

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE HEADLANDS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY
SCIENCE COLLEGE**

Bridlington

LEA area: East Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118085

Headteacher: Mr Anthony Halford

Lead inspector: Mr Graeme Clarke

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th February 2004

Inspection number: 259206

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1428
School address:	Sewerby Road Bridlington East Yorkshire
Postcode:	YO16 6UR
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Hall MBE
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the north of Bridlington. The number of pupils on roll has steadily increased over the past five years. It is above average size with 159 students in the sixth form.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 6.8 per cent is below national average, and 2.5 per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is about average. Their particular needs are broadly distributed between dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties, and to a lesser extent social, emotional, behavioural, speech, hearing, visual, physical, and autistic aspects.

Almost all pupils and students are from a white British background with less than one per cent from other backgrounds. None are refugees or at an early stage of learning English. Information from the 2001 census suggests that the socio-economic indicators for the area are broadly average, except that the proportion of minority ethnic children is far below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2003 was 10.7 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average.

The school became a specialist Science College in 2002, and its name reflects this aspect of its service to the community. It gained the Sportsmark award in 2003.

Some of the buildings date from the 1960's. A private finance initiative has enabled the school to be accommodated on a single site as a result of recent refurbishment of some of the premises, together with a new building programme that is almost complete. The site, which includes a new branch library, is open to the public. Maintenance of the premises and site is the responsibility of the private sector partner.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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	Dr Trevor Smith	Lay inspector	
19043	Dr David Lewis	Sixth form co-ordinator	Chemistry (post 16)
			Physics (post 16)
18989	Mr Bernard Mason	Team inspector	English
21855	Mr Dennis Carty	Team inspector	Modern languages
23578	Mrs Joy Edwards	Team inspector	Mathematics
8756	Mrs Pat Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics (post 16)
4720	Mr Graham Carter	Team inspector	Science
			Biology (post 16)
22906	Mr Barry Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
			Physical education
32169	Mr Bob O'Hagan	Team inspector	Geography
			History
16890	Mrs Maureen Potter	Team inspector	Citizenship
			Religious education
24894	Mr Clive Petts	Team inspector	Design and technology
32724	Mr Geoffrey Jepson	Team inspector	Physical education (post 16)
23544	Mr Gair Hedley	Team inspector	Art and design
19741	Mr Fred Peacock	Team inspector	Music
1769	Mr Michael Holohan	Team inspector	History (post 16)
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
22985	Mrs Jackie Sparkes	Team inspector	Health and social care (post 16)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which is working well to improve pupils' learning. The award of Science College status, good teaching, and good leadership and management in key areas all make an important contribution to pupils' good achievement. Pupils have good and trusting relationships with adults. The school is spending within its income and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership by the headteacher, and good leadership by key staff promotes learning.
- Provision in art and design is excellent, and very good in English, mathematics, science, music, drama and in religious education lessons. Provision is unsatisfactory for citizenship throughout, and for information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 10 and 11.
- Restricted options for studying vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11 limit choice.
- Thorough procedures for assessing pupils' work are very well used to support their learning.
- Pupils' participation in a very good range of out-of-school opportunities is excellent.
- Some features of the premises and grounds are unsatisfactory.

The school continues to provide good quality education since the last inspection. Attainments have risen in line with national trends, except in English in Year 9, and are now above average at A level. The school has not made sufficient progress on developing personal, social and health education, citizenship, and ICT, and does not give enough time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 or a daily act of collective worship for all.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' attainment improves from below national average when they join the school to average in Year 9, which reflects good progress and achievement. Year 11 pupils' 2003 GCSE results were about the national average, which is satisfactory improvement and achievement. Although attainment overall was below the average of similar schools in Year 9 tests, it was well above the average in GCSE. Pupils' English results, of boys' in particular, are below the national average. The inspection noted good achievement in lessons and work seen throughout the school. Standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are average. Gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. Girls' attainment is above that of the boys' in Years 9 and 11, but the difference is the same as nationwide.

Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	N/A	C	C	A
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	N/A	C	B	

*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 students have attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils' spiritual moral, and social development is good, and cultural development satisfactory. Pupils show good attitudes to school. There is negligible graffiti. The behaviour of the majority is good both in and out of class. However, the commitment in lessons by a significant minority is unsatisfactory and is not always well-managed. The new procedures for rewarding the positive and dealing with the consequences of unacceptable behaviour in lessons are not yet consistent throughout the school. Attendance is average and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall. In many lessons very effective methods and encouragement from teachers sustain pupils' involvement and lead to very good learning. Teaching is good in most subjects, and a third of lessons is very good or excellent. Provision for citizenship is not developed fully throughout the school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 not taking an examination course in ICT have few ways to develop their skills, and there is not enough time given for religious education. A restricted choice limits opportunities for study in modern languages and vocational areas in Years 10 and 11. All pupils enjoy excellent access to a very good range out-of-school activities, particularly in the arts and sports. Pupils benefit from good support, advice and guidance, although in a few subjects they do not know clearly enough how they can improve. Science college status benefits the work of the school and enhances good links with the community. The school maintains satisfactory partnerships with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management throughout the school are good. The headteacher gives very good leadership and the senior leadership team effectively promotes improvements to learning. Most heads of subjects lead and manage their departments well, and the leadership of others is very good or excellent. Governance is unsatisfactory. Although governors have a high commitment to developing and supporting their school, they have not ensured that the school meets all statutory obligations for the curriculum and for information about the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have confidence in the school and are pleased with the range of provision, standards achieved and the care their children receive. The school respects and acts on pupils' views and the concerns they express through the pastoral system and the school council. Pupils value the support, help and advice their teachers give. However, they rightly express deep concerns about limited social areas, unpleasant toilet facilities, and about the muddy areas outside doors where many have to congregate at lesson change-over times. This leads to a lot of dirt being trailed into the affected parts of buildings which are not effectively kept clean during the day.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are for the private sector partner, governors and headteacher to:

- Raise attainment in English, particularly by boys.
- Review and revise the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to widen choice for studying vocational subjects; and to improve the teaching of personal, social, health education and citizenship.
- Develop a straightforward and consistent approach to using rewards and consequences in managing pupils' behaviour.
- Improve parts of the buildings and grounds that contribute to pupils' personal and social education.

and, to meet statutory requirements: for religious education and ICT in Years 10 and 11; for citizenship and a daily act of collective worship throughout the school, and for items of information in the school prospectus and governors' annual report.

THE SIXTH FORM AT HEADLANDS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SCIENCE COLLEGE

About 150 sixth form students study mainly for GCE courses. Good links with other schools and colleges give access to vocational courses. Most students continue their studies beyond school.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective sixth form. It is very well led and managed. Provision in art and design, chemistry and physics is excellent, and in mathematics it is very good. Overall achievement is good. Good teaching, with nearly half of lessons very good or excellent, leads to good learning. Given the good achievement of students, the sixth form is very cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students gain results which are well above the national average in several subjects, and their achievement overall is good.
- Student participation is high in the very good range of extra-curricular activities the school provides;
- Students are proud of their school, and are willing to take on responsibility;
- Attitudes are very good and students accept responsibility for their own learning;
- Relationships between students and their teachers are very good, based on mutual trust and respect;
- Although accommodation within curriculum areas is good, and sometimes very good, the common areas and areas for sixth form study are unsatisfactory.

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.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good in English. The department provides an interesting combined course in English language and literature, which attracts large numbers of students. Teaching is good, and leads to good learning.
Mathematics	Very good in mathematics. Standards in A and AS examinations were below average in 2002, but are improving as a result of good management. Teaching of the well-planned curriculum is very good.
Science	Good in biology. Students have good attitudes to work and contribute well during lessons and practical work. Although examination results were below average last year, good teaching has led to improving standards. Excellent in chemistry. Students respond very well to vibrant teaching and an excellent course. Their examination results are well above average and their achievement is very good. Excellent in physics Teaching which is very good or excellent, combined with an exciting course, leads to very good progress. Well above average results in examinations mean that students' achievement is very good.
Curriculum area	Evaluation
Humanities	Good in history. Students' achievement is good as a result of well focused teaching and very effective assessment procedures. Examination results were below national standards last year.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Satisfactory in design and technology. Students show interest and respond to enthusiastic teaching, but achievement is hindered by inadequate graphical refinement and poorly developed ICT skills when analysing designs and products.

Visual and performing arts and media	Excellent in art and design. Teaching and learning are excellent, and the department sets very challenging standards for all students. Students respond very well and produce work which is well above average quality.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel.	Good in physical education. Good, well-planned teaching promotes good attitudes to work and individual study. In 2002, examination results were similar to those seen nationally.
Health and social care	Good Good teaching leads to good learning, and standards of work seen were above average. Achievement overall is good. Resources are well managed, but the increasing popularity of the course means that accommodation is becoming cramped.

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

Advice, guidance and support are good. Students have access to very good advice, guidance and support in planning their studies in the sixth form, and they are well prepared for their privileges and responsibilities in Years 12 and 13. They quickly form productive relationships with their form tutors and the head of sixth form. Frequent planned discussions with form tutors ensure that difficulties are swiftly dealt with. Regular academic monitoring gives the school good information about each student's progress, and there are good procedures for giving them extra help in their studies. Good advice is available on entry to higher education, and there is ready access to careers information, both in discussion and in the careers section of the library. Students are given considerable freedom in organising their studies. This helps them to develop a responsible attitude, and prepares them for higher education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The head of sixth form has a clear vision for the place of the sixth form in the school. She communicates it well to other teachers, creating a good sense of purpose, with high aspirations. Support for students is very good, both within subjects and by form tutors. Students are not required to attend daily registration, but the school monitors their attendance carefully. Their academic progress is monitored well, and support is provided promptly when needed. The school meets the requirements for religious education in the sixth form, but the current system of *thought for the day* does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

For the most part, students are very positive in their views of the sixth form. They greatly value the relationships they have with their teachers, based on mutual trust and respect, and the opportunities they have to accept responsibility. They speak very highly of their teachers, who they say give them very good support, both academically and in their personal development. They value the regular meetings they have with their form tutors, and say that their progress is carefully monitored. They acknowledge the good opportunities they have to voice their opinions and influence the development of their school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Standards are below average on entry, average in Year 9 tests, and average in GCSE. Standards in work seen are about average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The extent of improvement from when pupils joined the school to taking statutory tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations shows that they made good progress and achieved well.
- The school's results in English tests and examinations are below average, and lower than those in mathematics and science.
- During the inspection pupils achieved well in most lessons, except in ICT in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32 (32.7)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.2 (35.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.8 (33.6)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 230 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1 When they come into the school, pupils' standards of attainment are below average in mathematics and well below in English and science. Overall, the National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were average. However, the year-on-year improvement is below the national trend because of results that were below the national average for pupils gaining the higher Level 6 in English. Results at higher levels were above average in mathematics and average in science. Results in English were below the target set, but well above in mathematics and science.

2 Mathematics and science results were in line with the average of schools where pupils had similar prior attainments, but well below in English. In English, boys attain less well than girls, but the difference is small. Boys' attainment is similar to that of girls' in mathematics and science. Overall, pupils' achievement in the 2003 Year 9 tests was good, taking into account their levels of attainment when they joined the school.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	43 (44)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (87)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (93)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.9 (34.7)	32.2 (34.7)

There were 228 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3 Overall, GCSE results are comparable with the national average, and a year-on-year comparison shows improvements are in line with the national trend. The proportion of pupils gaining

five or more A* to C grades is below the national average. The proportions gaining five or more A* to G grades, and one or more A* to G grades, are similar to those found nationally. More girls than boys attain five or more A* to C grades but, as in Year 9, the difference is the same as seen nationally. The results were just above the target set for five or more grades A* to C, and well above for one or more grade A* to G. The overall GCSE results are well above the average of those schools where pupils had similar prior attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2001. This represents good achievement. However, the improvement from Year 10 to 11 is close to the national average.

4 Results in individual subjects show considerable variations. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in art and design was significantly above the national average, but pupils in design and technology, English, geography, German, history and religious education performed less well by a significant margin. In the remaining subjects, the proportions of grades A* to C were not statistically different from the others.

5 In mathematics and science, the number of pupils gaining grades A and A* is just above the national average, and the number of high grades is comparable with national figures in art and design, French, and music; but it is below in other subjects.

6 Pupils' achievement in lessons and work seen during the inspection is very good in art and design, and religious education; and it is good in most other areas of the curriculum. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is very good in religious education, and good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, modern languages, music and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory in design and technology, and in history, but unsatisfactory in geography where pupils are not attaining as well as they should. In Years 10 and 11, achievement rises in art and design and music, and continues to be very good in religious education examination lessons. It improves to good in geography. Achievement is good in English, mathematics, science and physical education, and is satisfactory in history, ICT, and modern languages. However, the achievement of non-examination pupils in ICT is unsatisfactory because they do not have a properly structured course to develop their knowledge and skills. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils achieve similarly to other pupils.

7 Standards of work seen in Year 9 during the inspection are generally similar to or better than national expectations. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 is well above average in art and design, and above average in mathematics, physical education and religious education. It is about average in other subjects, but below average in geography, history and design and technology. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are also well above average in art and design and about average in most other subjects. This reflects their results in GCSE examinations. Standards are below average in design and technology, and in history. A significant number of lessons were characterised by average standards of attainment and an absence of really high attainment.

8 The school's strategy to improve learning, and the work of the learning manager and learning coach are having a clear beneficial effect upon pupils' literacy skills. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with a below average baseline of attainment. A good range of tactics employed throughout the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 leads pupils to average competence in English language and literacy skills. This represents good to very good achievement from a low baseline on entry. Pupils' skills, especially in speaking and writing are well supported because the national strategy for improving literacy is being implemented well in nearly all subjects. Reading standards are less well improved. Pupils' competencies in language and literacy in Years 10 and 11 are also average. Pupils' numeracy skills are average throughout Years 7 to 11. The good basis developed in mathematics lessons prepares pupils well for the skills needed elsewhere: in science, design and technology, and geography for example. However, subjects other than mathematics are not reinforcing and consolidating numeracy skills to the extent that the national strategy indicates they should. Pupils' ICT skills are about average in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' ICT skills are below average in Years 10 and 11 because not all follow an examination course. Their development lacks the consistent improvement that comes from a systematic and coordinated approach through other subjects.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is excellent in art and design, and very good in physics and in chemistry.
- Fewer students than nationally gained the higher grades in mathematics, history and biology in 2002.
- Achievement in design and technology is hindered by unsatisfactory resourcing, weak ICT skills and students' inability to innovate and to work independently.
- Some students embark on mathematics courses, which are too demanding for them. For these students, achievement is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

9 Standards on entry to the sixth form are typical. Virtually all students have gained at least five GCSE passes at grade C or above but a few, including some with particular talents in specific subjects, may have gained only four higher grade passes. The school operates a general requirement that the student should have gained at least a grade C in any subject proposed for A level, but this requirement is also occasionally relaxed. Some students come into the sixth form with very high GCSE grades, and go on to do similarly well in A level.

10 These statistics conceal considerable variations between subjects and from year to year. In mathematics, for example, some students have not sufficiently assimilated GCSE mathematical skills to cope well with the increased demands of A level. Teachers support them well, but some students fail to gain a pass grade in AS and leave the course. For these students, achievement is unsatisfactory. Other mathematics students work hard with their teachers to gain grades which, although modest by national standards, represent good achievement.

11 In some areas, students' achievement is either very good or outstanding. In art and design, for example, teachers promote high level skills from the outset so that students can express themselves lucidly when involved in high level criticism. In the physical sciences, students quickly learn to think as scientists, expressing themselves in terms which show that they can use ideas gained in one area of the subject in another. They use mathematics fluently, and understand how purely mathematical reasoning can lead to scientific conclusions. In history, they learn to make judgements about historical sources and prepare arguments that are firmly based on the evidence available. They recognise that more than one interpretation is sometimes possible. This high level achievement stems from well thought out courses based on a good understanding of what students need to know and, more importantly, how students of this age learn best. Tasks designed to fire their enthusiasm, and carefully planned lessons, contribute to very good learning.

12 Support for students is a strength of the sixth form, and this is as true of academic support as of support for personal development. Students who have special educational needs are helped to prevent physical disabilities affecting their ability to study, and teachers match their teaching styles to the needs of their students. The most able are enabled to work as fast as they can and often gain the highest GCE grades. For all these groups, achievement is at least as good as that of other students. In the main therefore, sixth form teaching helps students to do rather better than expected from their GCSE results, and gain results which are above the national average: this represents good achievement overall. Although there are sometimes considerable differences in the performance of boys and girls in individual subjects, these differences are not statistically significant and often vary greatly from year to year.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	88.8 (79)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	19.9 (20.1)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	267 (238.5)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

13 Students' personal development in the sixth form is good. They learn how to study from their subject teachers, who introduce them to the techniques used in their subject. Especially good examples of this were seen in history and the sciences. High attaining students often have good literacy and numerical skills, and some students are very competent in using ICT to help them to make the best use of their study time. However, the school's development of key skills, although explicitly covered by the process of induction into the sixth form, general studies and PSHE and citizenship courses, is not always as effective as it could be. This is an area for development, because lack of key skills and the ability to make use of them in all areas of the curriculum is a barrier to learning, especially for students of modest attainment.

14 Most students use ICT in their sixth form studies, and in the physical sciences, modern technology pervades the teaching and learning process. In other areas, and particularly in design and technology, lack of ICT facilities within the department is a real barrier to learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school, and their behaviour, are good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. Their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good arrangements are in place to investigate unexplained absence.
- Standards of behaviour out of class are good but managing the misbehaviour by a minority of pupils in a few classes is not consistently effective.
- Exclusions are relatively low.
- Students enjoy school and show a willingness to learn and to take on responsibility.
- Relationships are good.

Commentary

15 Students enjoy school, are well motivated and show interest in their work. Most are confident learners, fully capable of independent study. They usually listen and respond well in class. They readily accept responsibility whenever it is offered, and carry out their tasks well. Activities organised for them outside the normal run of lessons, such as in sport or music, are exceptionally well supported. Students are generally polite, relate well to each other and staff, and work well together in class. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes to school. For example, their enthusiasm and concentration are evident when receiving individual tuition. There are occasions, however, when lack of support staff in lessons can lead to disruptive behaviour and affect pupils' learning.

16 Standards of behaviour in class are good overall. However, they are more mixed than at the time of the previous inspection, with pockets of low-level disruption occurring in some classes. This affects the pace of lessons and slows down learning where classroom management is not effective. The school is seeking to improve the situation by implementing new strategies, but at present they

are not working particularly well. In lessons where teaching and classroom management are good, behaviour is also usually good. However, inconsistent operation between teachers stems from the guidance being too complicated. Furthermore, the system at present is too biased towards sanctions for misbehaviour without recognising or rewarding pupils when they behave well.

17 Reported incidents of bullying are relatively low, and handled well whenever they occur. Parents and pupils, when questioned anonymously, paradoxically suggest a higher incidence of bullying. Exclusions are also relatively low when compared with the national picture.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year 2002-3

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1378	70	0

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

18 Around school, behaviour is generally acceptable, with pupils acting very sensibly and courteously when moving between lessons along the relatively narrow corridors or stairs in the tower block. Pupils respect school property as a result of some very good work by the school council. There is little graffiti and litter on the site.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-3 (90.2%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.7	School data	1.1
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

19 The attendance figure which the school officially reports is well below the national average. However, when this figure is adjusted to take account of Year 11 students who are classified as being absent during periods of study leave the school's overall level of attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is at the national average. Lateness is not a problem and punctuality to lessons during the day is good. Registers are marked properly. They are monitored thoroughly and very prompt direct contact is made with parents whenever a child is not in school without a known cause. This is good practice and helps to maintain attendance generally.

20 Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. Their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are confident in their own beliefs and values and show respect for those of other people, cultures and faiths. The majority of pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and happily share and give support. Most are well aware of the importance of values in shaping the way communities live successfully together including their own. Their perception of right and wrong is clear and they act responsibly on their knowledge in their relationships and in the daily life of the school. They enter into lively debate on ethical and human issues and think carefully about the impact of these both globally and nationally. However, their awareness of the multicultural make up of their own nation and community, while sound, is not sufficiently informed.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance in the sixth form is good, and students' punctuality to lessons is very good.

- Students have a very good attitude to their studies and behave sensibly and enthusiastically in lessons.
- Constructive relationships make a good contribution to the status of the sixth form in the school, and students are a good role model for younger students.
- Cultural awareness is underdeveloped.

Commentary

21 Attendance in the sixth form is good, and punctuality to lessons is very good. Students enjoy being in the sixth form, their attitudes to work are very good and they behave sensibly and often enthusiastically in lessons. They have a mature attitude towards their studies and react well to the opportunities the school offers. In lessons, they take a pride in their work and nearly always do their best. Beyond lessons, they participate in a good range of activities, which widen their horizons and help them to become responsible citizens. Students have a mature approach, both in lessons and around the school. They work in a productive manner, collaborate very well, and are respectful of the values, attitudes and beliefs of each other. For the most part, they provide very good role models for younger students.

22 Students form very constructive relationships with their teachers and with one another. They relate very strongly with those teachers whose teaching is effective and who show them respect. The quality of these relationships is a great strength of the sixth form. Most students develop good interpersonal skills and these qualities are reflected in their work: a few, however, are better speakers than listeners. Students' social awareness is very good. They are good ambassadors for the school and make a significant contribution to school life, for example, as mentors in Year 8, and through the school council.

23 Students are very aware of the impact that their actions can have on others. They have a healthy respect for the views of other people. However, their ability to substantiate their views with good evidence is underdeveloped. In their relationships, they show sincere respect for each other, very good moral awareness and social responsibility. Overall, the attitudes, values and personal development displayed by students enhance their learning considerably.

24 Not enough is done to promote students' spiritual or multicultural awareness. The course in PSHE and citizenship provides some opportunities for students to consider a range of spiritual issues. Planned opportunities in other subjects to enhance this feature of personal development are limited, but when such opportunities occur, they are well used by teachers. However, their cultural development does not extend sufficiently to develop an awareness and appreciation of the rich variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

25 The quality of education is good. A high proportion of very good and excellent teaching supports very good learning, however, inconsistencies in managing behaviour in a minority of lessons limits achievement. The curriculum offers very good opportunities for enrichment, but statutory provision for ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A relatively high proportion of lessons, more than a third, is very good or excellent.
- The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is in Years 10 and 11 and stems mainly from inconsistent class management.

- The best lessons are well structured with appropriate activities that foster and sustain pupils' involvement.
- Assessment information is used well in some subjects to help raise achievement, but less consistently well in others.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 173 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
15 (9%)	45 (26%)	62 (36%)	41 (24%)	8 (5%)	2 (1%)	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.

26 Teaching is very good in religious education in Years 7 to 9, and in art and design, drama and music in Years 10 and 11. Teaching overall is good in most other subjects except geography, history and design and technology where it is satisfactory.

27 Most of the unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by inadequate management of poor behaviour by a minority of pupils', for example, in Year 11 modern languages, science and design and technology. Here, a significant but small number of pupils, particularly boys, have poor attitudes towards work, and ineffective teaching that does not inspire them with relevant activities leads to little learning. In some cases inappropriate activities and low expectations make teaching and learning unsatisfactory, as in geography in Years 7 to 9.

28 Excellent and very good lessons take place in several subjects throughout the school. The very good features of most effective teaching are particularly related to the way teachers foster positive relationships, and help to develop pupils' commitment and good attitudes to learning. Lessons are characterised by appropriate and well-managed activities, coupled with a lively pace and good time management, which sustain pupils' interest and involvement. For example, in art and design clear rules guide pupils' behaviour, in physical education teachers set high expectations for dress and conduct, and in modern languages excellent specialist teachers demand active pupil participation.

29 New technology supports learning, for example, in the many subjects where interactive whiteboards and PowerPoint presentations are used very well. In religious education, for example, they especially add interest and rigour to learning. Teachers effectively check and consolidate pupils' understanding in relation to clearly stated lesson objectives. In geography and mathematics, teachers make good use of questions to probe pupils' understanding.

30 The school has made a substantial commitment and investment in training to implement the national strategy for improving teaching in Years 7 to 9. In turn, this has led to a clear improvement since the time of the last inspection, and rising standards in statutory Year 9 tests, notably in mathematics and science. Teaching in English is addressing the perplexing recent decline in attainment by ensuring that classes focus on literacy and pupils aspire to accuracy. Homework is generally used well to support pupils' learning. It is used very well in art and design and well in most other subjects. Where it is used less effectively, such as in history, it does not exploit and extend pupils' independent learning skills.

31 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs by specialist teachers is good. When pupils are withdrawn for specific tuition, they benefit from well planned and intensive sessions which produce effective results. Within mainstream lessons in departments, the quality of the teaching for pupils with special educational needs leads to satisfactory learning and achievement, although in English, for example, effective organisation results in good provision. Where teaching assistants are available they provide good support and make a significant difference by helping to manage pupils' behaviour and enhancing their learning.

32 The school carries out an effective analysis of pupils' performance in tests and examinations. Good quality data is provided to subject leaders for use in their planning of teaching and learning. In mathematics and art and design it is used to very good effect. Here, teachers gain a clear understanding of pupils' knowledge and skills and adapt their lesson planning to provide appropriate content and pace in teaching. Pupils in these subjects know how to improve their work. However, the use of assessment information in lesson planning throughout the whole school is inconsistent. Pupils in geography and modern foreign languages are unsure about what they have to do to improve the quality of their work. At present, the clear philosophy for a whole school approach to underpin the drive to raise achievement is not yet implemented consistently in all subjects.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall, with nearly 90 per cent of lessons good or better, and more than half very good or excellent.
- Most lessons are well structured, with a variety of stimulating and challenging activities which capture and hold students' interest.
- Teachers know their students well and ensure that all of them make good progress in relation to their ability, including those with special educational needs, or who are gifted and talented.
- Assessment is thorough and accurate, and the school generally makes good use of data in planning lessons, setting targets, and supporting students in their progress towards them.
- Although some subjects make superb use of ICT facilities to enhance learning, students' ICT skills are not always as well developed as they could be. This is occasionally a barrier to learning.

Commentary

33 Teaching and learning are good overall. Over half of all sixth form lessons were either very good or better, with 11 per cent excellent. Nearly 90 per cent of lessons seen were good or better. Especially good teaching was seen in art and design, business education, physics and chemistry. The high quality of teaching is a major contributor to the rising standards in Years 12 and 13. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the sixth form, and only a few lessons were satisfactory rather than good or better. Such lessons were characterised by lack of pace and a failure by the teacher to give students sufficient focus or challenge in their learning.

34 Lessons are generally well structured, an outcome of good planning and the teachers' high levels of subject expertise. Most lessons include a variety of stimulating and challenging activities, which effectively engage and enthuse students. Occasionally, too much input by the teacher or whole-class discussion prevent less confident students from contributing to the lesson. Inspectors commented at the time of the last inspection that the quality of teaching had improved over the previous four years. That this improvement has continued since then is a tribute to the hard work of teachers and the benefits of the continued quest for improving the quality of teaching and learning.

35 Students recognise the high quality teaching in most subjects. They form very good relationships with the teachers, whom they hold in high regard. Teachers, in turn, treat the students as responsible adults, respecting their views and working with them to resolve any difficulties they may have.

36 Students nearly always maintain good levels of concentration in lessons, work conscientiously and respond well to skilful teaching. Most develop good work habits and make good progress in developing their learning skills. The key skills of communication and application of number are well taught in the main, but not consistently in all subjects as they are not explicitly planned for. The development of students' ICT skills through subject teaching is variable and overall is just satisfactory. Superb use of ICT in the teaching of both physics and chemistry shows the major contribution that the use of computers can make to students' learning.

37 Support for students of all abilities in lessons is very good. Teachers know their students well, and adjust their teaching to meet their needs. This is true equally of those with special educational needs, or who are gifted and talented. As a result, all students have the incentive to work hard because they have confidence in their teacher's ability to challenge them to make the best progress.

38 Marking and assessment of students' work are good. At best, students have a very clear idea of the progress they are making, and know how they can improve. Overall, their progress is well monitored by subject staff, form tutors and the head of sixth form. Good data, rooted in national standards, is used to make predictions of final and module grades. Students especially value the regular discussions about progress they have with their form tutors. Not all heads of department use assessment information thoroughly enough to evaluate the progress and achievements of their students.

The curriculum

The breadth of curriculum and statutory provision is unsatisfactory. Very good opportunities are provided for enrichment. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Staffing and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science College status enhances opportunities in science and mathematics especially.
- The school does not meet all statutory requirements for the curriculum. The implementation of citizenship throughout the school is behind the timescale expected and arrangements for ICT and religious education are inadequate for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities offered results in an excellent level of participation by pupils.
- Serious concerns about aspects of the accommodation and site centre upon pupils' welfare and social development.

Commentary

39 The recent award of Science College status has greatly enhanced the curriculum in science and mathematics, but has had much less effect elsewhere. Generally the curriculum caters well for all ability levels, including pupils with special educational needs. However, the implementation of a structured course in citizenship throughout Years 7 to 11 has not taken place as quickly as expected nationally. Furthermore, the arrangements for a personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme lack cohesion. In turn, provision in these areas is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, throughout the subjects of the curriculum, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and it is satisfactory for their cultural development.

40 Provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is, nevertheless, unsatisfactory in several respects. Although the school has been successful in introducing a weekly ICT lesson for all pupils in Years 7 to 9, it has not made adequate provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The business studies programme, which has a large ICT component, is taken by about half the pupils but there is no effective provision for the others. Although elements of ICT are taught through other subject areas, the school has no systematic way of ensuring these pupils' ICT skills are appropriately developed. Similarly, the time available for pupils who are not studying religious education for GCSE is insufficient to meet the demands of the locally agreed syllabus. However, units of religious education which form part of the life skills programme make a clear contribution to pupils' achievement. Opportunities for vocationally orientated learning have been enhanced and pupils show great interest in these programmes. However, arrangements for setting modern languages against vocational subjects significantly restrict choice and opportunity.

41 The way the school prepares students for later stages of education and employment is satisfactory throughout. At present the relatively few opportunities available limit pupils experience of

the working environment in the local community and industry. Some visits take place to the local Leisure and Tourism Centre and Leisure World, but although pupils use information collected when back in school, opportunities for more extensive work-related learning are not yet in place. The school is establishing links with the wider community, for example through its Science College status, and is extending the contribution of representatives from business to support this work.

42 Curriculum development and innovation in the school are good. Science College status has widened opportunities, for example, by an evening class for GCSE astronomy for Years 10 and 11 and GNVQ quadruple science in Year 10. The commitment of the school's leadership to fostering learning is exemplified by the appointment of a learning coach and specific initiatives. This has stimulated the development of a number of interesting teaching and learning strategies that impact on standards within the school. Booster classes for mathematics in the critical Years of 9 and 11, an English writing skills programme for pupils in Years 7 to 9, native speakers of both French and German, and thinking skills in history and geography are successfully raising achievement.

43 The curriculum provides a very good range of opportunities for enrichment, particularly through extra-curricular provision. In addition to the Science College activities after school, a very good range of sporting, visual and performing arts activities are offered, together with field trips at the school's centre in the North Yorkshire Moors, and foreign visits. The extent of pupils' participation in them is excellent.

44 There is a good match of teachers' expertise to the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified and teach their specialist subjects. Of particular note is the very high level of expertise in modern languages where three of the teachers are native speakers. The level of teaching assistants and support staffing is good, for example, for pupils with special educational needs where consideration is being given to making their deployment as efficient as possible. In science there is good technician support for the subject but demands are high because of the large number of laboratories.

45 Whilst accommodation in most learning areas is at least satisfactory, and some of the new facilities are good, there are concerns about the design and maintenance of the site and premises. Leaking roofs, particularly those of the gymnasium, often lead to cancelled indoor physical education lessons when it rains. Library provision is limited for the size of school.

46 Other concerns specifically relate to pupils' welfare and social development. Open access to the site, which includes a public library and a community education facility, leads to vehicular traffic and parking in areas designated for pupils. Some walkways connecting teaching blocks are too narrow for the high numbers of pupils exiting and entering doorways at lesson changeover times. Pupils overspill onto grassed areas which have become very muddy and in consequence mud is trailed into buildings and rooms, and is not cleaned up during the day. Mud mats in entrances cannot cope with the scale of the problem. Toilets in the older parts of the school smell unpleasantly. Open stairways with waist high banisters in the tower block offer little protection against jostling or objects accidentally dropped from upper landings. Areas where pupils can congregate at break and lunchtimes, outside when it is fair, or indoors in inclement weather, are extremely limited given the number on roll. These are issues which call for a reasoned approach from all involved, members of the public using facilities, governors and staff of the school, and the private sector partner, to address them responsibly.

47 Resource levels are good in the majority of subjects and do not limit teaching and learning unduly in any area. Interactive whiteboard availability has led to some extremely innovative work, for example, in art and design to exploit approaches that link art with writing skills.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very seriously the need to provide an appropriate curriculum for all its students and works with partner institutions to ensure that a very wide range of courses are available to them.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, and participation rates are high.
- Students have good opportunities to take responsibility, including working with younger students.
- The school provides good general studies, and PSHE and citizenship courses for all students. Tutor periods in Year 13 are used to provide very good one-to-one support for students.
- The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education in the sixth form, but does not provide a daily act of collective worship, either in tutor periods or elsewhere.

Commentary

48 The sixth form curriculum is based around a good range of AS and A level subjects with a small group of AVCEs. GCE sciences, English and art and design are particularly successful, with large groups of students, very good courses and good achievement. The range of vocational courses is much more limited. There are no intermediate level courses, and courses leading to national vocational qualifications are not available. The school has considered very carefully how it can best meet the needs of those requiring vocational courses, and does so by forging good links with the local college. Students are given full information about such courses at the information evening in Year 11. Other subjects which may attract small numbers of students may be available at another school in the town, and every effort is made to direct students' attentions to them. The school works well with other schools, and the local college, but links are as yet under developed.

49 When they come into the sixth form, all students take part in a programme of induction activities, centred around *Flying Start* material available on the school's intranet. Although this material is of good quality, there is no certainty that students will use it effectively and the school is planning a more proactive approach for entry to the sixth form in 2004.

50 For the first two terms in Year 12, all students attend a daily tutor period, which is the focus of their programme of general education. Good courses are available in general studies, and in PSHE and citizenship. These are taught by form tutors. However, from the third term of Year 12, students have flexibility in negotiating their attendance at tutor periods to allow them freedom to work at home or in the library when they are not in lessons. This arrangement helps them to develop independence in their learning habits, but deprives them of a potentially useful opportunity to maintain daily links with their form tutors. Tutor periods in Year 12 are well conducted and provide a vehicle for the *thought for the day*. However, the *thought for the day* does not fulfil the requirement for daily act of collective worship because there is insufficient opportunity for reflection, and it is not of a mainly Christian nature. Some students act as mentors to Year 8 students, whose registration they attend every day. This gives them a good opportunity to take the responsibility of working with younger students.

51 The school offers students a good range of extra-curricular activities, in sport, and in the performing and expressive arts. There are additional activities connected with specific areas of the curriculum, such as field trips, foreign visits, and lectures. During the week of the inspection a particularly well-attended science lecture fired the imagination of students and staff alike.

52 The overall breadth of curricular opportunities is therefore satisfactory.

53 Accommodation in most sixth form subjects is at least satisfactory and in some areas, for example, in the new or refurbished science laboratories, it is very good. Resources also vary between departments, but are generally at least satisfactory, though as numbers of students continue to grow, classrooms become more and more cramped. However, communal areas for the sixth form are either too small or uninviting. One seating area where students can socialise is situated in an alcove directly off a busy corridor, and the sixth form study area is also a locker room which contains too few computers for the number of potential users. Students often use the public library with which the school shares a site, but this can lead to conflicts of interest between the

school and the general public. The school is currently working on plans to rectify this situation, but at present sixth form accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Care, welfare and support and guidance

Provision for ensuring students' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school has good procedures for giving pupils support, advice and guidance, and good arrangements for involving students in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some health and safety concerns have been identified, particularly associated with site cleanliness and building maintenance.
- The school has very good arrangements for the induction of Year 7 students.

Commentary

54 Child protection arrangements are secure. The designated member of staff with responsibility for liaising with outside agencies is properly trained to carry out the duties associated with this role. Suitable health and safety measures are effective with risk assessments carried out on a regular basis. Internet security is properly addressed and this prevents pupils accessing unsuitable websites. However, during the inspection a number of concerns were identified in relation to health and safety (outlined in the section above) and were discussed with the school. Many pupils made strongly critical comments about standards of cleaning in corridors, and of some of the toilet facilities.

55 The school values pupils' views about the way it operates and regularly seeks them through its school council. This body functions effectively and works hard in trying to improve school facilities. Recently, for example, it has successfully persuaded the school to buy litter bins and as a result the grounds are now almost litter free.

56 The programme of careers education is now properly structured within the curriculum. Work experience for pupils in Year 11 is better organised than at the time of the previous inspection, with them all out on work placements at the same time in the autumn term. The school, however, is still in the process of arranging links with local business that are necessary to fulfil vocational course requirements, although there are difficulties with the range of opportunities in the locality. Pupils have good access to external careers advisers through the Connexions service, and good quality careers information (including relevant computer software) is readily available to them.

57 Arrangements for the induction of pupils in Year 7 and when they transfer from Year 11 into the sixth form are very good and work successfully. Pupils are very happy with them and, as a result, have settled quickly into their next phase of education. Pupils feel well prepared for GCSE courses available in Years 10 and 11 and for sixth form study, as a result of the guidance and meetings available.

58 Systems for monitoring pupils' academic achievements are comprehensive and help provide teachers with a good basis for reporting. Assessment data is used to set targets for improvement. This approach to support and guidance provides a good basis to drive forward school improvements in attainment.

59 Although current assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory, limited guidance for teachers in individual education plans reduces their effectiveness. The specialist provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties is ineffective. The current arrangements whereby the facility doubles as a place to send other pupils excluded from lessons makes it very difficult to provide those with designated special educational needs the support they require.

60 School reports are written to a consistent standard by teachers with appropriate individual approaches. Liaison with guidance agencies is satisfactory; good guidance is provided by the Connexions service. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the quality of advice as to how they can improve their work is variable. In those subject areas where guidance is very good, pupils display confidence in their future performance. This makes a significant contribution to the development of positive attitudes to learning.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are given very good information on entry to the sixth form, including details of courses available in other local schools and colleges.
- Advice about students' aspirations for their advanced studies is realistic, and supports well the school's view of an inclusive sixth form in which every student is supported in achieving highly.
- Students' progress and personal development are monitored throughout the sixth form, and good quality support is both timely and effective. Students especially value their regular meetings with their form tutors.
- Despite the provision of general studies, and PSHE and citizenship, students' study skills and key skills are not always as well developed as they could be.

Commentary

61 The school prides itself on providing an inclusive sixth form, in which students are given the best possible help in achieving their potential. Very good advice is given to students before they come into the sixth form, advice which recognises that what is best for the individual may not be a course of study at Headlands. The school is about to introduce a joint sixth form prospectus with other local schools: this will further enhance the quality of information available to prospective students.

62 Students greatly value the good relationships they have with their form tutors and subject staff. Regular and frequent one-to-one meetings with form tutors are a feature of the sixth form, and one which considerably enhances the quality of support and guidance in the transition to the greater freedoms of the sixth form. The head of sixth form monitors each student's broad academic progress, as well as their attendance, meticulously. This aspect is especially important as students have a considerable measure of freedom from the third term of Year 12 as to when they attend school outside lessons. This is an important feature of the sixth form policy of helping students to take a high level of responsibility, in a controlled and supportive environment, for their own study patterns in preparation for university. The provision by the school is largely effective, and students achieve well overall. However, some students need more help than others in creating good study habits, and for these students the level of support is not as good as it could be.

63 Students have good access to guidance on entry to higher education or employment. Subject staff, form tutors and the head of sixth form give them good advice, having due regard to their aspirations and potential. They use their good links with the local community to introduce students to first hand advice and experience, for example, for those considering studying veterinary medicine or entering the teaching profession. Students respond well to the advice they are given, and leave school confident in their ability to meet new challenges.

64 Students are very positive in their views of the sixth form. They greatly value the relationships they have with their teachers, based on mutual trust and respect, and the opportunities they have to accept responsibility. They speak very highly of their teachers who give them good support, both academically and in their personal development. They value the regular meetings they have with their form tutors, and say that their progress is carefully monitored. They acknowledge the good opportunities they have to voice their opinions and influence the development of their school. The inspectors agree that the school provides a very good climate for learning in the sixth form and prepares students well for higher education or for employment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents. Links with the community, and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of students' annual reports is good.
- Limited parental involvement in school life, although some events are well supported.
- The school has good arrangements for seeking parents' views and acting upon the findings.

Commentary

65 The quality of links with parents is mixed. Very few of them are actively involved in school life although events such as school concerts and productions are well supported, particularly when their children are involved. Chemistry evenings are also very well supported by parents and thoroughly enjoyed by them. The Parent Teachers Association, however, has recently been disbanded and replaced by a more informal Parents Forum in the hope of attracting more parents into school. This has had limited success, but found to be quite useful by those parents who attended.

66 Overall, the information that the school provides is satisfactory, and the quality of students' annual reports is good. These are well written, give a clear indication of achievement and also identify areas where improvements could be made. Some parents, however, are concerned about the new format of consultation evenings, saying they prefer discussing their children's progress with subject teachers rather than the form tutor. The school, on the other hand, feels these new arrangements are working well as more parents are attending parents' evenings. The school values parents' views about the way it operates and has recently commissioned a survey to find out what they are. It has taken full notice of all the findings and in response to them has already implemented new discipline procedures.

67 Links with other schools and colleges are good and enhance the quality of education provided, particularly in science. Transfer arrangements operate effectively and ensure the smooth passage of pupils into their next phase of education.

68 The school has good links with the business community, but the scale of them is limited by the nature of business and commerce in the locality. Arrangements to enhance the vocational curriculum are being promoted through a successful relationship with the local education-business partnership.

69 Overall, parents have positive views about the school. They think their children are taught well and make good progress. Arrangements for settling students into school are considered good. Nevertheless, some reservations were expressed about behaviour. Inspectors support these concerns. Inspectors do not, however, support parents' concerns about extra-curricular activities, homework and the way the school seeks parents' views and acts upon them.

70 Pupils and students also like the school. They consider that they are taught well and made to work hard. However, in their questionnaire replies, many expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying, and also felt they were not always treated fairly by staff. Inspectors followed up these concerns during the inspection and feel that, although some problems do exist, they are not as severe as initially indicated.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information and arrangements for students and parents about entry to the sixth form are very good.
- Good arrangements with local schools allow students to follow specific subjects.

Commentary

71 Links with other post 16 providers of education in the area are satisfactory. The school runs a joint information evening with the local college for Year 11 students and their parents, who can find out about a range of vocational courses as well as the AS and A level courses available at the school. These meetings provide very good information for students and their parents. Links with other schools in the area at sixth form level are not extensive, but they are effective in that a few students transfer both to and from Headlands on entry to the sixth form in order to take a specific group of subjects. The course in psychology in the sixth form has been able to continue following the departure of the teacher in Year 12, using a teacher from another school who visits Headlands for lessons after the main school day. Arrangements for transfer of students into the sixth form, and in preparation for higher education are very good. Links with the community are good, though limited in quantity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Governance is unsatisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, and that of other key staff is good. Management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, especially with regard to promoting pupils' learning in the school.
- Governors have a high commitment to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well.
- Governors have not ensured that the school meets all requirements for the National Curriculum and for the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
- Revised arrangements for managing good and misbehaviour are not yet in place.
- Most heads of subjects lead and manage their departments well, and the leadership of others is very good or excellent.
- Best value principles are applied well, with opportunities for further development evident.

Commentary

72 The governing body 's management of the school's affairs is unsatisfactory because it should have addressed gaps in meeting statutory requirements for the curriculum, and for information requirements in the prospectus and their annual report. However, citizenship is partly in place, and arrangements are well in hand to appoint another religious education teacher and revise the curriculum to deal with the present inadequacies. Many aspects of the governors' dedication and contribution, especially their strategic work and day-to day oversight of the school, reflect good leadership and governance. Governors rightly see their role as strategic and have clear priorities for developing the school. They are well led by a strong and experienced chairman. For example, they share a clear vision with the headteacher for the development of *The Community Science College* and support the headteacher in his drive to promote clear improvements in learning.

73 The governing body has a very good understanding of the school as a result of carefully monitoring the progress it makes. They discharge their many roles effectively through a well constituted sub-committee structure and specific working groups. Governors work well in consensus with the headteacher and senior staff, for example, steering through the private finance initiative for rebuilding the premises, and making the successful bid for Science College status. They value regular reports from the headteacher and his staff on procedures and examination

results. Some governors make visits to lessons, but the process lacks a theme or structure for reporting back. Governors recognise the increased value that systematically extending their first hand knowledge of the quality and standards would bring to their meetings.

74 Governors ensure that financial administration is diligent, with day-to day and longer-term control beyond reproach. They have established the principles of best value securely. For example, their spending seeks value for money. Consultation over parents' perspectives led to new procedures for behaviour management. They make comparisons with local and similar schools to gauge pupils' attainment. Aspects of staff performance are checked to ensure decisions are well founded.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4, 234, 536
Total expenditure	3,843,041,
Expenditure per pupil	2786

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	86,798
Balance carried forward to the next	6579

75 The headteacher provides very good leadership. His commitment to the school and high aspirations for developing a learning community give direction of the highest order to a relatively new senior management team. The team is equally dedicated in promoting the aims and values of the school, and its members work well together to achieve them. The headteachers' appointment of a learning manager is inspiring development work in many areas of the school by translating the leadership team's vision into reality. Although a relatively new innovation, the impact is already seen in improved standards in lessons and work compared to performance in examinations last year.

76 The management of the school draws strength from a systematic approach to quality assurance which includes analyses of test and examination results, taking stock in subject departments and seeking pupils' views. The self-evaluation process is characterised by a clear attempt to make honest judgements, and reflection to make them more accurate. In turn, departmental development plans reflect whole school issues and are implemented mainly through good systems for staff performance management. The school improvement planning sets out Science College aims with appropriate priorities for action.

77 Newly qualified teachers and other teachers joining the school are well supported through organised programmes and mentoring by senior staff. Teachers in their second year of teaching are also helpfully supported in their professional development. The school make a very good contribution to initial teacher training through good links with Hull University. Generally, priority for teachers' professional development is given to implementing new national initiatives for improving teaching in Years 7 to 9 and achieving the aims of the Science College. For example, developing the use of interactive whiteboards, which enhance many lessons, and effectively foster learning.

78 Very good leadership and management at departmental level leads to very effective provision in several subject areas: notably in art and design, English, mathematics, science, music and drama, and religious education. The planning for the future development of special educational needs provision is wide-ranging and accurate. New arrangements for handling information about pupils' performance and behaviour are being established to aid the school's self-evaluation and taking appropriate action. Subject departments have a high degree of autonomy but this leads to inconsistency in implementing school-wide strategies, for example, for managing pupils' behaviour. The need now is to harness the collective strength of the senior team, with that of the governors and middle management, to address the effectiveness of the current system of supporting positive aspects of pupils' behaviour and managing the consequences of inappropriate conduct.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors, headteacher and the head of sixth form have a clear vision for the place of the sixth form in the school, and the ways in which they can best support their students.
- The head of sixth form works closely with other teachers to give the students a very good experience, leading to very good academic and personal development.
- Students' progress is monitored closely so that the school knows how it can best support its students. The head of sixth form makes very good use of data.
- The school manages the budget for the sixth form very closely, so that, although the sixth form is a major asset to the school as a whole, it neither subsidises nor is subsidised by the rest of the school.
- Excellent practice in some subjects makes a big contribution to students' development of skills which they need in all subjects, such as the ability to argue a point of view and engage in reasoned debate; but not all of them use these skills as well as they should.
- The school does not fulfil the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

79 The sixth form is very well managed. The head of sixth form has a very clear view of the role of the sixth form in the school. She thinks carefully about the balance between additional freedoms and responsibilities, and the need to guide and support her students. She works with other teachers to prepare students for advanced examinations and, especially, to improve their independence and responsibility for learning. This prepares them well for higher education or entry to the world of work. Her vision reflects that of the headteacher and governors, who support her well in creating a sixth form which is a major asset to the school. The climate for learning is very good.

80 All students take a course in general studies in the sixth form: those who gain appropriate AS grades proceed to A2 in Year 13. They also take a course in PSHE and citizenship, which is well designed to cater for their needs and helps them to develop in their independence through Years 12 and 13. Key skills are also promoted through excellent activities in several subjects, most notably in art and design. However, skills such as the ability to develop an argument effectively, based on evidence, are not as well developed generally as they are in some subjects. This is an area for development.

81 Leadership of the subjects of the curriculum is at least good, often very good and sometimes excellent. Well qualified and enthusiastic staff, a consistent approach across all subjects, and good monitoring by the head of sixth form, help to give the sixth form a unity of purpose which is a major asset. The head of sixth form evaluates the work of the sixth form well, and always with a view to further improvement. However, there is not enough sharing of good practice, for example, in terms of short-term target-setting. Overall, leadership of the sixth form is, therefore, very good.

82 The school fulfils nearly all its statutory duties in the sixth form, for example, in terms of compliance with the locally agreed syllabus in religious education, but the current system of *thought for the day* does not meet requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

83 Financial management of the sixth form is very good. The governors, headteacher and bursar work together to allocate appropriate funds, having regard to principles of best value. Their financial records are very good and show clearly that the sixth form neither subsidises nor is subsidised by the rest of the school. In view of the high levels of achievement in the sixth form and the good contribution it makes to the ethos of the school, the sixth form as a whole is very cost-effective.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is very well led and managed.
- Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 was well below the average for similar schools, particularly at the higher levels.
- Attainment at GCSE English language in 2003 was significantly below the national average.
- Teaching is a strength: the department's strategy for improving learning is successful and achievement in lessons and work seen is now good.
- Although a significant number of students enter the school in Year 7 with poor writing skills, standards in writing improve significantly by the end of Year 9.

Commentary

84 Attainment at Level 5 in the 2003 National Tests at the end of Year 9 was in line with the national average, but below average for similar schools. Overall improvement compared with similar schools was below expectations with pupils' attainment in Year 9 lower in English than in mathematics and science. Pupils' average points score and attainment at the higher Levels 6 and 7 were below average and have been over the previous years 2000-2002. Boys' attainments are a little lower than girls, but the difference is similar to the national pattern.

85 Attainment at grades A* to C at GCSE English language in 2003 (as in 2000-2002) was well below the national average, although attainment within the full range A* to G was above average. Boys' results are well below girls'. Almost half of pupils attained within grades D and E and, in response to this, the department is operating a successful learning improvement policy across all classes. The few pupils for whom GCSE was inappropriate passed the Certificate of Achievement in English. Attainment at grades A* to C in GCSE English literature was in line with national expectations.

86 Almost half of all pupils entered the school in Year 7 in 2003 with poor writing skills. However, the analysis of pupils' work indicates that standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 in 2004 will be closer to the national average than in 2003. Year 7 pupils who have special educational needs in English attend a weekly lesson for reading and writing in small groups where their rates of progress are good. Full assessment of recent Year 9 mock examinations by the department's learning coach has identified pupils' main weaknesses which are now being addressed by appropriate action. Moreover, the learning strategy, introduced this academic year by the learning manager, teaches pupils by small but sure steps to raise attainment into the next grade. Motivation and achievement across all age groups are good. Small successes accumulate and standards in writing at all levels of capability are rising. Attainment in speaking is good. Pupils listen attentively both to instruction and to one another's ideas. Standards in reading amongst higher and middle attaining pupils are good, although lower attainers and those with special educational needs in English require support.

87 Teaching is consistently good, especially at raising pupils' own expectations. The majority of classes are acquiring a shared "literacy consciousness", a desire to "get it right". Pupils cooperate with teachers and with one another in a common drive for improvement. Pupils are not afraid to ask when in doubt, and are eager to volunteer answers. Teachers set worthwhile, well timed tasks. Aims are clearly understood, and learning objectives are reached. For example, in an

excellent Year 8 lesson pupils learnt how to plan for a variety of written and spoken tasks; ideas on subjects began to flow vigorously as pupils operated strategies for organising their ideas. Their confidence and self-esteem were in the ascendant. In other good and very good lessons pupils in Years 9 to 11 were taught the criteria used by examiners to mark written work and learnt from this how to correct their own work. Pupils make adequate use of ICT word processing facilities although classes often have difficulty accessing heavily used resources. Overall, developments in teaching have led to pupils' good achievement.

88 The head of department provides very good leadership and efficient management. The department works well as a team with common objectives and share responsibilities essential to the improvement of learning. Assessment data is used to identify priorities and effective action is taken to address weaknesses. The department's learning policy is an example of very good practice. The department contributes to the training of teachers. Links with the primary schools are encouraged and Year 6 primary pupils attend sample lessons in English. The department contributes well to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. That so many pupils choose to continue to study this subject at A level is testimony to the effectiveness of this department under its present leadership.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

89 Overall standards in speaking are good; attainment in reading is average; attainment in writing for the majority is average. A significant minority of pupils enter the school in Year 7 with poor levels of literacy; for example, in 2003 almost half entered with poor writing skills. In response, small, weekly withdrawal groups from Year 7 classes have been established where specialist teachers and trained assistants focus on improving reading and writing. Helpful advice is regularly received from the Local Education Authority's literacy consultant. The English department's learning coach focuses attention on identified weaknesses in pupils' writing, and this, together with the school's learning improvement strategy, plays an essential role in drawing these initiatives together. The literacy skills of gifted pupils are extended, for example in the higher sets in Years 9 to 11. Most subjects across the curriculum pay attention to standards in literacy, but it is of varying quality. For example, history and English co-operate well over pupils' written accounts. Most departments encourage purposeful speaking, though some pupils lack confidence. Most display key subject words and encourage the development of pupils' vocabulary. However, less attention is paid to widening the scope of their reading.

Modern Foreign Languages

Provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have excellent levels of subject knowledge and language proficiency.
- Teachers ensure good productive working relationships that promote good achievement.
- Recent teacher staffing difficulties have depressed pupils' attainment.
- Lack of consistent access to ICT is limiting learning.
- Teachers have not fully developed the use of assessment to identify individual pupils' curriculum targets

Commentary

90 Results at A* - C level in 2003 GCSE examinations were above average in French. In German, results were below average, with only a small proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades. Attainment of A* to G grades was above average in both subjects. GCSE performance has remained broadly constant in recent years with a dip in German in 2003, occasioned by staffing difficulties that are now resolved. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below average but trends show slight year-on-year improvements.

91 Standards of work seen are average by the end of Year 9 in speaking, listening and reading, but below average in writing. This represents good achievement overall considering levels of literacy upon entry to the school. The achievement of boys is satisfactory and that of girls is good, with the achievement of lower attaining pupils in Year 7 in French being good. Standards by the end of Year 11 are average in both French and German, which represents satisfactory achievement given attainment levels at the end of Year 9. The achievement of lower attaining pupils is satisfactory, and that of boys and girls is generally satisfactory. However, a minority of boys in Year 11 are underachieving because of their poor attitudes and behaviour. Therefore achievement overall is satisfactory.

92 Teaching and learning are good as teachers have excellent levels of subject knowledge and proficiency. They work hard to ensure good productive working relationships that promote good achievement. In Years 7 to 9, all teaching is satisfactory or better. The best teaching has very high levels of the foreign language used by excellent native speakers who demand active pupil participation. The purpose of lessons is shared with pupils so that they may readily understand their achievements. For example, very good teaching was seen with a Year 8 low attaining group who were all actively engaged. High levels of French were used, with good support from the teaching assistant. In Years 10 and 11 both good and poor lessons were seen. Poor teaching results from poor management of pupils' behaviour. The best teaching is characterised by teachers making known their expectations, setting challenging tasks with a brisk pace and changes of activity, and giving support sustained by excellent relationships. There are some examples of good and interesting approaches to lessons but with not enough opportunities offered for independent and collaborative learning. Lack of ICT in each classroom and inconsistent access to central facilities are limiting teaching and learning strategies. A systematic approach to setting targets and supporting pupils' achievement of them is hindered by inconsistencies in marking and using information from assessment. The advantages of joint planning that would improve the quality and use of lesson objectives and ensure consistent teaching have yet to be realised

93 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of faculty is knowledgeable and sets a good example to pupils. Teachers operate as highly skilled individuals but joint working arrangements are insufficiently developed to take full advantage of their expertise. Improvement planning and self-evaluation are not yet fully developed. However, participation in The Primary Pathfinder Project illustrates commitment to raise achievement. This is an improving faculty with potential for development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- The quality of teaching overall is good and promotes good achievement.
- The use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and to set realistic targets is very good.
- Written feedback from the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Competence in the application of mathematical skills in other curriculum subjects is underdeveloped.

Commentary

94 Attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average. In 2003, pupils' attainment in the Year 9 national tests was above the national average, and about the same as the average of similar schools. The 2003 GCSE results were in line with the national average. The performance of girls was similar to that of the boys. In lessons observed and from the scrutiny of work seen, standards are above average throughout Years 7 to 11. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11.

95 The quality of teaching and learning is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 follows the National Numeracy Strategy and provides good learning opportunities in all aspects of mathematics. In eight out of nine lessons, teaching was good or better, and was very good or excellent in a third. In the best lessons teachers challenge pupils' thinking and set high expectations for behaviour and effort. Pupils respond well and their attitudes to their learning are good. Teachers apply their expertise and good subject knowledge effectively in structuring lessons appropriately for pupils. They employ very good questioning skills to probe pupils' understanding. Teachers use a wide range of resources effectively to engage pupils in their learning, including the expert use of ICT and interactive whiteboards. Pupils are encouraged to work together, to share and discuss their ideas. Opportunities are created for them to explain their strategies and solutions in solving problems which consolidate understanding. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by suitably informed and appropriately deployed teaching assistants.

96 Teachers regularly set homework, which is discussed with pupils and marked at the beginning of the next lesson to address misconceptions promptly. Pupils' exercise books are marked regularly. However the teachers' written comments are not sufficiently informative to indicate to the pupils how they can further improve their work. In lessons in Years 9 to 11 pupils are made aware of the level at which they are working and are given very clear guidance as to what they need to do to attain the higher grades.

97 Pupils benefit from the support of lunchtime and after school enrichment lessons. These sessions are focused on helping the pupils to achieve the higher grades in the national tests in Years 9 and 11. In addition intervention and booster classes support lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9.

98 Mathematics lessons are very well resourced as a benefit of Science College status. All but one room is equipped with interactive whiteboards which were used very effectively to engage pupils' attention, to increase participation and to enhance learning.

99 The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of the department leads by example and gives very good support. A comprehensive handbook promotes consistency in the application of departmental procedures. Performance management is well established, an outcome of which has been the sharing of responsibilities within the department thus contributing to the teachers' opportunities for continuing professional development. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The department has successfully incorporated the recommendations of the national strategy into its planning and teaching. In turn, standards are rising in the Year 9 national tests.

Mathematics across the curriculum

100 Competency in the application of mathematical skills across the curriculum is satisfactory but as yet there are few planned opportunities for pupils to practise and apply them in other curriculum areas. The mathematics department has produced a policy to promote numeracy across the curriculum but as yet this has not been monitored and its impact on standards has not been evaluated.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching predominates and leads to good learning.
- Very good use of ICT supports teaching and learning.
- Science is very well led and managed.

- Good assessment procedures are well used to monitor pupils' progress.
- The curriculum provision, including extra-curricular opportunities, is good.
- The work in a small minority of Year 11 lessons is poorly matched to pupils' ability.

Commentary

101 In the 2003 statutory assessments in Year 9, results were average compared to all schools, and below average compared to similar schools. The attainment of girls was not significantly different to that of boys. Results exceeded the target set by the school. During the past four years the results have followed closely the national trend. In the 2003 GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils attaining A* to C grades was in line with the national average for all schools and for similar schools. There were no significant differences between the results of girls and boys. Results have continued to rise steadily during the last four years. The school has exceeded its targets for GCSE passes.

102 The standards of work seen reflect test and examination results. Since the last inspection standards have risen steadily because of the department's focus on teaching and learning. By the end of Year 9, many pupils understand various forms of energy and transformation and competently describe the consequences of animal adaptation.

103 By Year 9, pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs, across all attainment targets, given the below average attainment in science at the beginning of Year 7. By Year 11, pupils achieve well, and are on course to achieve above average results in the 2004 GCSE examinations, from average attainment in Year 9.

104 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Many lessons are at least good and frequently very good or excellent. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Very good and excellent lessons were seen in Years 7, 9 10 and 11. These were characterised by very good planning, challenging questioning, which made pupils think hard, and very good use of time, resources and new technology. In many lessons teachers use the interactive whiteboard skilfully, as, for example, in one Year 10 lesson on plate tectonics. Teachers emphasise key vocabulary and develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Most pupils respond well to discussions and show good attitudes and behaviour in practical sessions. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs skilfully. The highest attaining pupils are well challenged through additional lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11. However in a very small minority of lessons, the match of work to the needs of some of the lowest attaining pupils, particularly those in Year 11, is unsatisfactory.

105 The broad curriculum includes single sciences, applied science, double award modular science and vocational GCSE. Good extra- curricular opportunities exist, such as the astronomy enrichment course and well organised visits. However, the use of ICT for data logging, though planned, is at an early stage of development. The department has good assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and modifying the curriculum. There is an excellent liaison arrangement with local primary schools.

106 The department is very well led and managed. The head of faculty, ably supported by well qualified heads of subject, has provided a strong lead in raising attainment. The quality of technical support is very good and helps the department to run smoothly. Since the time of the last inspection, the school's award of specialist Science College status has resulted in better laboratory accommodation and excellent provision of computing and interactive whiteboard technology, which is contributing to the raising of standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not benefit from a systematic programme to develop their ICT knowledge, skills and understanding. Provision does not meet National Curriculum requirements
- Relationships are fostered well and in turn pupils' attitudes are very good
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Insufficient use is made of National Curriculum levels to help pupils improve their standards.
- Assessment of pupils not taking accredited ICT courses in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory

Commentary

107 Standards of work by pupils in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations. About half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 take an ICT related course. Those in Year 10 follow either a GNVQ ICT or a business and communications course, and in Year 11 the business and communication course only. In both of these courses pupils' capability in ICT is at the level expected and they achieve satisfactorily.

108 In Years 7 to 9 pupils, including those with special educational needs, show confidence in using a range of ICT skills. They are able to access software from the Intranet and understand file storage. They are able to use a range of word processing skills and can import images to enhance their work. They make good use of desk top publishing to create leaflets. In Years 8 and 9 pupils can use simple formulae to make use of spreadsheets and create charts. Pupils use word processing skills to prepare slide shows using PowerPoint software. In Year 10 GNVQ pupils use a wide range of skills in the 'Presenting Information' unit of work. They make use of more extensive word processing skills to create business letters and cards. Pupils have prepared web pages, which are hyperlinked to a home page on a website. In the Business and Communication course pupils use their ICT skills effectively to complete various units of business related work.

109 Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils join Year 7 with some knowledge of word processing. The introduction of the national strategy to improve ICT in Years 7 to 9 has ensured that the curriculum is covered and that pupils are able to develop a wider range of skills. Pupils in Year 9 are reaching the standards expected for their age. There is satisfactory achievement by pupils in GNVQ in Year 10 where they produce the level of work predicted, and in many cases above. Other pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have any structured ICT provision, in which the development of their skills is systematically assessed. Their achievement is unsatisfactory.

110 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good understanding of the subject which they use to plan lessons well and give clear explanations. Pupils' learning is reinforced by focused questions and evaluation. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who are interested in the subject and behave well in lessons. This is a significant factor contributing to pupils' progress. However, in some lessons pupils' progress is limited when the pace slows or when lower attaining pupils do not get sufficient support. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory but little use is made of National Curriculum levels in teaching to help pupils understand their level of work and how they might improve.

111 Leadership and management of teaching in ICT are unsatisfactory. The successful introduction of discrete lessons and the national strategy for improvement in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection are contributing to the rising standards and achievement. The GNVQ course in Year 10 has improved the provision for some pupils. However, the management of ICT does not extend to ensure and coordinate provision for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not follow a specific ICT accredited course. Failure to meet statutory National Curriculum requirements for the subject is an unsatisfactory aspect of management.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

112 All departments have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. Teachers have undertaken training to develop their skills in the use of ICT in their subjects. There is very good provision of interactive whiteboards throughout the school, and the ongoing training on the use of these is helping more departments to make use of this technology. The four ICT rooms, which are inconveniently located around the school, are barely sufficient to meet present demands for computer rooms made by departments. Particularly good use is made of ICT in teaching in science, art and design and music, although in modern foreign languages and in design and technology it is insufficient. As a Science College there is very good outreach by providing schools in the area with high level training in the use of ICT in teaching science.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Frequent staff turnover has contributed to pupils falling behind in Years 7 to 9 but most make up the lost ground in Years 10 and 11.
- Enthusiastic, knowledgeable teachers develop pupils' enquiry skills well but homework and assessment have not yet been harnessed to accelerate learning.
- Plans are insufficiently detailed or rigorous to weld the large group of teachers into a unified team for improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and they learn to collaborate well.

Commentary

113 Pupils' standards on entry to Year 7 are a little below expectations but by the end of Year 9 they are notably below expectations, particularly among the most competent. This is not evident from teachers' assessments which do not always reflect National Curriculum criteria accurately. In Years 7 to 9 most pupils fall behind and their achievement is unsatisfactory because their tasks are not sufficiently demanding. However, most make up ground again in Years 10 and 11 so their achievement in GCSE is good. GCSE results were below average in 2003 but average in 2002. Work seen in the inspection was below expectations in Years 7 to 9 but close to national expectations in Years 10 and 11. By Year 11, most pupils' knowledge of physical geography is strong, but the most talented do not make up the ground lost in the first three years.

114 Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but good in Years 10 and 11. In recent years, frequent changes of staff have held back pupils' attainment, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Enthusiastic, knowledgeable teachers engage pupils successfully and are able to make difficult concepts relevant with their very good local knowledge. Teachers combine good use of interactive questioning with pair and group work techniques and pupils learn to collaborate well. In Years 7 to 9 their skills of geographical enquiry develop well, but insufficient time is given to their knowledge and understanding of features and changes. Teachers use a limited range of resources and pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their ICT skills especially in Years 7 to 9 because of poor software provision. Teachers use display to create a positive learning environment but homework is not set regularly. Teachers' expectations are too low in Years 7 to 9, but those who teach GCSE in Years 10 and 11 demand much more from their pupils.

115 Pupils have good attitudes towards geography and behave well. Nevertheless, the use of assessment, grading and target-setting is unsatisfactory and marking is often brief and lacking guidance on how to improve.

116 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department provides a good role model and has managed a demanding period of high staff turnover effectively. He has a good appreciation of the department's strengths and weaknesses. Performance data are scrutinised and monitored effectively but procedures for staff monitoring lack rigour. The large and disparate group of teachers has not yet been welded into a unified team for raising attainment. The schemes of work that specify pupils' entitlement lack detail.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but more talented pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- Knowledgeable, hard-working teachers plan imaginative lessons in a vibrant learning environment.
- Homework is neither well planned nor set regularly.
- The large staff team is well led and has embraced many innovations but development planning is not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

117 GCSE results have been below average in recent years, particularly at the highest grades. Standards on entry to Year 7 and at the end of Year 9 are also below expectations, and the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11, except that the most talented pupils do not achieve well enough. Those with special educational needs are well supported by dedicated teaching assistants so they achieve well. Work seen in the inspection confirmed this picture of reasonable progress by most pupils. Their skills of historical enquiry, including the use of primary sources, are stronger, but historical knowledge and the skill of marshalling extended balanced argument are less well developed.

118 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are often good because they are well-planned by imaginative, knowledgeable teachers who nurture the skills of historical enquiry by examining primary sources regularly. As a result, pupils become confident, independent learners who collaborate well together. With vibrant classroom display, teachers fashion an absorbing learning environment from humdrum accommodation, and pupils are able to visit a wide range of sites at home and abroad that bring history alive. However, tasks are not well designed for the full range of aptitudes in classes, and those with a talent for the subject are insufficiently challenged. Occasionally, this leads to unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour, but most pupils are keen and the subject is popular. Homework is generally unplanned and neither exploits nor further extends pupils' independent learning skills. While most pupils' ICT skills are rarely practised or extended, some pupils have imaginative and innovative opportunities, such as creating short multimedia presentations on the First World War in the excellent 'movie-making project' with Hull University in Year 9.

119 The use of assessment to improve learning is at an early, emergent stage but new procedures planned will involve pupils more effectively. Teachers sometimes overestimate pupils' attainment, for example, in statutory Year 9 assessments, and pupils are not yet provided with individual targets or, in Years 7 to 9, with guidance on how to improve.

120 History is well led by a busy head of department who provides a good role model, and the staff team works hard. A host of initiatives has been introduced, some of them having exciting, innovative potential, but strategic planning lacks coherence. Management is satisfactory. The head of department has a good appreciation of strengths and weaknesses and the handbook is comprehensive. However, procedures for monitoring and evaluation are underdeveloped. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, but a rigorous strategic focus on the

core purpose of developing pupils' historical knowledge and skills is needed if future improvements are to be more substantial and faster.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education overall is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has not given sufficient time for the locally agreed syllabus for religious education to be taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 as required.
- Provision for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and for the small number following a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Teaching is mostly very good, often excellent and is both interesting and challenging.
- Standards are above average and achievement is very good, leading to exemplary behaviour and attitudes and learning which is mostly very good or excellent.
- The curriculum is well balanced to enable the pupils to learn both about and from religion with personal reflection as a strong feature.
- Leadership and management within the department are effective with a clear sense of direction in planning and innovation.
- Insufficient use is made of the community to enrich the pupils' first hand learning about cultural and religious diversity in the locality.

Commentary

121 Standards by Year 9 are above average. Pupils have a thorough awareness of important religious beliefs and traditions. They use religious language fluently and their grasp of the influence of religious belief on behaviour is better than usual for their age. Pupils arrive in school with a variety of backgrounds in religious education and with generally below average attainment. As a result of effective teaching, by Year 9 pupils make very good progress and achieve at the best of which they are capable. They are becoming especially skilled in reflecting maturely on life's fundamental questions.

122 Standards and achievement of most pupils by Year 11 are impaired by insufficient teaching time. Standards of pupils following the GCSE course are above average. In lessons and work seen they can talk and write competently about the origins of Christian belief and they present well illustrated commentary on social and moral issues. This justifies the ambitious target that has been set for results this year. Teaching is enthusiastic, thorough and knowledgeable. As a result pupils always do their best and are well prepared. Their achievement is very good.

123 Teaching quality overall is good. At the outset in Year 7 teachers establish clear ground rules for work and behaviour. Teaching is demanding and care is taken to ensure that pupils of all abilities are motivated. Lessons are well paced and structured. Starter activities are particularly stimulating and set a clear focus for learning. Relationships in lessons are excellent and the pupils become confident and eager learners. They cover a lot of ground and their recall is impressive. They use the good opportunities for talking, writing and summarising to express thoughts clearly. ICT is used effectively in lessons. PowerPoint presentations especially add interest and rigour to learning. The best lessons challenge and inspire the pupils to think for themselves. In a lesson in Year 9, for example, pupils perceptively considered responses to death and the afterlife. Pupils derive a great deal of enjoyment from their learning and this accounts for the growing numbers opting to take the subject to examination level.

124 Pupils are well supported. Activities are carefully adjusted to their needs. Marking is helpful. Pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss their progress following regular assessments. They are well aware of their targets and how to achieve them.

125 The wide use of personal reflection provides a rich platform for the pupils to become spiritually aware and to be alert to moral, social and cultural issues. Their personal development is actively encouraged through the emphasis on free expression and the insistence that the opinions of others as well as their own should be valued.

126 The head of department leads with a clear sense of direction. Arrangements are in hand to increase staffing and time to meet the locally agreed syllabus requirements throughout the school. He knows what needs to be done and promotes a good team approach to bring about change and improvement. The impact of new classroom strategies, for example, has been considerable in turning teaching and learning from good to mostly very good or excellent. In contrast, since the last inspection there has been no movement by the school to increase the amount of teaching time to meet the entitlement of pupils' in Years 10 and 11. Without this it is difficult to see how the subject can improve further.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A hard working team of staff has a secure command of the subject.
- Lesson planning does not take sufficient account of assessment information.
- Standards are below national expectations.
- Pupils with capability in technology are not achieving as well as they should.
- Provision for computer aided design (CAD) is inadequate.

Commentary

127 Standards of work seen by the end of Year 9 were below national expectations. Pupils show interest in the subject and enjoy designing and making activities. They display a good grasp of the design process. Graphical skills are variable in their quality and hold back the representation of designs. Technical language is vague but standards are improving. Pupils are confident and safe using appliances, tools and machines. The quality of construction and standards of finish lacks care. Given pupils below average attainment when they enter Year 7, overall achievement is satisfactory

128 Standards in 2003 GCSE are below national averages, except in textiles which are well above average. The attainment of girls is significantly worse than boys and well below national averages. Although standards show an improvement over the past three years, the rate of improvement is slow. In work seen, pupils' lack of refinement and sophistication in graphical communication inhibits the quality of their design work. Specifically, their presentations are not sufficiently enhanced by computer aided design (CAD), the annotation of ideas requires much greater depth, and specifications need more technical detail.

129 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is consistently good in textiles and systems and control. Unsatisfactory teaching stems largely from boys' poor attitudes to learning which are inadequately managed. Lessons are well organised with clear learning objectives but planning does not incorporate sufficient challenge based on assessment information. Questioning and interventions are not demanding enough to consolidate technical knowledge and understanding.

In turn, pupils' ability to apply knowledge of materials and constructional techniques to realise their designs is limited. Tasks are not differentiated to take account of individual pupils' capability.

130 The leadership in the subject area is satisfactory. Collaborative approaches within the faculty team are very good. A very good vision for the subject area has been established. Technology options for pupils do not include sufficient provision of accredited work related programmes. Management is consistently good despite a range of ongoing staffing difficulties. The narrow range of essential ICT resources at present limit improvement in quality of both design and construction. Overall progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **excellent**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards of attainment in Years 7 to 11 are high. The average points score in the 2003 GCSE results for art and design is significantly higher than the national average.
- The department has very effective leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching and learning has a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- The department sets very challenging standards for all pupils. This encourages pupils to work hard to achieve their maximum performance.
- The quality of knowledge and understanding of the subject that teachers bring to lessons is high.
- Through a number of integrated projects, the department make a significant contribution to the development of literacy across the curriculum.

Commentary

131 In Years 7 to 9 attainment is above expectations. By Year 9 a significant minority of pupils achieve the top grades in the teacher-assessed tasks. The work sampled shows that pupils respond well to a structured and effectively taught programme of study. Work seen in lessons in Years 7 and 8 provide a firm foundation for future developments. Achievement is therefore good overall. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and differences in performance between boys and girls are minimal throughout. Year 7 is used to identify pupils with particular gifts and talents.

132 Attainment in Years 10 and 11 is well above expectations. Pupils' work clearly shows a good use of a wide range of media. They manipulate them well to produce very effective images. The standard of work seen in lessons is very good. Pupils research the work of other artists and analyse it effectively. Teachers foster all pupils' skills, including those who are gifted and talented. Achievement is therefore very good.

133 The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good. Strong teaching provides very good classroom management. There are very clear rules to guide pupils in their behaviour. These are confidently enforced. The impact is seen by the way in which pupils enforce them independently when working in groups. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of examination requirements support the development of effective learning. Teachers are also very positive towards pupils giving appropriate encouragement. High expectations are set and, with very good classroom management, there is every opportunity for pupils to achieve highly. Through the use of the interactive whiteboard, teaching and learning are clearly enhanced. Homework is used to encourage pupils to think ahead; work is well assessed and this informs target setting at individual pupil level. As a result pupils understand the assessment objectives that need to be covered and can structure their work in order to achieve them.

134 Leadership is excellent. The main focus of the department is to continuously raise achievement. The department aims to get pupils to think and work in the way they will be expected to perform in the next key stage before they enter it. This is a very high expectation and the quality of leadership within the department enables this goal to be achievable. Management is very good. The department has addressed the issue of boy's underachievement by working in smaller units. Innovations such as *The management of teacher performance*, and *The Creative Context and Progression Through Literacy* projects are very well developed and managed. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high standard of teaching encourages pupils to learn.
- All pupils use music software regularly to support learning.
- Many pupils play instruments and support extra-curricular activities.
- GCSE examination results are above average.
- There is insufficient time at the end of some lessons for reinforcement of what has been learned.

Commentary

135 The results of teachers' assessments for 2003 were below average for pupils at the end of Year 9 but inspection evidence shows that standards are rising in line with national criteria. This is because classes now have a weekly lesson in music. Results in the GCSE examinations continue to be above average. There is no significant difference between the work of girls and boys.

136 By the end of Year 9 standards are average. This represents good achievement considering that the majority of pupils enter Year 7 with few musical experiences. In Year 11 standards are well above average and pupils' achievement in lessons is very good compared with their prior attainment. Very good teaching is a key factor in improving the quality of learning. Many pupils in Year 11 play instruments and take part in the choirs, steel pans band, wind band and orchestra which compliments their work in class

137 Pupils learn well in Years 7 to 9 because teaching is good overall. This has a positive influence on their attitudes and behaviour. They enjoy a rich diet of musical experiences that enables them to develop their singing, instrumental improvisations and compositions by working individually, in pairs and in groups. Because music technology is used throughout Years 7 to 9, pupils select, edit and refine musical ideas with increasing technical and musical skill. Verbal and written assessment of pupils' work ensures that they know how well they are doing and how to improve. Some lessons run out of time at the end for effective reinforcement of learning to take place.

138 Very good teaching overall in Years 10 and 11 leads to a very strong commitment to learn. Minimalist compositions by pupils in Year 10 improve as they experiment and edit what works best. Year 11 pupils talk confidently about their musical ideas. Because they have a good understanding of harmonic and melodic progressions their compositions are of a high standard. The very good accommodation and resources provide a first-class working environment.

139 The department is managed very well and the schemes of work have been brought up to date. The inspired leadership of the head of department ensures that music has a high profile within the school and the local community.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' good subject knowledge encourages pupils to learn and make progress.
- This is a popular subject and GCSE grades are above average.

Commentary

140 Standards of work seen in Years 7 and 9 are average and represent good achievement. Very high standards in Years 10 and 11 demonstrate very good achievement because of the pupils' strong commitment to the subject. Last year's GCSE results at A* to C grades were above average.

141 Year 7 pupils delight in mask work and learn well because of the very good teaching taking place. They improve their understanding of physicality as a means of conveying mood and feelings. Since the more outgoing pupils exaggerate posture, this gives their chosen mood greater authenticity. Year 9 pupils work on soundscapes and because of good teaching manipulate mass, shape and sound well, for example, when attempting to interpret the supernatural aspect in the opening scene from Macbeth. When a few pupils lose focus the teacher refers to lesson rules to bring them back on task.

142 In Years 10 and 11 there is very good teaching with excellent features which engage pupils and give a strong stimulus for the high standard of learning taking place. In a Year 10 lesson, powerful images of everyday situations successfully created dramatic tension, and discussion and evaluation reinforced learning. Good use of staging and levels, characterisation and conflict were well used by pupils in Year 11 in a presentation on drugs abuse to younger pupils. Although the well planned action and dialogue communicated directly with the audience, a few pupils felt that they did not have the confidence to raise points of interest from what they had been watching.

143 The leadership and management of the department are very effective and reflect good progress since the last inspection. Many pupils choose drama as an option in Year 10. The drama facilities are well used at lunchtime and after school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good quality leadership is driving improvement in teaching and learning.
- Teachers have a good range of subject knowledge and expertise, high expectations of performance, attitudes and behaviour.
- Procedures for assessment and recording progress are good.
- Extension work for the most able pupils lacks rigour in lesson time.
- Resources are limited for further improvement.

Commentary

144 Standards on entry into Year 7 are broadly in line with expectations. The department carries out extensive and well documented assessments to establish a baseline for all new pupils. Pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 8 dance class pupils were able to demonstrate with confidence sequential movements of a very high standard. They were clearly thrilled with their mastery of the techniques of linking, canon and unison movements and with their interpretation of the music. In a Year 9 basketball lesson pupils were able to demonstrate good technique in the basic skills of dribbling, passing and shooting and had a good grasp of the importance of an awareness of space. By the end of Year 9 standards are above expectations and achievement is therefore good.

145 In Years 10 and 11 standards in GCSE are above expectations and achievement is good. Predicted grades for 2004 improve on the 2003 results, and are supported by the work seen in lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' written work. For example, in a mixed badminton lesson pupils were able to demonstrate high standards in smash, drop and recovery shots and an understanding of tactical awareness. Girls were able to compete on equal terms with boys and one girl showed very good achievement in competition. Written work is well presented and shows evidence of good independent study and evaluation of physiological aspects well linked to practice. Very good use of ICT enhances the presentation. However, standards in non-examination classes are only average as pupils are not sufficiently well challenged.

146 Teaching and learning are good. Good teaching is characterised by the high expectations teachers have of pupils in standards of dress, behaviour and attitudes. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils interact well with each other. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. For example, in a dance routine in Year 9, pupils cleverly adapted their group work to include a girl with a physical disability. Teachers have good subject knowledge and there is a good range of expertise in a team who are very supportive of each other. Assessment and recording are good and are used to inform lesson planning. As a result pupils feel well supported and guided. Pupils enjoy the subject and there is energy and enthusiasm in their work.

147 Leadership is very good. There is a clear vision, sense of purpose and desire for improvement. Schemes of work and policies are constructive and helpful to staff. The impact of this is seen in the attention all teachers give to the fundamentals of good teaching. For example, there is a consistent approach to behavioural issues, to the need for clear objectives and impact at the start of lessons, and to consolidate learning together at the conclusion of a lesson. Despite the difficulties presented by limited resources, the school has received a Sportsmark award as there is a very good range of extra curricular provision. Opportunities enable all pupils, particularly gifted and talented, to reach their full potential through school, district and county teams. There has been good progress since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHE is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson plans and resources to support teaching and learning are well prepared.
- There are no procedures for assessing pupils' work or for informing pupils of the progress they are making.
- There has been no professional development to support form tutors in this aspect of their tutorial role.
- The school has been slow to revise its provision for PSHE since the time of the last inspection.

Commentary

148 Provision for the pupils' PSHE is unsatisfactory overall. Discrete lessons are well planned by the co-ordinator and include resources to support flexible and varied responses to teaching and learning. However, written evidence of assessment is not available on which to make a judgement of pupils' standards of attainment. The teaching seen was of mixed quality. In some lessons teaching was unsatisfactory, for example in Year 10 where teachers did not make good use of the materials provided, planning was weak and the pupils showed little interest in the topic. In these lessons pupils misbehaved and some could see little benefit in the work they were doing. In contrast, in a very good Year 11 lesson the teacher skilfully introduced ideas to engage pupils in a lively discussion on getting a place of their own. The pupils explored budgetary and personal problems with maturity. Learning was very good.

149 A programme of study for each year group covers a broad spectrum of topics including sex, health and drugs education as required. The topics take into account the pupils' growing maturity and preparation for life beyond school. Links with the community and a programme of visits and visitors supplement the pupils' personal development. These are mainly linked to health and sex education although a wider range is being planned. The science curriculum especially supports their education in health and safety matters. The school council and a wide range of well supported extra-curricular activities enrich the pupils' personal and social development.

150 The school has been slow to respond to recommendations made at the time of the last inspection and this largely accounts for the current overall unsatisfactory provision. The co-ordinator has begun to speed up the process for developing an effective whole school approach to PSHE but the school is without a policy to underpin its approach. Monitoring arrangements are yet to be planned and assessment procedures are not in place to inform the pupils of the progress they are making. The school has not provided appropriate professional development to ensure confidence and consistency among form tutors to deal effectively with this aspect of their role. These omissions lessen the impact of the overall provision although the recent introduction of a well structured programme of study throughout Years 7 to 9 is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. This is a basis on which to build.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is making slow progress in implementing this new subject especially in the preparation of a coherent programme of study for all year groups.
- Teaching in lessons seen in Year 7 and Year 8 is mostly good.
- There are no systems to assess the attainment and progress of the pupils.
- The contribution of other subjects and wider school experiences is mainly incidental and has not yet been appropriately integrated in an overall framework for citizenship.
- The school council is an effective aspect of the pupils' citizenship education.

Commentary

151 There is no documentary evidence available to accurately judge standards. Record sheets in pupils' individual files lack sufficient comments to make a reasonable judgement on progress and achievement.

152 The teaching seen in Year 7 and 8 is mostly good. Teachers use the materials provided to plan and prepare lessons well. They engage pupils in purposeful discussion. For example, in Year 8 studying government, pupils respond with interest and show a reasonable grasp of different forms. Some teaching was unsatisfactory. In these lessons teachers lacked sufficient subject knowledge and the pupils were difficult to motivate. In the best lesson, the teacher used thought provoking questions to engage pupils in lively debate on the impact of sharing the world's resources. Pupils make good progress in topics where they had limited prior knowledge. There is good practice in teaching and learning on which to build.

153 The school council is a further effective aspect of the pupils' citizenship education. All pupils are involved in their tutor groups in debating issues to be taken forward for discussion and there are wide representative roles for pupils in class, year and whole school council meetings. Pupils are gaining good first hand experience of democratic processes in their own community. However, incidental contributions from subjects and wider school experiences have not yet been appropriately integrated into the framework for citizenship. There was no teaching or work seen in Years 10 and 11 on which to comment.

154 Citizenship was not a requirement at the time of the last inspection. It became a requirement in 2000 since when the school has been very slow to respond to the national timescale for implementation. The recently appointed co-ordinator for citizenship is planning well to accelerate the process although some important aspects such as assessment, monitoring and coordination have not yet been sufficiently considered. The school is currently not meeting its statutory requirements for this National Curriculum subject.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

156 The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003. The table of AS results does not show the results of candidates who subsequently continued to take examinations at A level.

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
English	8	62.5	82.9	12.5	17.5	20.0	28.7
Mathematics	12	41.7	61.9	0.0	17.1	10.0	22.1
Biology	7	28.6	65.2	14.3	11.1	10.0	20.6
Chemistry	8	62.5	72.7	0.0	13.9	16.3	24.1
Physics	6	50.0	68.6	0.0	14.4	15.0	22.7
History	8	62.5	80.7	25.0	19.5	25.0	28.6

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
English	28	100.0	99.4	53.6	36.3	90.0	80.9
Mathematics	9	100.0	96.7	44.4	55.6	86.7	88.8
Biology	9	100.0	96.4	11.1	39.2	66.7	78.6
Chemistry	8	100.0	97.6	62.5	49.0	92.5	84.9
Physics	13	100.0	96.7	38.5	44.6	80.0	81.7
History	15	100.0	99.0	26.7	44.6	72.0	84.6
Design and technology		Fewer than five candidates					
Art and design	14	100.0	98.6	42.9	50.2	90.0	87.5
Physical education	6	100.0	98.0	50.0	30.9	83.3	75.2
Health and social care		Fewer than five candidates					

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

157 The focus was on English, but lessons in French in Year 12, and German in Year 13 were also sampled. In both subjects, teaching was good, with techniques and structures adapted and applied successfully from the Key Stage 3 national strategy. High levels of the appropriate target language were consistently used, with all teachers demonstrating excellent proficiency and fluency. All teaching was characterised by good support and challenge sustained by excellent relationships and rapport, with a brisk pace and changes of activity. Students showed a good commitment to their courses, but the lack of ICT in each classroom and inconsistent access to central facilities limit the range of teaching and learning strategies that can be used. This depresses students' levels of attainment. Video conferencing facilities obtained by the head of faculty from the Local Education Authority advisory service are under-used.

English

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment at A level in 2003 (and in 2002) was well above the national average.
- The department offers very interesting combined English language and literature courses at AS and A levels.
- The department operates an inclusive entry policy and caters for more students than any other department: achievement is good.
- Teaching is good, although sometimes too little guidance is given to some of the students prior to their independent study and research.

Commentary

158 Standards at A level English language and literature in 2003 were well above the national average. More than half the students gained the higher grades, A or B, and all 28 passed within the grade range A to D. In their AS level examinations, all but one of the 29 students passed in 2003, but with a smaller proportion gaining grades A or B.

159 Achievement in Year 12 is good, with students building well upon their previous knowledge at GCSE. Attainment is close to the national average with the vast majority presenting well thought-out, convincing work. Students' commentaries (which explain their own objectives in their original written work) comprise balanced, critical and revealing judgements. The best writing shows a keen sense of audience with, for example, students varying the rhythm of their sentences to enhance meaning and suggest inferences.

160 Achievement in Year 13 is also good bearing in mind students' previous results at AS level. Attainment is average, mainly within grades C to E; however, because the department accepts borderline candidates – who achieve well – a smaller proportion than in previous years is attaining at grades A or B. Most students, however, handle complex ideas and concepts well. Enthusiasm and perception, especially of the high attaining students, shine through their original writing. For example, the lecture one student provides for Jane Austen's heroine, Elizabeth Darcy, in support of feminism is witty and convincing. Another student re-casts the foolish Lydia from *Pride and Prejudice*, as a 'fairy tale' heroine of destiny: she ends her most amusing tale thus: 'all the stars in the sky were twinkling in appreciation of Lydia, who had changed the lives of the women in the kingdom for ever.'

161 Teaching in Year 12 focuses on improving students' initiative through their independent learning. In one very good lesson, groups of students read, and shared their ideas on some demanding poems. They then passed their written views and uncertainties to another group for consideration before joining a third group to discuss a different poem. The teacher circulated, offering brief contributions where appropriate. Students experienced the interesting processes of learning; they assimilated ideas, and they passed from an initial uncertainty to a confident justification

of their own conclusions. Afterwards students spoke with the inspector of their enthusiasm for poetry – they were perceptive of the varying ways poets share ideas with their readers. The very good teaching had increased students' confidence in learning about, and enjoying, challenging literature.

162 The teaching in Year 13 is usually thorough. In one good lesson, students learned to marshal knowledge and thought in their preparation for forthcoming examinations and the teacher's penetrating questioning challenged students to delve more deeply into the subject. Some momentum was lost in another lesson because less guidance than was required had been given prior to students' preparation for their class presentation. However, appropriate advice was given in the course of the lesson, and the process of giving talks is very useful preparation for higher levels of learning.

163 The leadership and management of the department are very good. The teaching is shared amongst six staff, offering students a variety of approaches to learning. Teaching methods are regularly assessed to ensure they meet the requirements of students of widely differing capabilities. That the interesting combined English language and literature course attracts more students than any other sixth form course is testimony to the enthusiastic work of an innovative, well-run department. The department under the present leadership plays a significant role in the school's ambitions for its students.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

164 Standards of literacy in the sixth form are good. Students speak clearly and, when in more formal situations, in Standard English. Attainment in reading is good with, for example, students making effective use of the resources of the school library and of the public library situated next to the school. Overall attainment in writing is good; students write with accuracy in science, with confidence in English and with insight in art and design. However, there is some inconsistency in teachers' approaches to the correction of technical errors.

MATHEMATICS

165 The focus of the inspection was on AS and A level courses. The numbers choosing to study mathematics, especially in Year 12, are increasing, and retention rates in mathematics in Years 12 and 13 are good.

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of post 16 courses are strong; the impact is shown in the improving standards of students' work.
- Teaching is very good, and hard working students learn very well.
- A well-planned curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for all students.
- ICT is well used by teachers as a teaching tool but students do not use it enough.
- The choice of AS mathematics is unsuitable for a small proportion of students.

Commentary

166 Standards in the AS and A level examinations in 2003 were close to the national average, and were an improvement on those in 2002. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Year 13 were in line with national course averages. Although there is some variation from year to year, there is no significant overall pattern in attainment by gender, either in class or in examinations. The comparison of the work of the current Year 12 with comparable work from the previous year groups shows that, in particular, the standards of the large proportion of average attainers have improved.

Lower attainers in Year 12 find the change to AS work difficult, but most cope due to their hard work and considerable support from their teachers.

167 In Years 12 and 13, virtually all students' achievement is good. Higher attaining students show a high level of analytical thinking and can choose appropriately from a wide knowledge of different methods. For example, they can decide what is the most appropriate method to use to differentiate complex expressions, reaching high standards. Higher attaining students have good opportunities to extend their work in further mathematics, through after-school lessons, and accelerated and independent learning. This is an important factor in their good achievement.

168 Average attaining students make good progress, extending their knowledge and skills and developing confidence in their ability to use them in more testing questions. They reach standards that are in line with national averages. They can solve problems in mechanics by resolving forces and taking moments. Lower attainers often need prompting, and find algebraic manipulation difficult. Their standards are well below average. The achievement of nearly all average and lower attaining students is good as they are doing better than expected from their GCSE results. This improvement is due to hard work, in class and for homework, and considerable teacher support, both in lessons and through regular, weekly tutorial sessions after school.

169 There is a very small proportion of lower attainers who make satisfactory progress in lessons but do not make enough progress over time to gain an examination pass. For this very small number of students, the AS course is not suitable, and their achievement is unsatisfactory.

170 Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is well structured, and sets high expectations in terms of the quality and quantity of work expected from students, both in and out of the classroom. Teachers are experienced and knowledgeable and are able to present ideas in such a way that students can overcome difficulties in learning. Teachers use ICT very effectively to present new topics and work out problems. However, there are not enough opportunities for students to use ICT themselves to further their learning. Students feel that their work is marked clearly and helpfully and that weekly after-school tutorial sessions are very good. Students make the most of their opportunities; they work very hard.

171 The co-ordinator for post 16 mathematics has been in post for a year. His very strong leadership and management have improved curriculum planning, setting up a very clear framework of linked classwork, homework, testing and tutorial support for students. Data is analysed closely to identify any areas of underachievement. The improvement in standards is showing the impact of all of these actions.

172 Standards have fluctuated since the previous inspection but are now rising. Resources and accommodation have improved. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

173 Students' mathematical skills in the sixth form are average. These skills help them to make progress in different areas of study, especially in physics and chemistry. In these two subjects, students' skills are systematically developed so that, for example, those not taking A level mathematics are taught how to use calculus. In art and design, students can measure accurately and have the necessary spatial awareness. In all subjects students can interpret data presented graphically and can also represent graphically data they have collected.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' good attitudes to work help them to learn.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers use ICT very effectively as a teaching aid.
- Assessment data is used effectively to monitor and improve students' performance and improve curriculum planning.
- Students are not using data logging sufficiently in practical work.

Commentary

174 The GCE A level examination results in 2003 were below those of other schools nationally. There were no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls, and the number of boys in the group was relatively small. The proportion gaining higher grades, A and B, was below average, but 90 per cent of all students gained a pass grade. In the 2002 examinations, all students gained a pass and the number of students gaining higher level passes was well above that for 2003, although comparison is unreliable because of the significantly smaller size of the group. The proportion of A to E grades gained in the 2003 AS level examinations was broadly in line with the national average, but the proportion of higher grade students was lower than expected nationally. These results were an improvement on those for 2002 when the number of candidates entered was significantly smaller.

175 Achievement in lessons is sound in relation to students' prior attainment at GCSE in both Years 12 and 13. In one Year 12 lesson, students made good gains in their practical skills when planning and completing an investigation into the effect of concentration on potato catalase. Most students at this stage in the course can use appropriate vocabulary well to explain their planning and observations in practical work. By Year 13 students have a good knowledge of respiration. They describe competently the importance of the Krebs's Cycle, and higher attaining students know how adenosine triphosphate (ATP) functions as an energy supplier in the process. Students have a sound grasp of natural selection and can explain the stages of the process using their knowledge of inheritance and the behaviour of recessive alleles.

176 Students are well motivated and organise their time well in supplementing class notes. They tackle homework conscientiously and prepare well for coursework and on-going assessments.

177 Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. In the best lessons the pace is lively and teachers' expectations are high. In a good Year 12 lesson the teacher used his knowledge to challenge students to think hard about the relative importance of variables such as temperature, pH and concentration in the catalytic function of enzymes. Students rose to the challenge when planning their investigation. Most could explain their observations well and discuss the importance of errors in their investigations. Insufficient opportunities are provided for students to use data logging apparatus in practical work. Homework is used very well to reinforce learning, and marking is developmental. Assessment procedures are good and marking is supportive and regular. Regular feedback is used to help individual students to make better progress.

178 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The recently appointed head of subject has reviewed the provision and already put measures in place to improve learning, such as the development of improved home-learning resources on the school's website. The provision of ICT to support students' learning is well established. Since the last inspection improvement has been good.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **excellent**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership and management and an exceptionally well-planned course lead to a consistent ethos for learning.
- Teaching is consistently very good or excellent.
- Standards in experimental work are very high and both contribute to and reflect very good learning.
- Students are supported very well, so that their achievement is very good.

Commentary

179 Many students who start the course have high GCSE grades, though a few have gained science double award grade B or C. They make very good progress, and standards seen in lessons are well above average, reflecting students' AS level results. In an investigation into the enthalpy of decomposition of sodium hydrogencarbonate, for example, students worked carefully to obtain good results. They had a good understanding of sources of error, and could provide a realistic evaluation of the procedures used. Students, including the most able, are well supported so that they reach their potential, and work seen in the classroom indicates that standards continue to improve.

180 In Year 13, students continue to make very good progress. Their practical skills are particularly good: quantitative work is cleanly and accurately carried out, and the results swiftly and perceptively interpreted. Qualitative work is also of a high standard. For example, in a Year 13 lesson on transition metals, students showed a very good understanding of reactions involving ligands and the origin of coloured ions. Their results in examinations are consistently well above average. Achievement throughout the sixth form is therefore very good.

181 Teaching is very good. The department has planned a particularly effective course which gives teachers the opportunity for innovative and challenging teaching. Teachers make very good use of technology available to them to maintain the pace of lessons, in which the intellectual challenge is unusually high. Students are fully involved, and are continually supported in thinking about the inter-relationships within their subject. Rigorous and frequent assessment and feedback, especially in lessons, mean that students always know how to improve further. All these aspects are exceptionally well integrated throughout the department, leading to learning and achievement that are very good.

182 Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The head of subject has a very good vision for the progress of her subject, and has designed a course which makes excellent use of the resources available to the school, emphasises the links between parts of the subjects, and uses a variety of teaching styles to suit all students. Activities are designed to suit the needs of students of all abilities, including providing opportunities for the most able to do as well as possible. Excellent records help her to monitor students' progress well so that support can be directed where it is most needed. All these features lead to high and rising standards: improvement since the last inspection has, therefore, been very good.

Physics

Provision in physics is **excellent**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the course are excellent.
- All teaching is very good or excellent.
- An innovative course emphasises the fundamental ideas of physics, and captures students' interest very well.
- Excellent relationships lead to a high level of motivation and commitment.

Commentary

183 Standards on entry to the course are above average, though students cover the full range of grades available on the GCSE higher tier paper. Excellent teaching holds students' interest so that they make good progress. Overall they gain above average grades in their AS examinations at the end of Year 12. Retention rates are high, and most students go on to take physics in Year 13. Examination results in 2003 were close to the national average, and were slightly below those of 2002, reflecting the attainment of these students on entry to the sixth form. In class, students show a very good level of understanding. They are well motivated, and show by their questions, and by the answers they give to the teacher's questions, that they can use physical ideas well in a variety of contexts. They are fluent in the use of common quantities and units: their use of them in discussion and in answering questions shows that many students have an unusually good grasp of the way in which quantities are related to one another. In a short practical task, in which students were to estimate how long a small candle would burn for, and its power, they not only showed excellent practical skills, but a real understanding of the relationships between the various quantities involved and their units. Although not all students showed an understanding at this high level, it was clear that the culture of success across the whole sixth form resulted in all students achieving or surpassing their potential. Overall, standards are improving and achievement in sixth form physics is very good.

184 Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' own understanding and their knowledge of how students learn best means that they are able to create a scholarly atmosphere in their classes which is near ideal. Furthermore, their own understanding is such that they are able to respond with genuine enthusiasm to students' questions. An outstanding example of this response was seen in a lesson in which the teacher led a discussion about the justification for allocating large amounts of money to pure research of no obvious practical benefit to humanity. Assessment is regular and firmly based on national standards. This means that students always know how they can improve, and teachers can target their support accurately.

185 The implementation of the physics curriculum is outstanding. Teachers have worked together, under the leadership of the head of department, to produce an exceptionally stimulating course, with excellent activities, and a superb approach to the development of ideas. Imaginative use of ICT is a feature of all lessons which has a tangible effect on the achievement of all students. A good range of extra-curricular courses extends the curriculum and inspires students further.

186 Leadership and management are excellent. Not only does the head of subject have an excellent vision for the progress of physics, but his management of resources, monitoring of teachers and analysis of students' progress are superb. Achievement is already very good and standards are rising. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

187 No subject was the focus of the inspection in this area of the curriculum. However, provision in ICT across the curriculum was sampled.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

188 Provision for ICT across the curriculum is good. In Year 12 all students follow the European Computer Driving Licence course. Students make use of their computer skills to complete project work. There is good access to computers in the sixth form area, where there is a dedicated computer room. Teachers make good use of the technology in teaching, particularly in developing the use of interactive white boards and slide show presentations.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good tracking and assessment systems result in rising standards.
- The curriculum is much enhanced through an imaginative range of trips and visits.
- A good range of textbooks supports students in research activities.
- Students' achievements were in line with their GCSE results in 2002, but are improving.
- The library stock is inadequate for the needs of A level students.
- Students' files are not always well organised.

Commentary

189 Students' work and the tracking and assessment data available in the department show that students' achievements are now good when compared with their GCSE results. All students achieved a grade in AS and A level examinations. The popularity of the course is reflected in the high retention rate between the AS and A level courses. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls.

190 Students' files show a wide range of work that demonstrates their growing confidence and understanding of the subject. There is evidence of independent research and use of the Internet. Their written work shows an ability to analyse historical data and to reach balanced and informed conclusions. However, some files are not organised well enough to ensure that efficient use can be made of the information for examination revision.

191 Teaching is good overall. Effective use is made of resources such as newspaper cartoons to make lessons interesting. Extensive notes are provided. The quality of the teaching and learning is enhanced by the extensive tracking and assessment systems. These enable staff to measure students' performance accurately as well as giving them a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. The marking of students' work provides equally effective guidance.

192 There is a good range of textbooks but the stock of library books is inadequate.

193 History is well managed. There is a strong commitment to the improvement of students' achievement. This is evidenced by the establishment of very effective assessment systems and the development of a wide range of visits which underpin the curriculum. The previous report did not comment specifically on sixth form students' achievements.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT provision falls short of curriculum needs and is a barrier to raising skills.
- Students employ structured approaches to analytical thinking and exploration, but are insufficiently innovative in their approach.
- Sketching lacks sophistication and hinders the quality of design development.
- Leadership and management of both courses are very good.

Commentary

194 A single course was inspected: GCE AS and A2 Product Design.

195 Standards of work seen at both AS and A2 in the recently developed course are close to the national average. In 2002 and 2003 AS and A2 results reflect this judgement, but national

comparisons are difficult in view of the small number of students. In lessons, students show interest in analysing and solving problems. A lack of sophisticated freehand graphical skills results in inadequate design development. Technical knowledge in both analysis and specification is inadequate. Students are developing confidence in applying design methodology in a systematic way to a range of products; and they demonstrate an increasing awareness of consumer and ethical issues. Poor ICT resources and a narrow range of ICT skills hold back the development of advanced research skills, testing, evaluation and graphical presentation.

196 Attainment on entry to the AS course varies from below average to satisfactory. Although increased AS enrolment is resulting in more discussion and debate in lessons, students struggle to apply analytical thinking to demanding problems at a brisk pace. Whilst students in Years 12 and 13 show interest and demonstrate sensible attitudes when working, they do not take enough responsibility for their learning or show drive to explore and innovate.

197 Overall, teaching is good; and lessons are characterised by thoughtful planning and organisation. Teacher command of the subject is secure. In very good lessons, teaching approaches stimulate pupils and lead to improved learning. Assessment is used to inform lesson planning; good guidance for student improvement is a feature of very good lessons. Teachers do not employ a wide enough range of strategies to challenge students' thinking or ensure that a brisk pace and stimulating approach is maintained throughout lessons. Too little use is made of exemplar material to sustain the push to raise standards of AS and A2 coursework.

198 The leadership and management of courses are very good; there is a total commitment to raise standards in day to day teaching. However, unsatisfactory resources hinder the drive to improve achievement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

199 Provision in art and design was the focus of the inspection, but lessons in Years 12 and 13 music and music technology were also sampled. In both lessons, achievement was at least good because of the very good teaching and learning taking place. Standards of work seen are consistent with progress towards success at the end of the course.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **excellent**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards of attainment in the sixth form are very good.
- The programmes of study are very effectively led and managed.
- The quality of teaching and learning are excellent.
- The department sets very challenging standards for all students. Students respond appropriately and appreciate the efforts of the staff.
- The processes used to analyse images are very challenging and provide a firm foundation for the understanding of art and design.
- The quality of knowledge and understanding of the subject that teachers bring to lessons is high.

Commentary

200 At the end of Year 12, attainment is above average. Standards of work seen both in lessons and through scrutiny of work confirm the high levels of performance. In lessons, the very carefully structured processes used enable students to achieve well. Achievement in Year 12 is therefore very good. There is no significant difference between the work of boys and girls either in Year 12 or Year 13. At the end of Year 13, students gained results which were above average in 2003; in lessons attainment is now well above expectations. Lessons are characterised by a high level of

challenge and intellectual rigour. The level of demand enables students to produce work on a very personal level. Pupils have to be able to understand the content of others' art as well as to create their own. The excellent support given ensures that the needs of students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are met very effectively. Overall achievement in the sixth form is therefore excellent.

201 The quality of teaching in the sixth form is excellent. It is marked by a clear determination to reach the highest levels of achievement for all. Through a number of exciting projects, teachers demonstrate their good knowledge of the subject and extend students' ability within literacy. In one lesson, the teacher explained the many ways the written word is used within painting. This was extended through comparisons with other cultures and how they use images and text to convey meaning. This allowed the teacher to bring in a wide range of references such as the work of Aboriginal artists and the London underground map, both examples of cultural conventions understood by those from within the culture, but neither corresponding to the 'real world' as we would see it. Another member of the team who introduced the group to the work of a New York graffiti artist further developed this project. As a consequence the quality of learning in the sixth form is excellent. The quality of assessment is also excellent. Systems are detailed and enable students to target their work in an extremely detailed way. Teachers have perfected this approach and students are very positive about the support they get. The quality of the sixth form art and design curriculum is excellent. The programmes offered, supported by innovative developments, provided an interesting and engaging curriculum.

202 Leadership is excellent. The main focus of the department is to continuously raise the baseline of achievement. The aim is to get pupils to think and work in the way they will be expected to perform at the next stage in their education before they enter it. This is a very high expectation and the quality of leadership within the department enables this goal to be achievable. Management is very good. The department has addressed the issue of boys' underachievement by testing out the theory that boys work more effectively within a curriculum structure that is broken down into smaller stages. There is a clear plan for provision for pupils with gifts and talents. The management of teachers' performance, the *Creative Context* and *Progression Through Literacy* projects are very well developed and managed.

203 Communications with staff are very good. The way in which staff use common approaches and standards confirms this. Planning is very good, as all documentation, although individualised, follow standardised formats. Monitoring of teaching and learning is very good. Performance management procedures are well established and contribute to the development of provision. Since the last inspection the department has made very good progress.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, and they have a good range of skills.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students are well supported so that they make good progress.
- Teaching is good, expectations are high, and there is a well-planned range of challenging tasks and activities.
- Some students lack confidence in expressing their opinions.
- Resources limit the range of activities in which students can participate.

Commentary

204 On entry to Year 12, attainment is in line with expectations. Projected results at the end of Year 13 are in line with last year's results, which were above average, reflecting the quality of work seen during the inspection. Achievement is therefore good. Inspection evidence shows that, in Year 12, the students have developed their ability to analyse and evaluate their own performance and can relate findings to improving performance. In a lesson on analysing strengths and weaknesses in a chosen sport, students demonstrated a good appreciation and understanding of their abilities. They could then constructively discuss training routines which would make good use of this analysis. By Year 13, higher attaining students use a wide range of technical language in kinaesthetic and physiological concepts and relate them to performance levels. In a lesson on psychological aspects they questioned the teacher intuitively and spontaneously although the lower attaining students were less confident in making contributions. Their work showed that their levels of independent learning skills have improved since Year 12 and good research skills supported by good use of ICT enable students to produce work which shows an insight into global issues affecting sport.

205 Teaching and learning are good. The most effective teaching involves high expectations and a good pace to lessons, resulting in a high volume of work and good learning. Lessons are well planned and well structured so that students have a good mix of note-taking and independent work. Their note-taking skills are good, and the demands of the teacher for follow-up work reinforce amongst the students the need for accuracy and focus. There is very good use of ICT to aid clarity in presentation and students recognise the importance of good presentation as a result. Students have a responsible attitude to their work and are enthusiastic about the course. They relate very well to each other and to staff and there is a group energy in both Years 12 and 13. Teachers and students have managed to produce work of a good standard despite the resources being limited in their scope.

206 Leadership and management are very good. There is a determination to improve further the teaching and standards attained. An excellent spirit of team work has been generated within the department and the students speak keenly about the feeling of being very well supported and guided in their studies and pastorally. The school has an extensive range of extra-curricular provision with opportunities for students to compete at high levels of competition.

BUSINESS

207 No subject was the focus of inspection in this area of the curriculum, but one lesson in business studies was sampled. Excellent teaching in this Year 12 lesson led to excellent learning about consumer legislation. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, and their use of slide-show presentations and well-selected video all contributed to a very well-structured lesson. There are excellent relationships between teachers and students, who value the subject and have very positive attitudes.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Students are well motivated.
- There are good external links.
- Increasing group sizes mean that accommodation is becoming cramped.

Commentary

208 Examination results for 2003 were broadly average although, with only three candidates, statistical comparisons are inappropriate. All achieved a pass, but none was at the higher grades.

In view of their starting points at the beginning of the sixth form this represents good achievement for these students. There were no candidates in 2002. Retention rates are very good.

209 The standards of work seen during the inspection are good and students in Years 12 and 13 achieve well in relation to their GCSE results. Year 13 students have good knowledge of the provision available for young children and of the current legislation concerning them. Students in Year 12 have a clear understanding of the respiratory and circulatory systems and are competent in the use of physiological measuring devices such as blood pressure and lung capacity monitors. The written work of both years is well presented and shows competence in the use of ICT skills. Both year groups are developing their discussion skills.

210 Teaching in health and social care is good and students learn well. Staff are widely experienced so that they are able to teach the different aspects of the course with confidence. They have good knowledge of the course requirements and they help and advise students on their coursework assignments well. Lesson aims are clearly stated at the start of lessons, so that students know exactly what they are to learn. Reviews at the end of each lesson help to consolidate learning. There are good working relationships between staff and students. Teachers encourage class discussions and take care to ensure that all students become involved. The department has good links with external agencies, enabling visits and work experience to take place. Outside speakers are a regular feature of the course. Marking of students' work is thorough and provides good feedback to the students, who regularly receive individual interviews to discuss their progress.

211 Students make good progress in lessons and learn well because of the good teaching and because they are highly motivated. They are responsive in lessons and interested in the various topics covered. They take a pride in their work as shown by their coursework assignments which indicate that they explore a wide variety of avenues when undertaking their personal research work. Many of them wish to pursue a career in a caring profession. They work well together and help each other in a mature and sensible way.

212 Management of the department is good and the head of the department is keen to continue to improve results. Assessment and monitoring of student's progress are good and teachers meet regularly to discuss this. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory but the increasing popularity of the course means that it is becoming cramped. This course did not exist at the time of the last inspection, but has evolved from the old GNVQ course. The high standards seen then have been maintained.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

213 PSHCE is taught in tutor groups, using a good scheme of work designed by the head of sixth form. The course covers a wide range of material, including both practical advice, for example, about entry to higher education, and religious and moral issues. The statutory requirements for religious education are met. In a good lesson on civil rights and liberties, a Year 12 group of students discussed relevant facts in a mature way, showing that they had a good insight into issues surrounding conflicts of interest and the problems associated in creating a truly fair society. In discussion, they expressed themselves clearly, and showed a good level of respect for the views of others. However, many of them had not yet grasped the need for assertions to be backed up with robust evidence.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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