resources to make a far-reaching impact on the programme.



# 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 was inspected in depth but modern languages were not inspected as fully as other subjects as provision in these subjects was judged to be strong at an early stage of the inspection process.

#### English

Provision in English is **good overall**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement by Year 11 is good overall, particularly in writing in English, and is improving.
- The Key Stage 3 literacy strategy is used well to help planning of lessons and in longer term planning.
- Teaching is mainly good in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Provision overall in the subject has improved since the last inspection.
- Standards of speaking and listening are lower than those in reading and writing.
- Standards in English literature are significantly lower than in English.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils are sometimes not well managed enough, particularly in literature lessons in Years 10 and 11.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory, as are resources for ICT.

#### Commentary

61. Current standards in work are average in Year 9, but above average overall in Year 11, though weaker in literature than language lessons. The provisional GCSE English results for 2003 were a considerable improvement on those in 2002, which were close to the national average. Achievement is satisfactory by Year 9, and good, except in literature, in Year 11, when measured against national standards, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school and attainment in Year 9 National tests. The quality of pupils' work is improving, especially in Years 10 and 11, as a result of much good teaching, good curriculum planning and good leadership of the department. Year 9 test results are improving faster than the national trend. In Year 11 the picture is less clear. Results in GCSE have improved in English language, but have recently remained static at below average in English literature. This can be attributed mainly to the lack of interest in literature demonstrated by many boys, in particular those who tend to be disruptive in lessons and do not make the effort to do well in coursework and examinations. There is, however, much stimulation and extension of higher-attaining pupils, including boys. Most pupils with special educational needs and those few who speak English as an additional language achieve well in both English and English literature
62. The relatively recent improvement in Year 9 national test results is the result of better management of teaching and good curriculum development which uses the National Key Stage 3 literacy strategy well to plan good coverage of literacy targets. The head of department ensures that pupils' work is carefully monitored and their progress analysed, tracked and targeted, in a determination to raise standards even further.
63. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are the weakest of their language skills. Pupils offer contributions readily for the most part, but often find it difficult to express themselves in a sustained fashion and with complete coherence. Vocabulary is often thin and sentence structure inaccurate. Many pupils have little sense of the purpose for which they are speaking and the appropriate style for the occasion. Many find it hard to listen for any length of time and

their attention easily wanders. Reading skills are generally sound and many pupils read fluently, though their skills in research and retrieval of information are less well developed than most other aspects of reading. Reading aloud is frequently without sufficient expression. On the other hand, many pupils accomplish much good, sustained written work and are able to write in a wide range of styles for many purposes. The range of written work covered in all year groups is now good, and teachers make good use of homework to enable pupils to complete longer pieces of work. Very good pieces of coursework were seen in Years 10 and 11, such as that on 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Pride and Prejudice' and in pupils' work on the media.

64. Improvement in provision since the last inspection is good. The head of department has produced good plans for all years, prompted by the literacy strategy and new examination programmes. Pupils in Year 9 were enthusiastically working on poetry from World War I, while others in Year 7 were using the techniques involved in writing ghost stories. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers are strong in subject knowledge. Their methods are varied and interesting and most have high expectations of pupils and offer them a good level of challenge to do well and become involved with their work. In some lessons teachers do not manage groups of disruptive pupils well, which leads to lack of pace and hold back the achievement of other pupils.
65. The team of teachers is well led by the head of department, who has a clear understanding of how the subject can improve further, is making good innovations to the curriculum and presents a very good role model to both staff and pupils. There are, however, management problems, such as the reduction of the time allocated to the subject in Year 11, which makes it difficult for the department to do justice to the two GCSE subjects. The head of department is also responsible for drama, very recently introduced into Years 7, 8 and 9, and media studies. This provides her with a very heavy load of responsibilities, including the organisation and use of non-specialist staff to teach some of these subjects. She has few opportunities to monitor teaching throughout the department and promote the sharing of good practice. The poor attitudes of a minority provide problems in setting and grouping pupils to best advantage. Accommodation is inadequate, with too few teaching rooms, so that much time is wasted in movement around the school. ICT is not used well enough to support teaching and learning, partly due to difficult access.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

66. The school is well aware of the need for the National Literacy Strategy to be applied throughout the school and has taken many steps to ensure that all curriculum areas are aware of and involved in raising standards of literacy. Many of these measures, such as the formation of a literacy action group and the introduction of a paired reading scheme, in which mentors are offered to pupils in Year 7, are beginning to have a beneficial effect on whole school literacy. Already, there is some very good practice in science, in the form of homework booklets, in design and technology and in religious education, as well as in English. Strong support is now offered to pupils entering the school with levels of literacy below the national average. Teachers are becoming very aware of the demands of literacy in their own subjects.

### **French and German**

Provision in modern languages is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are consistently well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils achieve well and often very well.

- Pupils respond very well to the modular curriculum.
  - The needs of all pupils in Year 10 wide-ability groups are not always met.
  - Starter activities sometimes detract from the main aim of the lesson.
67. GCSE results in French and German have been consistently well above average in recent years. Pupils achieve very well to attain these results. In 2002, the girls taking German performed better than in all their other subjects, and German results at A\*/A were well above the national average for boys. In French all pupils performed better than in nearly all their other subjects.
68. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average. Pupils develop their writing skills well. The higher attainers have learnt well how to use the past tense and they write at length accurately, for example about themselves, their school and their holidays. Other pupils write for a more limited range of purposes, but with support they write with care and attention to detail. In Years 7-9 pupils take part very well in intensive language practice to help in their pronunciation skills. They are expected to listen carefully and follow instructions in the foreign language. All pupils learn a second foreign language in Years 8 and 9 and the majority demonstrate interest and enthusiasm in this new experience.
69. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average. Within the close framework of the modular syllabus higher-attaining pupils learn, with support, to write carefully and produce coursework that shows very good awareness of tenses and, in German, word order. All students make particular efforts in producing their coursework. At this stage of the year in Year 11, the development of pupils' speaking skills follows the requirements of the modular syllabus and is secondary to reading and writing skills. All pupils make tapes about themselves and many pupils do very well in this activity.
70. Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well. Lessons are often of high quality. As a pilot school for the Key Stage 3 Strategy for modern languages, the whole department has benefited from recent valuable training and in-service training. Teachers use the foreign language very well to raise standards in pupils' listening and speaking skills. Teachers freely share good practice and successful teaching methods, which bring about high levels of response from pupils. Vigorous pace, forceful teaching approaches and firm pupil management all contribute to pupils' enhanced attention and concentration, including pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. Pupils who are talented in languages are very well challenged in higher sets and teachers have high expectations of their achievement.
71. Leadership is excellent. The head of department leads an experienced and highly committed team of teachers. New and imaginative teaching approaches for Years 7-9 have been taken on and developed with enthusiasm. Management of departmental documentation is meticulous. Interesting plans for the further development of computer work are in hand. Rewards for good oral work in class are not immediate enough. The extent to which teachers meet the needs of all pupils in the new wide-ability sets in Year 10 should be monitored carefully. The department has maintained its previous high standards since the last inspection under the same dedicated leadership and management.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- There are very good curriculum arrangements for more able pupils.
- Departmental leadership is very good.

- Insufficient use is made of ICT.
- There are too few mathematics rooms: in consequence, some teachers and classes are itinerant.
- Schemes of work lack sufficient detail, especially for non-specialists and inexperienced teachers.

### **Commentary**

72. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with the national average and below those for similar schools. Results in 2003 were very much better, numerically the highest the school has ever obtained. They continued a trend of improvement over time since the last inspection in 1997 which is faster than that seen nationally. These results reflect good progress for pupils from the time when they enter the school.
73. GCSE results in 2002 were above average compared to those in all schools, although these results were lower than in previous years. Results in 2003 were much better. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results are better than might be expected. They also compare favourably with the same pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 9 two years before.
74. The school is not able to identify why the test scores were weaker in 2002, but from work seen during the inspection it is clear that standards do vary substantially from one year to the next and often reflect changing levels of attainment of the different cohorts on entry to the school. Overall performance is above average and in some years well above average. All pupils, including those few who may not use English as their first language at home, make good progress. Support assistants, because of good communication with the teachers, are usually well aware of lesson plans and objectives and play a significant part in securing that pupils with special educational needs progress well.
75. Pupils' work is above average, reflecting good achievement in mathematics throughout their time at Joseph Rowntree. Arithmetic, both mental and written, is a relative strength, well taught in lessons such as that seen for a Year 8 group learning how to do long division with numbers of any size. There are very good arrangements to enable the best dozen or so mathematicians in each year to follow an accelerated curriculum so that by the end of Year 9 they gain a higher grade at GCSE. They then study for advanced supplementary (AS) exams in Years 10 and 11 as a preparation to learning advanced and further mathematics in the sixth form. Results for these pupils have been very good. Almost all gain a grade B or higher at GCSE and go on to pass modules in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics or decision mathematics. They have thereby obtained an AS level in mathematics before they enter the sixth form.
76. Teaching is good and pupils learn well in spite of substantial recent staff turnover. Five teachers have left and been replaced since last Easter including the head of department. Two lessons were seen in which teaching and learning were poor. Neither had been planned in sufficient depth to ensure enough challenge to keep the pupils interested. In part this was because the schemes of work do not provide enough guidance for relatively inexperienced or non-specialist teachers; mentoring for such teachers is provided. Most other lessons were well or very well taught including an excellent Year 7 lesson. In this lesson the teacher was extremely well prepared so that she was able to maintain the interest and involvement of pupils, some of whom had very short attention spans. Rewards of "super spider stickers" were much sought after. The pupils were given a variety of activities including reading aloud, presenting their work from the front and using the overhead projector. They worked in pairs, in groups and individually. By the end of the lesson they understood the use of co-ordinates and how to plot position on a map much better.
77. Teachers mark work carefully and effectively so that the pupils know how to improve. They insist upon and obtain high standards of behaviour, occasionally having to influence a small but troublesome minority of pupils who are reluctant to do their best. Literacy standards are

secure and teachers are rigorous in introducing and explaining new vocabulary but do not always follow the school's policy for correcting spelling and punctuation. The use of ICT features strongly in a few lessons but is weak overall. Pupils use computers at home but one boy said that he had not used a computer in his mathematics lesson in his four years so far at the school. Some teachers need training so that ICT can be harnessed to make their lesson more interesting.

78. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Seven rooms are allocated for mathematics teaching, one of which is a long way from the other six. There are ten teachers in the department. This means that some staff and pupils have to migrate around the school. One Year 7 class is taught in a different room for every lesson. It is difficult for teachers to prepare adequately for the practical work that is an essential element in helping pupils learn.
79. Leadership and management are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and standards have improved because teachers have supported each other very well. Teachers are effectively supported by lesson observation and best practice is shared across the department. However, inherited schemes of work are little more than a list of what topics are to be covered when and a few pointers. Opportunities for using ICT or enhancing pupils' experiences of the spiritual and moral dimensions of mathematics are not identified. The use of assessment is not an integral part of planning. The new head of department is a very good teacher and role model. She has made an excellent start, drawing her new team together and identifying what needs to be done. The department is now set to improve further.

#### **Mathematics across the curriculum.**

80. Pupils demonstrate mathematical and numerical skills that are above the national norms across the range of subjects they study. There is no question of any being denied access to understanding through lack of number skill. In science, accurate measurement is a feature of pupils' work. In business studies pupils can calculate percentages, rearrange formulae and substitute into them when, for example, calculating profit or loss. Good and appropriate use of graphs is also apparent across subjects where they are needed.
81. A good contribution to pupils' improving numerical understanding is made in most areas across the curriculum. The school numeracy policy is published on the school's intranet and is thus available to all staff. Most departments have and implement their own departmental policies. Opportunities for developing numerical skills are identified in most schemes of work. Especially good work, within an industrial context, is evident in food technology with the scaling of ingredients for recipes and in GCSE engineering where all measurement is to industrial standards in millimetres only. In geography, good work building on a secure foundation established in Years 7-9 is to be seen in individual project work for GCSE.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Over the past four years, standards have shown a rising trend.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Assessment and monitoring are very good.
- Management of unruly pupils in a few classes is not good enough.
- In some mixed ability classes, work does not meet the needs of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
- Programmes for gifted pupils, and for citizenship, are not in schemes of work.

## Commentary

82. National test results, at the end of Year 9 in 2002, were in line with the national average, and were also average when compared with similar schools. Boys consistently do better than girls. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, the results for the dual award examination were well above the national average, whilst those for single award were below. When compared with similar schools, the overall science results were well above average. Boys performed a little better than girls in dual award, but were significantly outperformed by girls in single award. Science Year 9 test and GCSE results overall were better in 2003 than in 2002. They have shown a fluctuating, but slightly rising trend, over the past four years.
83. Standards of work in Years 7-9 are above average, and reflect the most recent test results. Progress is good. By Year 9, more capable pupils show well above average knowledge and understanding, when, for example they balance chemical equations. Middle to lower attainers show secure understanding when, for instance, they predict the outcomes of chemical reactions by applying their knowledge of metal reactivity. Pupils have good practical skills and their investigative skills develop very well because of their effective inclusion in many lessons. They use numeracy well, especially when drawing and using graphs. Written work is clearly expressed and presentation is of a high standard. The lowest attaining pupils and some with special educational needs achieve well when work is modified for them. However, in some classes of mixed ability, especially in Year 9, they are out of their depth and progress suffers.
84. In Years 10 and 11, pupils benefit from different setting arrangements and specialist teaching. Standards are above average and the school is able to show that most pupils in Year 11 are doing better than earlier attainment might predict. During Years 10 and 11, they develop a detailed knowledge of a range of scientific topics, and the ability to apply their understanding of science is especially good amongst the higher attainers. They respond well to challenging questions. They use ICT well to carry out investigations and their numeracy skills are good. Written work is generally good and their use of scientific terminology is well developed. However, speaking skills, especially amongst the middle groups, are often weak. A modified curriculum for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
85. Teaching is good and leads to good learning. Lessons are well planned and progressively structured and almost always include ongoing consolidation and assessment. A variety of teaching methods keeps pupils engaged and focused. Practical work is taught with much rigour and develops good laboratory practice. Throughout the year groups, an investigative approach to practical work develops pupils' skills of planning and evaluation very effectively. Teachers interact well with pupils and questioning is used very well to make pupils think and reason. The challenging work set by most teachers is commendable and helps raise standards, but in some of the mixed ability classes in Years 7 to 9, work is not always matched to the whole of the very wide ability range. In most lessons, class management is good and, together with the good attitudes of pupils, contributes to good progress. In a few lessons, however, behaviour management is less disciplined and the pace of learning is affected. Technical support is very good, but at the time of the inspection, the long-term absence of a team member was presenting difficulties.
86. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department is highly focused on raising standards and has a clear vision of the way forward. Organisation is very good and very well structured systems are in place. Teaching is monitored well. Performance of the subject is monitored and analysed very well and action is taken to improve. There is much ongoing curriculum development, and a new and innovative course for pupils with lower capability is being piloted. Programmes for the gifted and talented and for citizenship, however, have not yet been formally built into the schemes of work. Amongst the staff, there is a very good team spirit; teachers support each other effectively and share the head of department's enthusiasm to improve.

87. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is very well organised and implemented, and much extra support is provided beyond the timetable. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Resources are good, especially the in-house booklets that provide challenging homework and comprehensive information for pupils and parents. Extra funding derived from Technology College status has been put to very good use; the very good ICT resources are being used very effectively in teaching. Two temporary laboratories are unsatisfactory for practical work, but replacements are soon to be built. Time available for teaching Years 7-9 is a little less than that recommended, and to some extent, restricts how pupils can be set and grouped.
88. Improvement since the last report has been good. Teaching and learning styles are much improved and pupils' investigative skills are better developed. Assessment, target setting and feedback on progress have been extensively developed and the provision for ICT is very good. A number of laboratories have been refurbished.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and behave well in lessons.
- Schemes of work are well planned for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- All pupils in Years 10 and 11 take short course GCSE in ICT.
- Accommodation and resources are insufficient.
- There has been considerable instability in staffing.
- Pupils underachieve in the GCSE short course because insufficient time is allocated to the subject.
- There are no opportunities for pupils to take a full course in GCSE.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in many other subjects.

### **Commentary**

89. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 show that there has been some improvement on the previous year's work, which was below the national average. The standard of work seen in the current Year 9 is at the level seen nationally. Standards are rising as a result of pupils having a better structured curriculum which fully meets requirements. Pupils in Years 7-9, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they learn new and improve existing skills. They achieve well in graphics in Year 7 where they learn how to use more complex software. In Year 9 there is good progress as pupils learn how to use control software to operate simulated traffic lights.
90. No pupils took the full GCSE course in 2003. About half the pupils aged 16 in 2003 were entered for the short course, and of these only half gained grades above C. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results are poorer than might be expected. The instability in staffing in previous years, led to only half the pupils completing the coursework necessary for entry in the examination. Standards of work seen show improvement on previous years but are still below expected levels.
91. By Year 9 most pupils make use of a range of software, which they have learned to operate in previous years. They make use of desktop publishing to create web pages and use different fonts and colours in word processing, showing the ability to import clip art and images from the Internet. Pupils in Year 11 have completed two major projects for their course work and in lessons are working on the theory element of the course in preparation for examinations at the end of the year. In presenting information many pupils use the full range of skills they have

learned earlier in the school, as they create logos, business cards, letters, leaflets and letterheads. They devise simple programmes of instructions to draw shapes in the control unit of work. However, the standard of pupils' work is restricted due to their having only one period a week available to complete the short GCSE course. In consequence, pupils achieve unsatisfactorily.

92. Teaching is satisfactory, some lessons are very good. In a Year 8 lesson, excellent planning, very good pace, high expectations of pupils and very good relationships led to pupils making significant progress in developing web pages. In a Year 7 lesson however, insufficient planning and preparation taking into account pupils' capabilities, meant that pupils made little progress during the lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations, which help pupils learn. Pupils behave well, are interested in the subject, and the good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils contribute to the progress pupils make. In Year 11 one teacher's explanation about lap top and desktop computers helped pupils understand the build qualities of these machines and their production costs.
93. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the department, with good day to day administration. Staff changes in recent years have meant considerable instability in the department, and a decline in the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work, a concern to some parents. A new appointment to the department is bringing some improvement to the situation, but staff absence and the use of non-specialist ICT staff continues to affect work. The new curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is beginning to raise standards, but there is insufficient time in Years 10 and 11 for the short course pupils to achieve the standards expected for their age. The lack of a full GCSE option means that pupils are denied the opportunity to extend their interests and prepare them for advanced courses. Resources and accommodation are unsatisfactory. There are no interactive white boards in the department; staff use data projectors, a less recent teaching aid. Accommodation is restricted to two rooms for normal size classes and two smaller rooms with fewer computers, both with poor ventilation systems.
94. Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection, with better curricular arrangements and assessment in Years 7, 8 and 9, progress overall is unsatisfactory because pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to underachieve, with attainment below nationally expectations.

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

95. Most departments have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work, but few do anything significant. The ICT department are equipping pupils with a range of ICT skills, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects. Pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, make use of word processing skills as they complete project work in many subjects. There is considerable use of ICT in science where the dedicated computer suite and the very good range of hardware and software are in constant use. During the inspection week a lower ability science set of Year 11 pupils made considerable progress in identifying chemicals in the home, by making very effective use of computer controlled microscopes. In food technology, textiles and design and technology computers are used effectively, particularly in graphics and in computer aided design (CAD). However, there is insufficient planned use in mathematics, and business studies does not have its own dedicated computer facility. Although some departments have computers, and all departments have specific software programmes on the school Intranet, insufficient use is made of ICT because of lack of resources. The number of computers per pupil (1:6) is not as good as that seen nationally. There is only one interactive white board in the school, in the modern languages department.



## HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education were fully inspected.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 9 and well above average at GCSE.
- Pupils, especially boys, achieve very well due to good teaching and very good relationships and attitudes to learning.
- Both leadership and management of the subject are very good and staff work very well as a team.
- There are excellent GCSE fieldwork projects but insufficient fieldwork in Years 7-9.
- There are insufficient ICT resources and fieldwork funding to enrich learning fully.

#### Commentary

96. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9 because they enjoy their studies and work hard. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 match the standards of work seen.
97. Results in GCSE examinations have improved in recent years to well above average. The proportion attaining the highest grades is also well above average. More boys than girls take geography as other options are currently more appealing to girls.
98. In Year 9 standards are above average and pupils' achievement over Years 7-9 is good. Pupils have a good grounding in geographical skills. Most use and interpret maps well but the accurate plotting of statistical data graphically is weak. Pupils have a very good understanding of how similar environments worldwide usually have similar characteristics. Gifted and talented pupils are generally suitably challenged. Higher and average attainers work very well, often producing work above expectation. Lower attainers work well on the whole although, at times, tasks set for pupils with special educational needs are not simplified sufficiently for their needs.
99. In Year 11 standards are well above average. Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good. This is due to teaching of consistently high quality that is precisely focused on GCSE examination needs, and the presence of well-motivated pupils who work hard. The best independent study GCSE projects are of exceptionally high quality. The good revision material and regular testing of pupils' learning contribute noticeably to the well above average GCSE examination results.
100. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils. Management and control in lessons are very good and relationships are warm. There is a relaxed yet purposeful air in lessons that is conducive to good learning. Learning is effective, underpinned by teachers' detailed knowledge of topics taught and presented in a structured and focused way. The best teaching is lively, enthusiastic and has high expectations. A great strength of the teaching is the emphasis placed on investigatory skills, but there is insufficient enquiry-based project work in Years 7- 9. Independent learning is very good in Years 10 and 11. Learning benefits significantly from the consistently very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils in lessons. Learning would be further improved if, in all lessons, aims were more precisely focused on what pupils should know, understand and be able to do and if, at the end of the lesson, these objectives were tested thoroughly for effective implementation. There is insufficient regular reinforcement of teaching points visually on the board and insufficient use of visual aids to consolidate teaching.
101. The subject is very competently led and effectively managed. Staff work together very cooperatively. The subject improvement plans are excellent and curriculum planning

thoughtful. Monitoring of pupils progress has produced improved GCSE results, but pupil self-evaluation is not used enough to help focus pupils' learning.

102. There is a coherent programme of work using ICT planned but not implemented for all pupils because it is too hard to get hold of a computer. This is unsatisfactory and statutory requirements for the use of ICT are not met. Fieldwork undertaken locally around the school and in York provides opportunities for effective learning and greatly stimulates pupils' interest in the subject. However, overall fieldwork provision in Years 7-9 is inadequate. Very good quality displays and classrooms large enough to allow individuals to work on their own or within small groups make a good contribution to the very good GCSE results. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and there is very good capacity to take action on the points raised in this report.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, so pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes.
- Leadership is very good and management is good.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
- The support for a non-specialist teacher is not effective enough.

### Commentary

103. The standard of work from pupils in Year 9 is in line with that expected nationally. In 2003, in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, fewer boys than girls reached the highest standards. In pupils' current work there is no significant difference in standards. Boys achieve as well as girls because they are encouraged by their teachers and have a positive attitude to their work.
104. GCSE results in 2002 were above average compared to those in all schools, and pupils achieved well in relation to standards indicated at the beginning of Year 10 from end of Year 9 test results. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly better than in 2002. In 2003 boys' results were lower than girls'. Sixty per cent of girls gained an A or A\* grade. The trend in results over the last three years has fluctuated because of the differing capabilities of the pupils who have opted to take the subject in any year. The work seen during the inspection was overall of average standard, but a significant proportion was well above average.
105. By Year 9 the majority of pupils have very good knowledge and understanding. The highest attainers understand well the motives for actions taken in the past. The majority of pupils use historical sources competently to describe and explain the past. Higher attainers evaluate the reliability of evidence well. Lower-attaining pupils extract information from sources, but have difficulty making valid deductions about what the evidence tells them. This is often because of their low literacy standards.
106. By Year 11, most pupils have very good knowledge and understanding. Most successfully select relevant evidence from a range of sources, including oral evidence. They explain well the reasons for past events. The lower attainers describe adequately, and higher attainers evaluate successfully, actions taken in the past. The majority of pupils have good recall of earlier work and move on well to new work. The recall of lower attainers is often patchy and this sometimes hinders their progress to new work.
107. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their teachers set tasks that are appropriate and use available support teachers effectively. The most able pupils make good progress because the work they are asked to do is demanding.

108. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. Eight out of nine were good or better. There was one excellent lesson. In Year 7, an excellent lesson, with a group of pupils of mixed ability and with a range of behavioural problems, was characterised by a demanding task. Pupils used their knowledge from the previous lesson to discuss, in groups, how politicians sorted out the problems facing Europe in 1918. The teacher made the work accessible to all through clear explanations and by the effective use of a support assistant. As a result pupils made good progress. In contrast, in an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 7, the teacher did not ensure that pupils understood some of the words used in a video or that the worksheet was suitable for the lowest attainers. As a result many pupils made little progress.
109. In Year 11, in a very good lesson, pupils made very good progress in understanding the reasons behind Hitler's foreign policy, because the teacher used a series of short activities which kept pupils involved and motivated. In almost all lessons pupils' very positive approach to work is a major contributory factor in their good progress and achievement.
110. Leadership of the department is very good and management is good. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers' have high expectations and a strong commitment to improving pupils' attainment. The department usually succeeds in its aim to make hard work fun. In their effective marking and assessment, teachers show pupils clearly how to improve their work. The support for a teacher of Year 7 whose specialism is not history is not sufficiently well-focused.
111. The department does not make satisfactory use of ICT because there are no up-to-date computers in the department and access to centrally provided computers is not always available at times to suit the department.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership is good.
- Teachers are specialists.
- There are very good schemes of work.
- All pupils in Years 10 and 11 study a GCSE short course.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in Years 7-9 are unsatisfactory.
- Access to ICT is very limited.
- Assessment criteria are set too high in Years 7-9.
- The subject is not regarded as of equal value to others by pupils.

## **Commentary**

112. In Year 9, standards of work are in line with national expectations and those of the local agreed syllabus. Teachers' assessments of standards do not agree with this judgement, because the school has only just begun to assess religious education and criteria used are set too high. Most pupils can describe the key beliefs of the religions studied and they show understanding of what belonging to a religion and a community involves. The higher attaining pupils explain how selected features of religious life and practice make a difference to the lives of individuals. For example, in their studies of Islam, pupils explain the five pillars of Islam, using correct technical terms such as Salah and Zakah and show how the giving of charity makes a difference to the lives of both the giver and the receiver.
113. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 study the GCSE short course. In 2003, there was a significant dip in the number of A\* to C grades; the three previous years' results were much better. Standards

of work are at least in line with national norms, and the work of some pupils is above the standards expected. Pupils are particularly adept at studying a range of contemporary moral issues from a religious point of view and relating them to their own lives. For example, in their studies of prejudice concerning homosexuality, Year 10 pupils used, with good effect, a wide range of biblical and contemporary Christian writings as a basis for discussion about the moral imperatives concerning beliefs, love and prejudice.

114. Pupils at all ability levels make satisfactory progress in all years. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because their teachers know them well and provide effective guidance in lessons. There is, however, no in-class learning support. Pupils' progress is further hindered by lack of access to ICT. Girls' written work is presented better than that of boys, but boys make better oral contributions in class.
115. Learning is generally satisfactory in Years 7-9, and many pupils learn successfully. However, a significant minority of pupils, particularly but not exclusively in Year 9, hinder everyone's learning through their poor behaviour. This poor attitude stems in part from an antipathy to the subject. Learning in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils behave well; and work consistently well both collaboratively and individually. Good relationships underpin learning because pupils listen intently to each other and work well together.
116. In Years 7-9 teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. This was mainly due to difficulties managing pupils. However, work in pupils' books including evidence of good assessment indicates that teaching is most likely good when a permanent teacher is in place. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good and teachers display a strong commitment to the subject which is effectively communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a range of methods that support learning well. There is appropriate emphasis on some aspects of literacy, such as the use of correct technical language. However, pupils' own independent learning and writing are still not developed sufficiently.
117. The subject is led well and managed satisfactorily. The head of department has a very clear view of strengths and areas for development and she has a clear vision for the development of the subject. She has produced good schemes of work. She recognises the need to include the important areas of assessment and monitoring and evaluation in her management tasks. Her task of subject management is made more difficult by pupils' attitudes; many pupils do not see much point in taking religious education, a view made by the School Council when they met the lead inspector before the inspection. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

## **Design and technology**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement in Years 9-11.
- Standards at GCSE are well above average and rising.
- There is a broad curriculum choice in Years 10 and 11, including a vocational option.
- The quality of much finished practical work is outstanding.
- ICT facilities are unsatisfactory; computer assisted design and manufacturing are not fully developed. Computer control does not appear in Year 7-9 work.
- Application and practice in assessment varies too much across the department.

## Commentary

118. Pupils make good progress as they move through Years 7-9 and encounter different areas of work, such as food and resistant materials. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9 because they have good attitudes to the subject. Teacher assessments confirm the standard of work seen because teachers thoroughly understand National curriculum requirements.
119. In 2002, GCSE results were well above average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was well above average and has risen again this year. If the overall GCSE results are compared to the likely performance of pupils currently in Year 9, then pupils' achievement is good. There is some variation in performance in different areas. In 2002, pupils in electronic products and food technology did particularly well and food technology results have risen further this year. Standards in GNVQ engineering remain significantly below those in other areas of work. Pupils succeed best when encouraged to organise their project work into small sections, each with a manageable goal.
120. By Year 9, pupils can work safely with a wide range of tools and processes. Whilst standards overall are above average, teachers' expectations vary and so pupils' quality of sketching and development of design ideas vary across the department. Where well structured workbooks are provided pupils design better and avoid copying out details of tools and processes. However, they do not all develop products well to meet a specific purpose or user need, although good practice exists, for instance when pupils develop meals in different cultural styles. Pupils do not learn well enough about computer control.
121. By Year 11 most pupils develop well structured project folios. In the best folders they include trial samples of materials or processes and digital photographs, for example of prototype meals or electronic circuit designs. Pupils of all abilities seek to carry out thorough research and generate a product specification with some industrial awareness. They can suggest some improvements to their work after making and testing. However, in some areas of work, many do not consider users' opinions or develop their product evaluation fully against the original specification. Where ICT is utilised, despite limited resources, boys in particular benefit from the improved presentation it brings. Overall, pupils do not yet utilise computer aided design (CAD) or computer aided manufacture (CAM) to help develop or manufacture their products as well as might be expected in a Technology College. However, overall, the quality of finish of pupils' practical work across the department is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by teachers and the department makes particularly good use of learning support assistants.
122. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching was at least good in all and in about a quarter teaching was very good. In a very good Year 11 lesson, pupils responded to the teacher's high expectations and good resources when they developed textile products with a clear client focus, for example a teaching aid for a nursery school. Pupils are motivated, and have made rapid progress since the start of the course. In a very good engineering lesson pupils responded very well to the teacher's excellent subject expertise and understood and used correct industrial practices. They develop good and accurate numeracy skills through work on batch production when planning the making of demonstration mechanisms for use with Year 9 pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to learn independently, but these could be better with more access to ICT facilities across the department, but particularly in resistant materials areas.
123. The department has well developed policies and has identified clear priorities for improvement which the two people who lead the department share. Assessment in Years 7-9 is most often good, but application and practice vary across the department. In Years 10 and 11, work is generally well monitored at the end of each section of work and this particularly helps to motivate boys. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and can limit access to specialist equipment to a small number of classes. However there is a well planned contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, industrial and environmental awareness. There are

very good links with local institutions, national competitions and local industry, which all contribute to the department's success. Several years' success in Young Engineers of Britain is notable.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Art and design and music were inspected fully, several lessons of drama were seen.

### **Art and Design**

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good lesson preparation and good class management give pupils good opportunities to learn.
- The vocational art and design course has been very successfully introduced.
- Activities and planning for Years 7-9 lack clear structure and matching to the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- There is no collection of assessed work to clarify standards for staff and pupils.

### **Commentary**

124. Pupils enter the school with differing degrees of experience in art and design but on balance standards on entry are below average. Standards of work at the end of Year 9 are also below average. Boys achieve as well as girls because closely guided projects lead to similar outcomes for all pupils. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 overestimate attainment because assessment criteria are not clearly understood. There is no collection of assessed work to act as an example of standards to help teachers and pupils get assessment right.
125. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was very low. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-G grade was average. Results for a parallel GNVQ art and design course, with a similar number of pupils, were above average. Girls perform better than boys overall, though both are represented across the full ability range. If the overall GCSE and GNVQ results in 2002 are compared with the likely performance indicated by those pupils' end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the examination results are good. Hence pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good overall.
126. However, too many pupils got very low grades at GCSE in 2002 because the programme of activities during Years 7-9 was better suited to the closely structured GNVQ syllabus. Teaching on the GCSE course then gave insufficient opportunities for individual expression. A clearer distinction in teaching styles for the two courses has recently been introduced. Results in 2003 were better than in 2002. The trend in results over the last three years is upwards mainly because of the increasing success of the GNVQ course.
127. By Year 9, pupils can demonstrate satisfactory skills in decorative design and show a satisfactory awareness of a good range of artists and cultures. However, their observational drawing skills are below average and, in the absence of clear benchmark standards, they are unable effectively to evaluate their own and others' work. By Year 11, most pupils show good control of tones and form in their drawings. However, most have only a limited understanding of how artists use visual language to express ideas and cannot effectively apply their technical skills to this end.
128. Lessons are well prepared and classes are well managed. The projects planned for Years 7-9, however, do not present enough challenge to prepare pupils for the GCSE course. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who may not use English as the first language at

home, make satisfactory progress because teachers are aware of their needs and allocate a significant proportion of teaching time to individual tuition. Too frequently, even so, inappropriately large classes for a practical subject restrict the quality of this tuition. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress over Years 7-9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11 where there are more opportunities for personal initiative.

129. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Very effective delegation of responsibility has led to the successful launch of the vocational art and design course. Work has been done towards clarifying and recording assessments for Years 7-9 but a co-ordinated approach to planning and assessment is not yet in place.

### **Drama**

130. Drama from Years 7-11 was sampled during the inspection. Two lessons were seen, one in Year 9 and one in Year 10. The school has only just, this term, introduced drama into the curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9. Most pupils enter the school with little or no experience of drama and many pupils' appropriate oral skills are weak. In the lessons seen, pupils made satisfactory progress and are beginning to learn the skills of stagecraft.
131. The school has offered drama as a GCSE option for several years and examination results in 2002 were above the national average. In 2003 results were lower, but a greater number of pupils chose the option, with no previous experience of the subject. Overall, standards are below average, but achievement is good from the low base at which pupils start. Teaching in the two lessons seen was very good, and the subject is well managed. Resources, particularly resources for ICT, and accommodation are unsatisfactory.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A strong specialist teaching team and good teaching are promoting improvements in learning after a period of decline.
- Good management is beginning to restore the prestige and popularity of the subject.
- Unsatisfactory setting arrangements and behaviour management restrict achievement for some pupils, particularly in Year 9.
- Lack of rigour and independence in how some pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn hinders their achievement.

### **Commentary**

132. Pupils' attainment in music when they start school in Year 7 is below average overall. By the end of Year 9 most are close to the national average. However, attainment for a minority of pupils in Year 9 remains below average because their levels of practical skills and knowledge are lower than they should be. This is because of unsatisfactory learning during Year 8. A significant minority of high and low attaining pupils, including some with special educational needs, underachieve in the large classes with a wide range of attainment levels. Year 9 setting arrangements, which are not related to pupils' musical attainment, and the difficulties of pitching work to suit all attainment levels contribute to this underachievement. It is also in these classes that pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour and uncooperative attitudes are not always managed well. However, current achievement by in Year 9 is satisfactory overall.
133. In Year 11 standards are close to the national average. Achievement is currently broadly satisfactory; although lack of rigour and independence in their learning means that high attaining and talented pupils are not stretched sufficiently. Recent GCSE results are above the

national average for A\* - C grades, but there are very few A\* and A grades. A number of

current pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the potential to achieve those grades. As for the pupils in Year 9, periods of previous unsatisfactory learning have hampered their development in music, and some pupils do not work hard enough to make up the lost ground.

134. Led by a new head of department, a strong team of specialist, qualified teachers is beginning to make a positive impact on pupils' learning. There is a new scheme of work which integrates performing, composing and listening and delivers to pupils a greater range of good practical activities, awareness of cultural diversity and opportunities for good personal development. Although the main thrust of learning is practical, learning also develops well pupils' knowledge and understanding of musical theory, style and repertoire. These changes are most noticeable in the standard and attitudes of pupils in Years 7 and 8. Learning uses and builds on pupils' good levels of English and mathematics. However, pupils in Years 7-9 have no access to good ICT music programmes, because of the intensity of their use by pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form. Most GCSE pupils use ICT to realise their composing.
135. Since the previous inspection, which identified few weaknesses in provision, music has declined considerably. The effects of staffing instability are still very apparent, not only in lower standards and underachievement, but also in the attitudes of some pupils, who do not take the subject seriously, misbehave and disrupt learning for others. The new leadership is satisfactory, given the short time the head of department has been in post.
136. The subject is now managed well and improvements to the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities and some aspects of teaching and learning are beginning to restore the status of the subject in the school. As a result, improvement since the previous inspection is just satisfactory, within the context of the recent difficulties in provision and the present focus on overcoming them.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils receive extra help and coaching to raise the standard of their performance.
- Lunch time and after-school activities are of a good quality.
- Assessment of practical performance is continuous.
- Sufficient opportunities do not exist for learning in mixed gender groups to offer pupils a wider variety of sports.
- Insufficient provision is made for pupils' different levels of skill and understanding within some class groups.

### Commentary

137. Standards of work are average in Years 7 and 8 and above average in Year 9. This is due to the interest shown by pupils and the sustained development of skills. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are above average and GCSE results are a little above average. Girls out-perform boys for the top grades. Within a supportive environment, all pupils are given the opportunity to succeed and in games they develop and extend their skills, increase their tactical awareness and effectively evaluate each other's work. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 understand in depth the effects of exercise and its positive influence on the different body systems. Most pupils participate in a recreational or extra-curricular activity, some of which is off-site. The department is known for the high quality of netball. Pupils' achievements, in relation to their average starting points in Year 7 are, therefore, good overall.



138. Girls do better than boys because they manage their work more efficiently. Pupils feel advantaged and consider they have reasonable opportunities to participate fully in the learning opportunities provided in lessons; physical education is fully inclusive. Pupils also feel they are made to work hard and their physical skills are stretched. Inspection confirmed these views. It is clear that teachers have good specialist knowledge of such activities as rugby, netball and hockey. This knowledge is used effectively to enable pupils to learn skills in games and exercises. Pupils are challenged to make progress and reach the highest levels of performance. Most lessons are effective. Occasionally the pace of learning is slower because some pupils take time to prepare for their work. Higher attainers use their detailed knowledge and understanding well in order to increase their physical skills. Their work shows evidence of individual effort to improve performance. Teachers are assiduous in their provision of extra support for pupils with special educational needs, though many of these pupils are naturally talented in sports skills and can make their own amendments to improve performance in response to teachers' comments about their work.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that pupils appreciate the value of working together. All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives which are shared effectively with pupils, who respond with good levels of interest. Pace is good and there is a good variety of activity. The enrichment of physical activity is good. Regular matches and visits to other schools add a keen edge to an appropriate ethos of competition. Teachers use the school's assessment processes well to monitor the progress of individual pupils. Target setting is precise and motivates most pupils to improve their performance but there is a lack of challenge for some pupils.
140. Leadership and management are very good. Schemes of work are well matched to the learning needs of pupils and the subject is sensitive to being inclusive. There is equality of access for both genders though there are too few opportunities provided for mixed gender learning and in some lessons not all pupils are challenged equally. Resources are good. They enable pupils to be made aware of the need for constant practice to improve skill. Extra-curricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental support. Informal events are designed to include the whole school community and at times target minority or marginalised groups.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business education**

This subject was only sampled during the inspection; two lessons were seen.

141. In 2002, standards in GCSE were in line with national averages. Standards of current work are well above national expectations. Students confidently deal with business concepts and apply appropriate business terminology effectively. For example, in their studies of aspects of finance, Year 11 pupils both understand the concepts of cash flow and can calculate cash throughout successfully.
142. Teaching seen was very good. Teachers know their subject very well and lessons are well planned with a wide range of techniques to help pupils learn. There is appropriate emphasis on literacy and the use of correct technical language. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of their peers and this means they know how well they are doing and have a good understanding of how they can improve.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good planning for the introduction of the subject.
- An effective School Council and community programme help pupils' understanding.
- Teaching, in personal, social, and health education and through some other subjects lacks citizenship focus and definition.
- Lack of meaningful assessment prevents the school from evaluating pupils' attainment and achievement.

#### Commentary

143. The school's planning for citizenship as a curriculum subject is good. It has appointed two co-ordinators and allocated a budget. The co-ordinator has benefited from specialist training, some of which has been made available to staff who teach the subject. There is a citizenship policy and from the outset the school has understood that its extensive and successful internal and outreach community programmes provide additional opportunities to promote citizenship skills. The School Council makes an important contribution to pupils' participation in and understanding of representation, elections and accountability in democratic processes.
144. Although all pupils' attainment in citizenship is below national expectations, the progress they are making is satisfactory. Currently, there is no system to define levels of expected attainment by the end of Years 9 and 11. As a result, the school cannot accurately assess pupils' achievement in citizenship nor report it to parents in a meaningful way.
145. Citizenship has a common curriculum with personal, social and health education. This does not make clear how pupils will learn the quite specific requirements of the National Curriculum citizenship programmes of study. Other aspects of the subject have been identified in subjects such as mathematics, English, geography, religious education and physical education. In practice however, only a minority of subject schemes of work indicate how the subject can support pupils' citizenship development. As a result, the teaching of citizenship lacks focus and definition. In lessons, citizenship aims, aspects and outcomes are not clear. Although pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and they are developing the skills of enquiry and communication, participation and responsible action, their knowledge and understanding of the subject is unsatisfactory. Most pupils who were asked about their work in citizenship did not know that they were studying the subject.
146. Teaching is satisfactory overall and promotes a variety of activities in which pupils can discuss, debate and evaluate ideas and opinions. Most pupils are confident in expressing their views and are slowly developing the ability to give convincing reasons for their opinions. In some lessons, pupils' learning is too dependent on the personal, social and health education workbook, which restricts their opportunities to develop extended writing. Longer answers to questions by pupils in Year 11 are superficial and show no real evidence of personal research. The pace of some lessons is too slow to maintain the interest of all pupils and because too much time is given, group activity is too relaxed. Some of the best learning was seen in a religious education lesson, where a group of lower attaining pupils in Year 10 considered the conflict between religious teaching and homosexuality, and in a physical education lesson on racism and violence in sport.

147. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. There have been useful reviews of teaching and learning and the local education authority has monitored provision. However, these have not produced strategies for more cohesion and progression in promoting pupils' development as good citizens.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

Nine subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Sampling of work in other subjects and courses has contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Chemistry	2	100	84.8	50	36.9	45.0	35.2
Design Technology	3	100	89.2	33	32.0	40.0	35.7
French	1	100	85.4	0	35.2	20.0	34.9
General Studies	1	100	78.6	0	25.7	50.0	30.0
Human Biology	1	100	81.6	0	33.2	30.0	33.2
ICT VCE	4	25	78.0	0	20.6	10.0	28.5
Mathematics	2	100	74.2	0	34.3	30.0	31.3
Physics	1	100	82.0	100	36.2	50.0	34.3
Psychology	3	100	n/a	66.6	n/a	40.0	n/a
Theatre Studies	3	0	n/a	0	n/a	3.3	n/a

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design Textiles	2	100	89.0	0	27.4	43.2	69.4
Art	9	89	96.0	44	48.7	95.0	85.1
Art VCE	4	75	89.0	0	27.4	65.7	69.4
Biology	10	100	97.0	50	36.3	90.0	74.1
Business Studies	12	100	96.4	33	32.4	83.1	76.5
Business VCE	5	100	87.1	80	16.5	100.0	69.4
Chemistry	90	90	94.0	10	45.9	70.0	81.1
German	3	100	96.3	0	44.3	46.7	82.1
Design and Technology	10	100	95.3	30	35.5	83.6	76.5
Economics	10	100	96.2	40	45.8	78.0	83.1
English Language	14	100	98.3	29	43.7	82.2	80.1
Food Technology	1	100	n/a	100	n/a	120.	n/a
French	3	100	96.2	67	46.1	86.7	83.1
Geography	20	90	97.1	30	40.5	75.0	80.9
General Studies	50	94	90.1	34	29.1	75.6	69.3
History	10	100	97.1	20	41.0	80.0	81.2

Health and Social Care VCE	6	100	90.1	50	25.0	88.0	62.5
Health and Social Care VCE	4	100	90.1	50	25.0	88.0	62.5
ICT VQ VCE	11	100	84.3	0	24.5	57.7	64.3
English Literature	9	100	98.5	22	43.7	75.6	84.3
Mathematics	11	100	93.3	55	52.2	84.6	82.2
Music	2	100	97.7	100	41.8	120.0	82.2
Physics	9	100	92.8	56	42.8	84.4	78.6
Psychology	7	86	n/a	29	n/a	54.3	n/a
Sociology	3	100	95.4	67	39.6	86.7	79.1
Sports Studies	7	100	95.4	43	29.5	82.9	73.2

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Both English language and English literature were inspected.

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All lessons are planned and prepared thoroughly.
- Teachers have high expectations of the standards of students' work.
- The attendance and punctuality of a minority of students are unsatisfactory and this affects the continuity of their progress.
- Students do not always hand in homework on time.

### Commentary

148. Most students taking A and AS-levels join the two courses with at least a grade 'C' in GCSE English and English literature. A and AS-level results in 2002 were in line with the national average in English Language and below average in English Literature. In 2003, some remarking has been requested as results were not as expected. The number of students who continue their studies in English from Year 12 to Year 13 is most often high and A-level results show students improve. However, some students do not attend regularly, which affects their performance.
149. Current standards of work in Year 12 in English language are above average. In a Year 13 English literature lesson standards were well above average; students' level of discussion of characterisation in 'Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad was of a high order with most showing thorough understanding of a challenging text. Students achieve well in both courses.
150. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and teachers have good and sometimes very good subject knowledge. The structured approach teachers adopt helps students gain in confidence, especially in Year 12 lessons. Students are encouraged to make educated guesses in response to teachers' open questions, which helps to build up their knowledge and improves their skills in both language and literature studies. Their responses are respected and often used to develop other students' understanding of a new idea. Most students are enthusiastic in their approach to lessons and participate well in discussion. However, examples of 'forgotten' homework and some lateness to lessons were seen. Students make good progress in lessons as a result of teachers' good planning and

preparation and also the respectful relationships developed between each other and with teachers. Assessment is good and homework is set to reinforce and extend students' skills

and abilities. Coursework contains teachers' commentary as well as advice for improvement and suggestions for further study. Verbal feedback given during lessons is well focused and enables students to make good progress.

151. Leadership is good and well supported by the good leadership of the head of the sixth form. Results in 2002 and 2003 have suffered from students' absences and this is an area for improvement that is being addressed by both the head of department and head of sixth form. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Media studies been introduced and the department has dealt well with national changes in post 16 examination requirements.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The school offers courses in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics leading to AS level and A2 level mathematics and further mathematics. Lessons and samples of work in pure mathematics only were seen for Year 12 and Year 13 because of the way in which the courses are structured. Representatives from each group of students were interviewed.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results are above the national average because of good teaching and good student attitudes.
- Most students complete and pass the course once they have embarked upon it.
- Express groups in the main school lead to strong results at advanced level in mathematics and further mathematics.
- Some lessons are lack lustre.
- Information and communication technology is not as well used as it should be.
- Induction for students with lower pass grades at GCSE is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

152. Results in mathematics have been consistently above or well above national standards for several years apart from 2002 when they were in line with the national average. Last year's (2003) results were better than results in 2002. Overall, this represents a satisfactory level of improvement since the time of the last inspection.
153. The current standard of work seen in lessons and in the students' folders is above national expectations in both years. Year 13 students are almost all secure with all topics including factor and remainder theorems and volumes of revolution, although one or two are experiencing some difficulties with more recent work on the application of the binomial theorem to integration. Year 12 students have made a good start with the theory of quadratic equations and have a good grasp of surds. Most have begun the course after obtaining a grade B or better at GCSE having taken the higher paper. There are, however, one or two students who have embarked on A-level having studied for intermediate GCSE only and these are finding the work more difficult than they expected. They make mistakes with algebra, for example, when asked to complete a square to solve quadratic equations, and are therefore making slower progress. The new head of department rightly recognises the need to supplement the extra help always given by teachers outside of class by improved induction arrangements for future cohorts, although it is now too late for this year's students.
154. Currently just one boy is studying further mathematics in Year 13 but increasing numbers of students following an accelerated route in the main school means that in Year 12 and for the

future there are increasing numbers entering the sixth form with a pass at AS level already secured. Most of these will take A2 examinations at the end of Year 12 and go on to further mathematics in Year 13. They all say that they value the opportunity to gain their qualifications early although none, as yet, is intending to pursue a career as a professional mathematician.

155. Teaching overall is good, with that provided by more experienced teachers in the department very good. Lessons are carefully prepared and well presented providing the right level of pace and challenge. The students work hard in class and in private study. The work done is well marked and corrected both by the teachers and by the students themselves. In class, students answer questions and discuss their mathematics with confidence. They are happy to persevere when they find ideas difficult to grasp. Experienced teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and make very good use of humour so that their lessons are interesting and enjoyable as well as very informative. Those who are newer to advanced level work are less flexible so that their delivery can be rather dry.
156. Computers are an underused resource. Lessons seen on the differential calculus provide a case in point. Showing how chords on a curve approximate to a tangent as they get shorter can be very much better illustrated using computer software or at least an overhead projector with prepared transparencies, than by simply using rough drawn sketches on a board. The students themselves say that they would value increased use of ICT in their lessons.
157. The mathematics department is well managed. The students are well informed by regular testing arrangements of strong and weak areas in their work and of what needs to be done to secure improvement. Each of these is a factor contributing to the good examination results.

## SCIENCE

Biology was the focus science subject. A lesson of physics was seen which was satisfactory. Students had not done any significant reading about their work on capacitance.

### Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There is little use of ICT other than for research.

#### Commentary

159. In the 2002 A-level examinations, results were well above average. In the more recent 2003 examinations, provisional results were not as high, although all candidates gained a pass grade. The school is able to show that for both years, relative to their GCSE results, most pupils did better than predicted. Since the last inspection, results have fluctuated, reflecting differences in capability of the groups tackling the subject. Although numbers had been fairly stable, the past two years have seen a significant increase in students opting to take biology in Year 12, and most have chosen to continue into Year 13.
160. Standards of work are above the national average overall. In Year 13, there is a wide range of capability from average to very high, but most are achieving well, relative to school predictions. They recall previous work accurately and use scientific terminology well when, for example, they study the complex functioning of the kidney. Investigative work, as seen in course work, is of a high standard; planning, data collection, application of statistics and evaluation are good. Students in Year 12 have, on average, a higher prior attainment than those in Year 13. They

are only a little way into their course, but are already successfully taking their scientific knowledge and understanding to greater depths. They have a secure understanding, for example, of the complex nature of biological chemicals, and a good knowledge of the ultra-structure of the cell.

161. Teaching is good overall and, within their capabilities, students learn well. Teachers show very good command of their subject knowledge when they use questions to probe students' understanding. Lessons are planned well to include a variety of effective teaching methods and students' independent learning skills are being well managed. Whilst ICT is used effectively for research, there is a need for further development of its use as a tool for investigation. Extra reading, beyond the demands of the lesson, is encouraged, but the department is rightly looking at strategies to improve further students' independent learning. Consolidation of new work and day to day assessment are good, and students are very well prepared for examinations. Marking is helpful and teachers give very good one to one support. Each year group benefits from the teaching being shared between two specialists. The programme of work is well organised and enables students to make good progress.
162. Leadership and management of both science and biology are very good. Performance in biology is analysed thoroughly and the conclusions linked effectively to ongoing curriculum development. The new head of biology has a clear view of the way forwards and has decisive plans for improvement. Monitoring of teachers' work is well structured. A good team approach has been established and teachers share ideas and good practice effectively. Regular formal assessment of students' progress is monitored very well. There is good individual guidance that informs students, sets targets, and impacts positively on achievement. Resources, including those for ICT, are good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- All students take an ICT course.
- Teachers have very good relationships with students.
- Students are interested in the subject.
- Students have limited experience of ICT in preparation for advanced courses.
- There is no sixth form computer area for independent study and research.

### **Commentary**

163. In the provisional results for 2003 one fifth of the students studying AVCE ICT achieved grade B or better.
164. In Years 12 and 13 current standards in AVCE ICT are lower than might be expected. Students' overall ICT standards are below national expectations because students have had very limited experience of ICT in previous years in the school, and none has taken a full GCSE course in the subject.
165. Students in Year 13 have completed projects in the first year of the two-year course, making extensive use of spreadsheets. Topics selected range from soccer leagues, to currency calculations and transport systems. Standards are below what might be expected, as the quality of presentation lacks the sophistication expected for an advanced course. However, students are making good use of more complex formulae and understand how to create macros and use 'IF' statements. In Year 12, some students achieve expected standards in spreadsheets, although their understanding of prediction is limited. Students taking the



European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) are completing different units of the basic course showing an understanding of hardware, software, storage systems and Local Area Networks (LAN) and wide area networks (WAN). A small number of students in Year 13 are taking a GNVQ Intermediate course and are producing satisfactory work to achieve a pass in the subject, equivalent to 4 GCSEs.

166. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and give clear explanations, which lead to students increasing their knowledge and understanding. Students are interested in the subject, and respond well when questioned. In a Year 13 lesson students made good progress in their understanding of databases as a result of the detailed explanation given by the teacher. Students work independently and complete tasks set with good support from teachers.
167. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with planned courses in place and opportunity for all students to take an ICT qualification. However, the one lesson allocated for ECDL is insufficient to allow students to complete the course. Although the department has a small computer room for sixth form lessons, opportunities for students' independent study is restricted to the use of computers in the main library, which is used by the whole school; in consequence, computer provision is unsatisfactory.

## **HUMANITIES**

Geography and history were the focus subjects.

### **Geography**

The quality of provision in geography is **very good**.

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

- Students are well motivated and achieve very well.
- Standards are well above average due to very good teaching across both years.
- Students obtain great benefit from the fieldwork and practical elements of their courses.
- In Year 12, lessons are not always quite as well prepared as they should be, and students do not necessarily undertake sufficient preparatory work for them.

#### **Commentary**

168. Recent AS and A-level examination results have varied significantly, but in 2003 overall results were much higher than previously. The provisional AS examination results showed a much improved trend with four students in every ten gaining an A grade. Almost all students who start sixth form courses complete them. Most students perform as expected and a number perform better than this. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by male and female students. However, the subject is much more popular with male than female students in most years.
169. The standard of current work on the AS course is above average and on the A-level course well above average. This indicates very good achievement as students' standards on entry to Year 12 were close to average. This very good achievement is due to teachers' high expectations, a challenging course and the attitudes of students who are industrious and very well motivated. Students in Year 12 show good knowledge and understanding of introductory topics covered in both physical and human geography. Work on both courses is covered very thoroughly and summarised so that students can get greatest value from them. Critical analyses are progressively and well developed over time although assignments do not often allow an appreciation of any wider geographical context to their studies. When writing set assignments most students undertake independent research very well to add to text and notes

provided in class. Written work is of a generally high standard although lower attainers' essays need better organisation.

170. Teaching is very good. Teachers show very good subject knowledge when presenting topics and when monitoring students' learning. They give effective support to students of all abilities. Lessons are thoughtfully planned but the aims and learning focus need to be clearer, shared with students and tested for effectiveness at the end of lessons. Students are given good opportunities to contribute to discussion and develop their ideas and most respond very well, particularly in Year 13. In Year 12, learning would benefit if students prepared themselves more thoroughly for lessons. In Year 13 most students work with rare maturity in the way that they undertake independent study, including the use of web sites, so that they can contribute with confidence and competence in lessons. Generally, lessons have very good pace and productivity and teachers' expectations are very high. Higher attainers are appropriately challenged and students are developing good skills of synthesis in Year 13. Students use resource materials well and enjoy and gain great benefit from practical assignments, particularly fieldwork and investigatory activities. Even so, teaching does not draw frequently enough on visual resources
171. The AS and A-level courses are very competently managed and very well coordinated. Work is very thoroughly and well marked and comments made on how work can be further improved are helpful. Students have a clear understanding of their individual targets and appreciate the high level of support provided. Some students felt that they would benefit from a more extensive study skills induction programme in Year 12. There is a good stock of reference materials within the department but insufficient ICT facilities to support fully opportunities for independent study through investigatory work.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, and students make good progress and achieve well.
- Students' have very positive attitudes.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

172. A- level results in 2002 were average at grades A-E, but a below-average proportion of students gained an A or B grade. The provisional results for 2003 were better than those of 2002; a significantly higher proportion (over a third) gained an A or B grade. These results are likely to represent good achievement for most students. The work seen during the inspection was above average overall and students are achieving well.
173. Most students just beginning their AS course have a good understanding for this stage of the course of the complex issues involved in international relations in Europe in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They explain successfully the motives behind the actions of the major powers. The highest attainers understand the reasons why some motives were hidden, and argue a viewpoint well in oral work. Students in Year 13 have a reasonably good understanding of the changes in Russian politics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The highest attainers have good conceptual understanding of issues such as democracy and autocracy. The lower attainers do not easily link actual events with the abstract ideas.
174. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Three quarters were good or better. In a very good lesson in Year 12 the activity ensured the active involvement of all students and motivated them well. This resulted in very good progress and achievement. The role play activity, in

which students used their prior knowledge and understanding of the European situation to explain how the politicians reacted to events in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, provided the students with good opportunities to solve problems and explain their decisions. The teacher's probing questions set the highest attainers a demanding task. All teachers put an emphasis on students contributing orally in lessons, and this makes an effective contribution

to the development of students' speaking skills. Teachers use opportunities to assess students' progress in lessons very well, by means of effective questioning and short plenary sessions.

175. Leadership and management are both very good. The head of department leads a very effective team, who have high expectations of their students. The performance of the department is monitored very carefully. The department has maintained the high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
176. The department does not make satisfactory use of ICT because there are no up-to-date computers in the department and access to centrally-provided computers is not always available at times to suit the department.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

### **Design and technology**

177. Two lessons were sampled. Standards of work seen in food technology and product design are above average, and students achieved well in the lessons seen. Students develop project work confidently, and engage in lessons at a challenging level, due to good, well prepared teaching and teachers' very good subject knowledge. Teachers have high expectations, and intellectual debate is often a feature of lessons.

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

Art and design and theatre studies were inspected.

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching of ICT on the advanced vocational course.
- Very effective deployment of staff to courses.
- Very good working relationships between staff and students.
- Insufficient opportunities for the head of department to monitor provision overall.

### **Commentary**

178. In 2002 provisional A-level results were average compared with those in all schools. The three students taking AS-level in art and design in Year 12 were all successful in attaining A grades. Results for the advanced vocational course were average both for the higher grades and overall. If the overall advanced level results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils' GCSE results in 2000, the results are good. Hence pupils' achievement was good. Males achieved as well as females by the end of Year 13; teachers say that small groups allowed for effective tuition at an individual level.

179. The provisional A and AS-level results in 2003 were better than in 2002. The trend in results over the last three years has been upwards due to the impact of effective staff deployment on the sixth form courses. Teachers work in teams to bring their varied skills and knowledge to bear on the specific requirements of the A-level and vocational courses. Standards of work are average and students achieve well.
180. Teaching and learning are good. In Year 13, a very good lesson with enthusiastic teaching of ICT skills and high levels of challenge resulted in students' full involvement in creating websites for their own artwork. In another, the teacher successfully used an example from poetry to explain how new inspiration can be found by combining different ideas thus showing students a more creative way of using their resources. Teachers' broad experience enables them to direct students towards a very good range of artists and cultures to enhance their studies. Working relationships between staff and students are very good.
181. Leadership and management are good. Responsibility for particular courses has been very effectively delegated to selected teams of teachers, leading to the successful launch and development of the new post 16 courses in recent years. Time set aside for monitoring teaching has been used for teachers to observe each other's lessons. This is effective as a means of developing and sharing teaching skills across the department but limits opportunities for the head of department to oversee the progress of the department as a whole.
182. Improvement since the last inspection is good; appropriate new courses have been introduced and standards are rising. The quality of teaching was satisfactory six years ago and is now good.

### **Theatre studies**

Provision in theatre studies is **good, and improving**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in the subject is good.
- Teaching is often very good or excellent, showing a very high level of subject expertise.
- The curriculum is tailored to the needs of students.
- Through excellent use of assessment, students are offered very good individual support.
- Leadership and management by the teacher in charge of drama are excellent.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Resources are very poor.

### **Commentary**

183. Although provisional results in the AS and A-level examinations for 2002 and 2003 were below or well below average, achievement was (as it still is) good overall. Furthermore, standards are rising as the subject becomes more firmly established in the curriculum. Standards are not yet as high as they should be, partly because few students have had any previous experience in the subject; few have even taken drama at GCSE and many come into the sixth form with little or no previous experience of drama. However, as a result of very good teaching and the students' enthusiasm and commitment, the students already achieve well and most are now making rapid progress. Although standards in stagecraft skills are low, students quickly learn the rudiments and are able to perform, direct, improvise and draw with increasing competence and confidence on some of the theories of outstanding practitioners, such as Stanislavski and Brecht. Students' written work varies greatly in quality, but is always thoughtful, interested and full of effort. Some very good pieces were seen on Brecht's 'Mother Courage' and on 'Equus'.

184. Teaching is often very good or excellent. Knowledge of the required areas of theatre studies is very good and teachers are able to present students with very good role models. Methods of teaching are imaginative and varied, encouraging independence, concentration and confidence in the students, as well as giving them some sense of self-esteem and presentation of themselves. Teachers do far more than is required of them in ensuring that students have every opportunity to rehearse and to experience visits to theatres and other theatrical events. Teachers do much to enrich the social and cultural development of the students.
185. The curriculum for the AS and A-level examinations has been developed with care to suit the needs of these particular students. Moreover, the teacher in charge of theatre studies has taken great pains to write schemes of work and choose texts which will most benefit the students and enable them to work towards their full potential.
186. Assessment is excellent overall. All aspects of the course are carefully monitored for individual students and every opportunity is taken to promote the understanding of difficult concepts, and to help students produce the best work they are capable of, both in performance and written areas of the course.
187. Leadership is in many respects inspirational. The teacher in charge presents students with a role model that is illuminating, sensitive and challenging. Within their capabilities, students learn almost effortlessly from her extensive knowledge and experience. Sadly, accommodation and resources leave much to be desired, as there is only, at present, one ill-equipped drama studio; some classes have to be conducted in the unsuitable space of the assembly hall, open to frequent interruptions. The lack of technical resources hinders students' progress, since they have no opportunities to learn the technical areas of direction, such as lighting, sound or the use of other ICT equipment.

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

### **Physical education**

188. Physical education in the sixth form was sampled. The provisional examination results for 2003 appear to be below average but previous years' results were above average. Physical education contributing to the all round development of individual students. The course is aiding access to career opportunities by providing students with good skills and increased knowledge of physical growth.

## **BUSINESS**

Business studies was inspected; economics was sampled.

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well.
- A dedicated team of teachers provides very good teaching.
- There is very good leadership and management.
- There is a wide range of provision, including academic and vocational courses.
- Students do not spend enough time reading about the subject and have difficulty retaining knowledge.
- There is insufficient use of ICT by students.

### **Commentary**

189. In 2002, provisional results in the AVCE were above national averages. Students confidently use a wide range of business terminology. Most demonstrate clear understanding of key business concepts. Work is usually thorough and covers the requirements of the examination evidence grid in a broad way. The strength of the students' class work is their basic understanding of the subject matter and the steady accumulation of information which is well organised in their files. Students are increasingly confident with the analysis, interpretation

and evaluation of data, though these still remain relative weaknesses. Standards of current work are above average. Students' projects are interesting, well-produced and professionally presented.

190. In current work at A-level, standards are above expectations. Students understand the central ideas of strategic decision-making in business and most apply them successfully in realistic case studies. For example, in a case study about a steel company, lower attaining students knew the Ansoff matrix and used it effectively to offer strategic advice to the company. The higher attaining students are particularly adept at understanding the risk factors associated with the theory and point out correctly that these relate to the firm's level of certainty and knowledge about the market and about competition, particularly from companies abroad with lower labour costs. They put these higher analytical skills into practice when submitting their advice. These students are working well above national norms. The large majority of students attain above national expectations. Classes are predominantly of male students, but the female students attain standards a little higher than their male counterparts, particularly, but not exclusively, in the preparation and presentation of course work elements.

191. From a relatively low academic base on entry to the sixth form, students' achievement is good overall. However, the school reports students' achievement is hindered to some extent by many students working more hours to earn money than they do to study. Consequently there is a concomitant lack of additional wider reading which would support their learning. Moreover, the inadequate access to ICT does not ameliorate this position.

192. Teaching is very good. In the best lessons teachers have excellent rapport with students and their expert subject knowledge underpins discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. Lessons are carefully planned, and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. Students are very well supported academically. Teachers' methodical explanations promote considerable gains in the lower attaining students' comprehension. However, in some lessons, there is a tendency to over-provide such help for students. Progress is best in lessons where students apply assessment and evaluative criteria to their work.

193. Students respond very well in lessons. Their attitudes are mature and they sustain interest. They listen attentively to each other's presentations, and they are mature and mutually supportive. Higher attaining students maintain intellectual rigour in class and a small number portray evidence of wider reading. Too often, however, some students are happy to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. Students have very positive views of the subject. They particularly appreciate the very clear organisation and structure of their courses, and the clear feedback on their attainment and progress.

194. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has produced a range of informed and informative documents that deal effectively with all aspects of the department's work and give very effective and very efficient leadership to the subject. There is particularly effective and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of students' work and the target reviews which follow from this for individual students lead to better learning and higher attainment. In all his work, the head of department is very well supported by his colleagues. He has a clear vision for the future of the department which sensibly encompasses plans to strengthen both the academic and the vocational aspects of provision to meet the wide and differing needs and

aspirations of future cohorts of students. He provides an excellent role model for a department which is committed to high standards and high achievement. There has been good progress since the time of the last inspection, particularly in the accruing and use of assessment data.

## **Economics**

195. This subject was sampled. Results at A-level in 2001 and provisional results for 2002 and 2003 have been above national averages. The standard of students' written work is good. However, students do not take every opportunity to read around the subject. There is very good teaching; teachers have expert subject knowledge and organise their courses well. The subject is managed very well.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

196. One lesson in health and social care was seen. Teaching and learning were very good. Resources were very well prepared and the teaching stimulating. Examination standards in health and social care have been outstandingly high, and, to judge by these results, students have achieved very well.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

### **General studies**

197. Around two-thirds of students take general studies. Several lessons were sampled. Teaching was at least good and students were interested. A lack of general knowledge in Year 12, about matters such as significant books and music (though students' knowledge about painters is better), appears to be overcome to some extent since examination results at the end of Year 13 represent good progress. Overall, female students do better than male students.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	0	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Pupils' and students' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>4</b>
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	0	4
Pupils' 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	3
How well pupils and students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	2	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils and students needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	5	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils and students	3	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' and students' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); insufficient evidence (0)*

