

INSPECTION REPORT

HARROGATE GRANBY HIGH SCHOOL

Harrogate

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121697

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Edwards

Lead inspector: Mr Graeme Clarke

Dates of inspection: 8th – 12th December 2003

Inspection number: 259207

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
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 1243

School address: Ainsty Road
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
Postcode: HG1 4AP

Telephone number: 01423 548800
Fax number: 01423 549381

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr K Hill

Date of previous inspection: 10th November 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Harrogate Granby High is an 11 – 18 mixed comprehensive school in the northern part of Harrogate in North Yorkshire. It is above average size with 1243 on roll, including 154 in the sixth form. The role is rising and the size of the sixth form is increasing. Students come from the immediate locality, where socio-economic factors are about the national average but below the average for North Yorkshire. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals in 2002 was 12.9%, which is in line with the national average.

The buildings, formed from three smaller schools, are extensive, with some parts recently refurbished. The school gained the School Achievement Award, the Sportsmark Award and an Education Extra certificate of distinction in 2003.

Many students have below average attainment on entry. Most students are white British with a very small number of others mainly from Asian backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is very low – eight are at an early stage of English language acquisition.

About 18 per cent of students have special educational needs (SEN), which is average, but 41 have statements, which is an above average proportion. Pupils with special educational needs have predominantly specific learning, speech and language, or social and emotional difficulties.

The school has substantial links with the community education service on a shared use basis, for example for family learning, community outreach, district community management, and leisure and recreational courses and activities. Students are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Young Enterprise and the Rotary Youth Leadership Award Scheme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1547	Mr Graeme Clarke	Lead inspector	
19741	Dr Trevor Smith	Lay inspector	
19043	Dr David Lewis	Sixth form co-ordinator	Chemistry (post 16)
18989	Mr Bernard Mason	Team inspector	English
1839	Mr Maurice Edwards	Team inspector	Mathematics
4720	Mr Graham Carter	Team inspector	Science
			Special educational needs
19404	Mr Les Schubeler	Team inspector	Modern languages
8090	Mr Frank Turns	Team inspector	Art and design
10308	Mr John Paddick	Team inspector	Design and technology
3755	Mr Trevor Hulbert	Team inspector	Geography
			Citizenship
8070	Mr Joe Haves	Team inspector	History
10894	Mr Paul Reynolds	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
8360	Mr Fred Peacock	Team inspector	Music
22906	Mr Barry Hodgson	Team inspector	Physical education
20252	Mrs Rita Price	Team Inspector	Religious education
			Business education (post 16)
19586	Mrs Wendy Easterby	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Ltd
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne and Wear
 NE11 0SR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a fairly effective school, which promotes an ethos that is conducive to learning and **provides a satisfactory quality of education**. Students achieve well from Year 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. Good teaching in many subjects, strong pastoral care, very good community links, and good management in many key areas all make an important contribution. In turn the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The schools main strengths and weaknesses are;

- Very good provision is made in English, art and design, music, and physical education.
- Students receive very good care, and good guidance and support.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is very well led and managed.
- The school is inclusive and gives all students very good access to subjects and courses.
- Very good community links, and the community education service, enrich students' experience.
- Most lessons are good, and some are outstanding, but too many are unsatisfactory.
- The quality of education is unsatisfactory in science, information and communication technology (ICT), modern languages and religious education.
- Statutory requirements are not met for ICT, religious education, and daily collective worship.

Since the previous inspection, the school has implemented the national strategy for improving learning in Years 7 to 9 to good effect in most subjects, leading to good achievement. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and is improving. Target-setting arrangements are thoroughly implemented, leading to good pastoral support but less effective subject-based advice. New vocational programmes in Years 10 and 11 are well developed with Harrogate College. Although the quality of education provided is very good in some subjects, it is unsatisfactory in science, ICT, modern languages and religious education. Students' knowledge, skills and understanding in ICT have improved in Years 7 to 9, but are not developed in Years 10 and 11 as well as they should be. Statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 to 13, and daily collective worship for all are still not met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 9 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	C	A
Mathematics	B	B	C	A
Science	B	B	B	A*

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

Similar schools are those whose students have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

Information about students' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been compiled by the school, and similar schools comparisons made using information provided by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in Autumn 2003

Year 11 and 13 results

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

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.

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is below the national average when students join the school and rises to average overall in statutory tests in Year 9. In 2003, attainment was well above the overall average of similar schools. The extent of improvement reflects very good progress and achievement. Students' 2003 GCSE results were about the national average, but well below the average for similar schools. The extent of improvement from Year 9 to 11 has been poor. Currently, achievement in lessons is good in Years 7 to 9 and mostly satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Overall, standards are average in literacy, and above average in numeracy but ICT skills are below average. Gifted and talented students and those with special educational needs show satisfactory achievement. Girls attain more highly than boys in most subjects.

Students' moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory throughout the school although their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Students show good attitudes to school, and good behaviour and commitment in lessons. Attendance is average and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In many lessons effective methods and encouragement from teachers sustain students' involvement and lead to good learning. Teaching is good in most subjects, but one in fifteen lessons is unsatisfactory which is too many.

All students enjoy very good access to activities, particularly in the arts and sports. Students benefit from good support, advice and guidance, although in some subjects they do not know clearly enough how they can improve. Partnerships with other schools, the community and parents are very good. The school does not meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all students. For most students in Years 10 and 11, who do not take GCSE courses, it does not fulfil the requirements for ICT, and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This limits achievement in ICT and religious education, and aspects of personal and spiritual development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management throughout the school are satisfactory. The new senior staff team provides strong management. Most heads of subjects lead and manage their departments well. The management of provision for students with special educational needs is a particular strength. Notably, strong pastoral leadership makes a major contribution to the ethos of the school. The headteacher gives satisfactory leadership. The senior leadership team does not concentrate sufficiently upon the various factors that contribute to unsatisfactory teaching. Governors have a high commitment to supporting their school. However, governors and the headteacher have not ensured that the school meets all statutory obligations for the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have confidence in the school and are pleased with the standards achieved and the care provided. Some parents were concerned about the reports on their children's progress, but these have now been improved. Some parents' concerns about misbehaviour are partly justified, and the school is working to improve the behaviour of a small minority of students. The school respects and acts on students' views and the concerns they express through the pastoral system and the sixth form council. Students are generally very satisfied and value the support and advice they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are for the governors and leadership team to:

- Strenuously continue to pursue the development of teaching and learning styles to raise achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Eradicate inconsistencies in the quality of provision.
- Promote students' spiritual development.

In addition, meet statutory requirements for ICT in Years 10 and 11; and, as indicated as key issues in the previous inspection, for religious education in Years 10 to 13, and daily collective worship for all students.

THE SIXTH FORM AT HARROGATE GRANBY HIGH SCHOOL

About 150 sixth form students study mainly for GCE and vocational courses. There are good links with Harrogate College. Most continue their studies in higher education

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective sixth form. Provision in art and design, physical education and music is very good. In most areas of the curriculum some students achieve very well, although too many fail to gain a pass grade at AS level. Overall, achievement is therefore satisfactory. Good teaching, with more than one third very good or excellent, leads to good learning. Vocational courses, some of them provided in conjunction with Harrogate College, extend the range of opportunities available to students. Provision for religious education and for a daily act of collective worship does not meet statutory requirements. This was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. The sixth form does not draw on funds allocated to the main school, nor does it contribute to the funding of the main school. The sixth form is, therefore, cost-effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The sixth form is very inclusive, and the school works hard to provide appropriate opportunities for all its students, including those who have special educational needs, or are gifted and talented.
- Students are proud of their school. They are willing to take on responsibility, and relationships between students and their teachers are based on mutual trust and respect.
- There are very good links with the community, and with other schools and colleges.
- There is insufficient development of key skills, including ICT, across the curriculum.
- The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for religious education and a daily act of collective worship.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected. 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.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good. AS Level English literature in Year 12 is well taught and learning is good. Students achieve well and standards are above average. Although achievement at A Level in Year 13 is good bearing in mind past performance, attainment is within the middle and lower pass grades.
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory, and students gain results which are broadly as expected, but work seen in lessons is below average. Teachers' analysis of students' progress is very good, but has still to be used effectively to raise attainment.
Science	Satisfactory in Chemistry. Some students gain the highest grades in response to teaching which is often very good or excellent, but too many fail AS examinations. Practical skills are especially good, and help to raise attainment overall.
Information and communication technology	Good for ICT at advanced vocational level. Teaching and learning in examination courses are good, and students gain above average results. Provision for the development of ICT skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
Humanities	Good in history. In history, standards of attainment are above average and students' achievement is good by Year 13. This is because of consistently good teaching and students' own positive attitudes towards their studies.

Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art and design and music. In art and design, very good teaching leads to very good learning and students produce work which is of very high quality. Some students take an AVCE course, which serves their needs well. The department makes very good use of its artist in residence to motivate and inspire students. In music, students are well motivated as a result of very good teaching. They gain above average results. First class accommodation and resources contribute to students' good achievement.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Very good in physical education. Teaching is very good and students make very good progress in lessons. Students achieve well in the subject to reach standards in line with those seen nationally.
Business	Satisfactory in business education. Students reach standards which are in line with expectations, and achievement is satisfactory. Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory, but day-to-day management is satisfactory.

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

Students have access to good advice, guidance and support. They are well prepared for the privileges and responsibilities of life in the sixth form, and the form tutors and the head of sixth form are readily available to give them support when needed. Regular monitoring provides the school with good information about each student's progress, and there are good procedures for giving them extra help in their studies. In a few subjects, for example, mathematics, the guidance given to students is not yet reflected in examination results. Good advice is available on entry to higher education, mainly from subject teachers, and there is ready access to careers information, both in discussion and in the careers section of the library. Very good links with the community give students valuable opportunities and support in their personal development. However, tutor periods, assemblies and citizenship lessons do not contribute as much as they should to students' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership of the sixth form is good. The head of sixth form has a clear vision for the place of the sixth form in the school, and communicates it well to his colleagues, creating a good sense of purpose, with high aspirations, in students and teachers alike. There is an especially good commitment to creating an inclusive sixth form in which all students have the same opportunities and are equally valued, whatever their abilities or aspirations. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met, however, and the provision for religious education in the sixth form does not meet requirements.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

For the most part, students are very positive in their views of the sixth form. They speak very highly of their teachers, who give them very good support, both academically and in their personal development. They report that the head of sixth form, the head of Year 12 and the form tutors work with them to identify and resolve any problems that they may have. In particular, they greatly value the relationships they have with their teachers, based on mutual trust and respect, and the opportunities they have to take on responsibility for events within the school. They feel that the opportunities they have to voice their opinions give them a measure of ownership of a school of which they can be justly proud.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Students come into Year 7 with standards that are below average, especially in their literacy skills. In the statutory Year 9 tests in 2003, students gained results that overall were comparable with the national average and well above that of similar schools. This improvement represents very good achievement. Achievement in work seen and in lessons is good.

In Years 10 and 11, GCSE results were overall average but students' progress did not match that of similar schools, indicating unsatisfactory achievement. Achievement in work seen and lessons is now satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Levels of achievement in Years 7 to 9 in 2003 were very good in relation to students' attainment when they came into the school in Year 7. The school was in the top quarter nationally for its improvement of students' performance from Year 7 to 9, reflecting very good progress.
- In 2003 GCSE achievement was unsatisfactory: the school was in the bottom quarter nationally for the improvement in students' attainment, which reflects poor progress from Year 10 to 11.
- In work seen, overall achievement is very good in most subjects, satisfactory in mathematics and ICT, but unsatisfactory in science and modern languages.
- Except in examination classes, students' ICT skills are insufficiently developed in Years 10 and 11 where achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Attainment in the English National Curriculum tests has improved considerably since 2002, and is now close to the national average.
- The number of students gaining the highest GCSE grades, A and A*, is well above average in history, but is well below average in most other subjects.

Commentary

1 When they come into the school, students' standards of attainment are below average, especially in English.

2 The National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were average overall. They show a year-on-year improvement that is above the national trend. They were similar to the national averages in English and mathematics, and above average in science. The results in English improved from 2002, rising to the national average for the first time since the previous report in 1997, reflecting effective development work within the English department. However, standards in mathematics fell back. Each of these subjects was close to meeting its target in 2003.

3 The overall averages of English and mathematics results were well above those of similar schools where students had similar prior attainments, and very high in comparison for science. Boys perform significantly less well than girls in English, but girls do slightly less well than boys in mathematics and science. The school is in the top quarter of schools nationally for its improvement of students' performance from Year 7 to 9, which indicates that they made very good progress relative to other students. Overall, students' achievement in the 2003 Year 9 tests was very good, taking into account their levels of attainment when they joined the school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.5 (32.4)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	35.8 (36.8)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	34.7 (34.6)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 219 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4 Overall, GCSE results are comparable with the national average, and they rose again in 2003 with a year-on-year improvement in line with the national trend. A higher proportion of girls than boys attain A* to C grades in most subjects. However, in sharp contrast to the picture in Year 9, the school was in the bottom quarter nationally for the improvement it helped students to make in GCSE in 2003, which indicates relatively poor progress. Results are well below those of schools where students had similar prior attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2001, reflecting unsatisfactory achievement over this period.

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* to C grades	46 (45)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* to G grades	87 (85)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A* to G grades	97 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.3 (32.3)	33.3 (34.7)

There were 157 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5 Results in individual subjects show considerable variations. The proportions of students gaining grades A* to C in French and physical education were significantly above other subjects. However, students in design and technology, German, ICT and physics performed less well by a significant margin. In all other subjects, the proportions of grades A* to C were not statistically different from the others. The school also obtains an analysis from Durham University which indicates that results are relatively good in history, music and physical education, and relatively poor in biology, chemistry, physics, German, ICT and business studies.

6 Although the most able students do well, many do not attain as well as they could, and not enough of them gain the highest GCSE grades, A and A*. In history, the number of students gaining grades A and A* is well above the national average, and the number of high grades is comparable with national figures in English literature, religious education and physical education. However, in most areas the most able students do not do as well as their performance in the classroom suggests they could: for these students achievement is unsatisfactory.

7 For those GCSE subjects where there is a large enough entry to make a statistical analysis, girls attain a markedly higher proportion of A* to C grades than boys. The difference is clear in design and technology, English language and literature, French, German, geography, history, and ICT; although it is not significantly different in mathematics and science.

8 Achievement in lessons and work seen is very good or good in several areas of the curriculum. In music in Years 10 and 11, and in drama, for example, a group of Year 10 students achieved very well over a short period, producing a pantomime for a very receptive audience of primary children. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 11 in English, art and design, history, music, design and technology. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is good in mathematics, science, geography,

ICT, citizenship and physical education. In Years 10 and 11, however, achievement is unsatisfactory in science, and for non-examination students in ICT and religious education. About 40 Year 11 students are enrolled on NVQ Level 1 courses in hairdressing and catering, and the applied GCSE in engineering. These students make good progress and are achieving well. Many from last year have been motivated to enrol for Level 2 courses when they leave the school. In contrast to this, achievement is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages; in Years 7 to 9 overall and in German especially in Years 10 and 11.

9 Standards of work seen in Year 9 during the inspection are generally similar to those seen nationally. In Year 7, they are above average, but inspection evidence points to standards in Year 8 as closer to average. Standards seen in lessons improve again in Years 10 and 11, though there is an absence of really high attainment, and a significant number of lessons were characterised by below average standards of attainment in these years. Overall, in Years 7 to 9 achievement is good. High standards of attainment were seen in English, history (where girls did better than boys), and art and design; and in music in Years 10 and 11. Students in most other subjects produced work which was broadly average. Overall in Years 10 and 11 achievement is satisfactory.

10 The achievement of students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In some departments, such as art and design and design and technology these students achieve very well in lessons as a result of effective help from learning support assistants.

11 Competence in English language and literacy across the curriculum is average which represents very good achievement from a low baseline on entry. The national strategy for improving literacy is very well implemented in nearly all subjects. Competence in mathematics across the curriculum is good. Staff are conversant with the national strategy for numeracy for Years 7 to 9. ICT skills are average in Years 7 to 9, but below average for those students who do not take examination courses in ICT in Years 10 and 11.

Sixth Form

Although many sixth form students achieve well, often from limited prior attainment, too many fail to gain a pass grade in their AS examinations. Girls gain many more high grades in both AS and A level than boys. Achievement overall is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Advanced level standards were high in 2002 in English, history, music, ICT, and art and design, with students gaining grades which are better than expected from their performance in GCSE.
- There have been consistent improvements since the last inspection in art and design, and in ICT,
- Too many students in Year 12 fail to gain a pass grade in one or more of their AS level subjects, especially in mathematics and the sciences.
- In the sixth form as a whole, and especially in Year 12, boys perform much less well than girls.

Commentary

12 Standards of attainment on entry to the sixth form are below average, and many students enter sixth form courses with GCSE grades in their chosen subjects which are lower than is usual in other schools and colleges. The school is rightly proud of the inclusive nature of its sixth form.

13 The sixth form is currently going through a period of expansion as a result of more students remaining in school to take AS Level courses in Year 12. In 2002 – 2003, the number of students in Year 12 increased by nearly half, and a wider range of AS Level courses was available to them. Reflecting the often modest grades on entry, relatively few students gained the highest grades, A and B. Nevertheless, many students with limited prior attainment achieved well and the many AS Level grades in the C to E range are a testimony to the hard work of students and their teachers.

14 It is to the school's credit that nearly all Year 13 students in most subjects gained at least a pass grade in A Level examinations in 2002 and 2003. Good results were gained in 2002 in art and design, music, English literature, ICT, mathematics and physics. Because of the small sizes of some of the teaching groups, detailed statistical comparisons are not appropriate, and none are available for 2003. Overall attainment at the end of Year 13 in 2003 was below the national average. Students' achievement in examinations in Years 12 and 13 taken together is therefore satisfactory.

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	85.2 (86.2)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	24 (25.5)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	222.5 (238.2)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

15 Some very good achievement was seen in lessons, notably in art and design, history, ICT and music. Achievement in sixth form lessons is satisfactory overall, with about one third good or better, but about one sixth unsatisfactory or poor.

16 Some students in a wide range of subjects, including computing, biology, chemistry, history, music, general studies and geography, achieved very well and gained the highest grades, A or B. However, girls gained 17 of the 21 grades A or B awarded: this discrepancy is an issue of teaching that the school should address.

17 On the other hand, many students, mainly in mathematics and the sciences, fail to gain a pass grade at the end of Year 12. For these students, achievement is unsatisfactory. Evidence from the inspection indicates that, whilst there is good support for any student who is experiencing difficulty, the school does not currently do enough to match teaching and learning strategies to the needs of students of modest prior attainment. Most students work hard in lessons, and have a genuine interest in their subjects. Homework and other assignments are carefully completed, and students are not afraid to seek help where needed. But lessons in which achievement was less good were those in which there was little variety of activity, too much direction by the teacher, and limited participation by students. In these lessons students made only modest gains in understanding.

18 Throughout the period since the last inspection, group sizes in most sixth form subjects have been small, often with fewer than five students. This makes it impossible to identify trends with confidence. However, at the time of the last inspection it was noted that standards achieved by students in the sixth form needed some improvement. This remains the case in the sciences in Year 12, and for boys throughout the sixth form. Overall improvement in standards since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The constructive and good relationships that students have with their teachers and each other contribute to their achievement and self-esteem: : clear lines are drawn and students usually respect them.

- Deficiencies in the provision for students' spiritual development remain from the previous inspection.
- The wide range of social and educational activities contributes well to students' personal development.
- Behaviour around the school is generally satisfactory, though there are pockets of misbehaviour, especially amongst younger students.
- Most students in Years 7 to 11 are punctual to school and to lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.3%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9 per cent	School data	0.8 per cent
National data	7.2 per cent	National data	1.1 per cent

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

Commentary

19 Although students' attitudes to learning are good for the school as a whole, there is a marked variation across the different age groups. Within Years 7 to 9 students' attitudes are satisfactory, although Year 8 students' interest and motivation are not as well developed as they should be. Nevertheless, students of all ages do show a willingness to take on responsibility whenever opportunities arise, and they pursue them well, for example, in the way they raise funds for charity.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1216	42	3

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

20 The school sets high expectations for students' conduct and places strong emphasis on building relationships and racial harmony. Overall, it does this well and as a result behaviour is generally good, particularly around school. However, behaviour in class broadly mirrors students' attitudes to work. It is good amongst students in Years 10 and 11; in Years 7 to 9 it is satisfactory but is affected by pockets of misbehaviour, particularly in Year 8. Students with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning and behave well in most lessons. Relationships generally, are good. Students are polite and work well together in class. Bullying and other forms of anti-social behaviour are minimal, and the school deals with them promptly and effectively. Exclusions remain relatively low.

21 Most students attend regularly and unauthorised absence is relatively low. Almost all students arrive on time. Students' punctuality to lessons during the day is good. Registers are marked properly. They are monitored thoroughly and parents are now contacted very promptly if their child is absent from school without good cause. This good practice helps to maintain satisfactory attendance generally.

22 Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The 10 minute morning registration session does not allow enough time for students to observe, reflect and discuss the thought for the day because of the necessary form administration that must also be done. The year assemblies held about once every two weeks do not make up for the missed opportunities that the thought for the day could offer for challenging students' values and beliefs. There is no consistent approach between subjects to

enhancing students' spiritual development. Only a few lessons lead to improved spiritual awareness and opportunities are often missed to contribute to this aspect of personal development and respecting others' beliefs.

23 Moral and social development are satisfactory. The majority of students treat each other and adults with courtesy and this strengthens relationships. Students show their concern for the needs of others by raising money for good causes at home and abroad. The school's code of conduct makes a good contribution to highlighting the differences between right and wrong, and class discussion helps students to make moral judgements and decisions. The wide range of additional activities that the school provides makes a good contribution to students' moral, social and cultural development. Although some subjects deal with world developments there is not a strong emphasis on raising students' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.

Sixth Form

The attitudes of sixth form students to the school are good, and their behaviour is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are proud of their school and seek to enhance its reputation with younger students and in the community.
- Students recognise the responsibilities that the additional freedom afforded to them in the sixth form brings, and seek to discharge them well.
- Students have a responsible attitude to their studies, and work with their teachers to gain the maximum benefit from lessons.
- Students take part in the many activities the school offers to them, often working with younger pupils, and many help to forge good links with the community.
- Although most students make good use of the support and guidance the school gives them as individuals, many fail to take advantage of the benefits of the daily registration periods.

Commentary

24 In lessons, nearly all students work very responsibly to gain the maximum benefit from their studies. They take part well in discussions, ask questions, and seek help when necessary. They accept that others may have valid opinions which differ from their own. They work well together in groups in several subjects. In discussion it is evident that they are very proud of their school. They take part in the many extra-curricular activities that the school provides, for example, in drama, music and sport. Many students offer voluntary support to younger students, for example, by supporting literacy across the curriculum.

25 During their time in the sixth form, students gain in confidence because they know that teachers and other students will always take their views seriously. They are not afraid to ask for help, either in their studies or personally. They organise several important events in the school calendar, such as the information evening about the sixth form for Year 11 students. The confidence they gain helps them to participate in activities in conjunction with local organisations in the community or nationally.

26 Students generally make good use of the support that the school gives to them, and comment especially on the value of their one-to-one discussions with their form tutors, sixth form year heads and subject teachers. Year 12 students speak highly of the help which they were given when they joined the sixth form.

27 In contrast to their otherwise very good attitudes, many students fail to appreciate the value of tutor periods and the opportunities they provide for discussions based on the *Thought for the Day* by either arriving late or failing to attend.

28 Students look after the sixth form common room area well, and it provides both a quiet area to work and an area for conversation and relaxation. Students generally make good use of this facility, though the use of the quiet study area for recreational purposes by Year 12 during break times sometimes creates difficulties.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are inconsistent, with both excellent teaching and unsatisfactory lessons evident. The curriculum is enriched by good extra-curricular activities and very strong links with the community education service. There are clear gaps in provision in ICT and religious education for Years 10 and 11, and for spiritual development throughout. Students have good support, guidance and preparation for the next stages of education or employment.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant proportion of teaching is very good or excellent, more in Years 10 and 11 than Years 7 to 9, and this leads to very good learning and high achievement.
- Too many lessons are unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good in most subjects. It is satisfactory in mathematics but unsatisfactory in science and modern languages.
- Training to implement the national strategy for improving teaching in Years 7 to 9 has led to improved attainment, especially in English.
- Homework is often used well to support and consolidate learning, but not consistently between all subjects.
- The procedures for assessment do not give students sufficient specific subject-related information for them to know how to attain their targets.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 195 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9 (4.6%)	48 (24.6%)	89 (45.6%)	38 (19.4%)	9 (4.6%)	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.

29 More than a quarter of lessons that were seen during the inspection were very good or excellent, and in them students learned and achieved very well. Six examples of excellent teaching in Years 7 to 11 led to very good learning and high levels of achievement. Two thirds of lessons in Years 7 to 9 were good or better, and this proportion increased in Years 10 and 11 to three quarters. Teaching is good in the sixth form, where the great majority, almost four out of five lessons, were good or better, leading to good or very good learning and achievement. However, importantly, teaching is no more than satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11 because of the high incidence of unsatisfactory lessons, one in fifteen, and students are not learning as well as they should.

30 Teaching is very good in art and design, and good in all other subjects except three. Teaching is satisfactory overall in mathematics and satisfactory in religious education in Years 7 to 9, but unsatisfactory in science. French teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but improves to satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Generally, unsatisfactory teaching stems from inadequate

leadership and management to identify and address weaknesses. The school has made a substantial investment in training to implement the national strategy for improving teaching in Years 7 to 9. This has led to clear improvement since the time of the last inspection, as seen in rising standards in statutory Year 9 tests. However, there are further gains to make by consistent application of the principles involved, especially in those subjects where levels of unsatisfactory teaching and achievement give cause for concern.

31 Several very good features contribute to the most effective teaching. Of particular significance is the way teachers foster positive relationships and help develop students' behaviour and good attitudes to learning. This makes a major contribution to the ethos of the school. Appropriate and well managed activities, together with a lively pace and good time management, encourage students to behave well and to become involved. As a result students concentrate well and show interest in lessons. They work hard, both mentally and physically as appropriate. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject and, from the school's comprehensive tracking and target setting system, a clear knowledge of students' potential. Although this helps them plan and carry out their lessons well, their expectations of students, and the degree of challenge they set is not as high as it could be in several subjects.

32 Students' development of subject skills, knowledge and understanding is good, except in lessons where there are unsatisfactory features of teaching. Students' abilities to work with others or independently, which are well developed in humanities subjects, ICT, music and physical education, are less well developed in others.

33 Learning is effective and is consolidated by the ways in which teachers check and support students' understanding. All students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons when questioning, support and consolidation are related to clearly stated lesson objectives. Excellent teaching leads to a high degree of learning and achievement, as in an excellent Year 10 science lesson where very effective use of computer software, which simulated a photosynthesis investigation, helped higher attaining students achieve very well.

34 Unsatisfactory features of teaching include shortcomings in selecting lesson content, planning activities appropriate for learning, or managing students' behaviour. Students' achievement falls away as a result. In mathematics in Years 7 to 9, instructions are not clear enough, and consequently students do not know what to do and waste time. Their misbehaviour is not adequately addressed and this limits their learning. Students in unsatisfactory science lessons exhibit boredom and negative attitudes because the content is too difficult or not explained clearly enough. Modern languages tasks are sometimes too easy, especially for the more gifted students. Conversely, inappropriate choice of too high a level of foreign language leads to confusion and lowers students' motivation and involvement.

35 Homework is often used well, but at times it is not consistently set; there are wide differences between subjects and teachers. In Years 7 to 9 it is used very well in art and design and religious education, well in design and technology and geography, satisfactorily in other subjects except German. The picture is the same in Years 10 and 11 except for more effective use than in Years 7 to 9 in history, ICT and in examinations work in physical education.

36 Teaching for students with special educational needs is good overall. In most lessons teachers plan well and make good use of the help of teaching assistants. In the best lessons assistants take an active part in the learning. Students' vocabulary and spelling are improved when they are withdrawn from lessons for additional intensive support.

37 Overall, the quality of assessment is good. The school rightly insists on regular assessments of students' work, which form tutors use diligently with them in review and target-setting. However, the use of assessment information in subject departments is inconsistent. In English, history, and design and technology secure assessment procedures lead teachers to evaluate progress accurately and give good guidance. All too often, however, students do not have sufficiently clear information for them to know how to raise their achievement. In several subjects,

assessments in Years 7 to 9 lack essential detail to help students because they do not use National Curriculum levels to set clear and specific targets. Whilst they know what their targets are, they cannot explain how they can attain them. In some subjects the use of assessment to plan future work is unsatisfactory.

Sixth Form

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good, and leads to good learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between teachers and students lead to a good level of self-esteem and good learning.
- Teachers generally have secure knowledge which they use to respond to students' questioning.
- Planning does not always focus well on students' needs, in relation to their prior attainment, and this sometimes leads to an approach which is not well organised.
- There is not always sufficient variety of activities in lessons.

Commentary

38 Some teaching seen during the inspection was excellent, and about 40 per cent was very good or better. Only one lesson was less than satisfactory. Particularly good teaching was seen in history, chemistry, and physical education.

39 The best teaching is characterised by an awareness of the ways in which students' knowledge and understanding need to develop, and a clear appreciation of their strengths and difficulties. When this awareness is associated with a clear and logical presentation which challenges students to think, without ever leaving them bewildered, learning takes place in a secure environment and is most effective. In addition, however, teachers must help students to develop their skills of independent learning so that they will be able to get the best out of their studies when they leave school.

40 All these qualities were seen during the inspection. Effective discussion to generate ideas about the expansion in the mid-west of the USA after 1840 helped students identify important conflicting influences. In an excellent lesson, the teacher skilfully used her experience to identify misconceptions before they arose, and was thus able to sidestep them and lead on to rapid and clearly defined learning. Group work in physical education made a good contribution to students' understanding of their own learning. In a good French lesson the teacher skilfully conducted the whole lesson in French, despite the students' limited confidence in the spoken language, and by sensitive encouragement and help raised students' self-esteem and the quality of their learning.

41 In some lessons the teacher misjudged the students' current knowledge and then had to spend too much time repeating work. This was often well done, but because teachers do not always evaluate their students' progress accurately, progress in lessons is inhibited by poorly assimilated material from earlier parts of the course. In part, this difficulty stems from the modest grades achieved by many students in GCSE. Good teaching, and a stimulating and lively approach in which every stage in the argument was carefully thought through, led to good learning in many areas of the curriculum. In contrast, teaching which concentrated on a specific issue, such as showing students how to answer questions which they had attempted for homework, rather than general principles, often led to poor learning. Teachers in many areas of the curriculum pay insufficient attention to the need to structure the lesson to cater for different learning styles.

42 Since the last inspection, the school has implemented improvements in several areas. There is now much more use of ICT to illustrate points in lessons, for example, interactive whiteboards and data projectors are used to very good effect. Teachers are more aware of the need to design their lessons to match the needs of their students. However, procedures for setting immediate learning objectives and targets are not yet fully established, and students do not always know clearly what they need to do in order to improve. Progress since the last inspection is therefore satisfactory.

The curriculum

Despite its many good features, the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because statutory requirements for religious education and ICT in Years 10 and 11 are not met. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision in a majority of subjects is good and in some it is very good.
- The school provides very good access to the curriculum for all students, including students with special educational needs.
- Opportunities for enrichment are very good, especially in sport and the arts.
- Inadequate provision of religious education, and the lack of a daily act of collective worship lead to unsatisfactory spiritual development.
- The school provides two modern foreign languages in Years 7 and 8 but insufficient time is available for students to benefit from a second language in Year 9.
- The match of teachers, resources and accommodation to the curriculum is good.

Commentary

43 The breadth and balance of the curriculum in most subjects is good and in some it is very good. In art and design, provision is very good because of the wide variety of opportunities offered for students to work in two and three-dimensional media. In design and technology very good opportunities are offered in electronics, food technology, graphics, resistant materials and textiles. Students develop a wide range of skills through very good opportunities for fieldwork in geography. Physical education is enhanced by additional swimming in Years 7 to 9, and in Years 10 and 11 the opportunity to study GCSE and the Junior Sports Leader Certificate enhance good provision. The limited opportunities for students to study both French and German in Year 9 is of questionable benefit. In turn, relatively few study German compared to French in Years 10 and 11 and none study both languages. The range of provision in vocational subjects made in partnership with Harrogate College extends opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11. As a result, students study an appropriate range of applied GCSE and NVQ (Level 1) subjects and have wider opportunities for work experience, which are clear improvements since the last inspection. Citizenship and the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) are supported by effective links with external specialist agencies for careers, health, drugs and sex education.

44 About two thirds of students in Years 10 and 11 do not follow examination courses in ICT, and over four fifths do not take GCSE in religious education. For them, ICT is not satisfactorily co-ordinated to ensure that they develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they are required to have. Insufficient time is available for non-examination students to complete the Agreed Syllabus in religious education. These inadequacies in ICT and religious education result in students achieving less well than they should.

45 The overall curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is very good and contributes to the school's aims of providing an inclusive education. Students with special educational needs have excellent access to the full range of curriculum experiences. Teaching assistants are particularly attentive to the needs of students with physical disabilities by ensuring that they can move without difficulty around the large school site between lessons. The use of modified computers and software, and the availability of hoists for physically disabled swimmers enhances access. The grouping arrangement for students with special educational needs is regularly reviewed by the special educational needs co-ordinator in liaison with departments and teaching assistants. The Award Scheme, Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course for small groups of students in Years 10 and 11 provides a valuable learning experience with work placement opportunities in conjunction with Harrogate College.

46 Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are a strength of the school. Many students regularly take part in a good range of team sports and matches in local league, area and friendly

fixtures. Many opportunities for students to play musical instruments are provided, leading to a good range of active instrumental groups, including a highly successful concert band. The school regularly organises visits which are open to all students, such as those to France and Germany and walking in the Yorkshire Dales. Students are successfully encouraged to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Many students are involved in regularly held events to support charities. Participation by many students in extra-curricular activities makes an important contribution to their social and cultural development.

47 There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum. Teachers are well qualified and teach their specialist subjects. There is very good staffing in physical education and art and design, and for students with special educational needs. The extent of support available is good, as the majority of departments have additional help with administration. Technical support in ICT is satisfactory, but the level of support in science is insufficient for a school of this size. Support is inadequate in physical education where the teaching staff have to take responsibility for all equipment.

48 The quality of accommodation is good. Refurbishment has improved it since the last inspection. Internal decoration is good, and there are very good displays of students' work around the school celebrating their achievements. There is very good accommodation for music, ICT and physical education; however, in design and technology there is only one room for work with food, which restricts practical activities in this aspect of the subject.

49 The school provides a good range of resources, including books, artefacts and computer equipment such as data projectors and interactive white boards. The resources in the library are satisfactory, although the ratio of books to students of 7:1 is below recommended levels. The ratio of computers to students, at 1:4, is slightly better than that seen nationally. The ready availability of computer equipment, which has improved significantly since the previous inspection, is not a factor limiting students' ICT development in Years 10 and 11.

Sixth Form

The curriculum overall is unsatisfactory. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum includes a good range of AS and A Level and vocational courses, some of which are offered in response to demands from the student community.
- Students make good use of the wide range of extra-curricular activities both in and out of school.
- Registration sessions and assembly are poorly attended: arrangements for them do not fulfil the requirement for a daily act of collective worship and make a very limited contribution to students' spiritual development and personal, social and health education.
- Provision for religious education for all students does not meet the locally agreed syllabus.
- Students' key skills are inconsistently and insufficiently developed across the curriculum.
- Lessons are taught by well-qualified specialist teachers, backed by a good range of resources.
- Sixth form students have very good accommodation available for lessons, private study and socialising.

Commentary

50 Within the school, the curriculum is centred upon a good range of AS and A Level courses. Some subjects, such as psychology, have been added in response to demands from students. Vocational A Levels are also available in art and design, business education, health and social care (in conjunction with Harrogate College) and ICT. Good links with the college mean that students who work towards NVQ qualifications in Years 10 and 11, for example, in hairdressing, catering and engineering, enrol at the college for higher level courses in Years 12 and 13.

51 The school's very good policy of inclusion and the implementation of Curriculum 2000 mean that the sixth form at the school is increasing in size and now consists of 154 students, of whom 98 are in Year 12. Most embark on four AS Level subjects in Year 12. However, for many courses the level of attainment on entry is below average. Not surprisingly, some students do not complete all their courses through to the end of the year, and this number is slightly higher than average. In Year 13, students typically continue with three subjects to A Level.

52 All students are expected to attend registration each morning, unless an arrangement has been made for them to take study leave. This period provides a good opportunity for students to meet with their tutor regularly, to discuss administrative and other matters, and to reflect upon the 'thought for the day'. In practice, this short period does not fulfil the requirement for a daily act of collective worship because the thought for the day is insufficiently developed, and the period of reflection is often peremptory in the extreme. However, many students appear late for registration, especially in Year 13, and both learning and personal development suffer as a result. Students also attend a period of PSHE and citizenship once each week, but every other week half of this period is taken up with assembly. The effectiveness of these sessions is also limited by poor attendance, and in some at least by implementation which lacks drive and enthusiasm. Some students study religious education as an examination subject, and others cover some aspects of the subject as part of a general studies programme. However, as there is no provision for religious education for all students, in this respect it fails to meet statutory requirements.

53 Many teachers provide students with good opportunities to develop their communication and numeracy skills in the context of their teaching, and ICT is a feature which supports many lessons. However, the school has not co-ordinated the development of study and key skills. In turn, duplication and inconsistencies limit their development across the curriculum. The advantage to individuals is largely dependent on their choice of subjects. Achievement in key skills, especially ICT skills, is therefore unsatisfactory.

54 A good range of extra-curricular activities both in and out of school is available to the sixth form, and students make good use of this provision. They take part in sport, music and drama, and involve themselves in activities in the community, for example with the Rotary Club. Most students are keen to take on responsibility, for example through the school sixth form council, or working with younger students.

55 Well-qualified specialist teachers teach sixth form lessons, which are backed by a good range of resources for text-based and practical work. Effective use is made of data projectors and interactive white boards in some subjects. Lessons take place in suitable specialist accommodation. The sixth form also enjoys good common room and quiet study areas. Library facilities for the sixth form are limited although students have good access to computers linked to the Internet. Notebook computers are available for short loan periods to aid work at home.

56 Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Although the school has continued to build on the strengths noted at that time, particularly widening the range of examination courses available, arrangements for the daily act of collective worship remain inadequate, and insufficient provision is made for religious education and the development of key skills.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring students' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Support, advice and guidance are good. The school has good arrangements for involving students in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety arrangements mean that students work in a safe environment.
- Good child protection procedures are in place.
- Arrangements for seeking students' views and acting on them are good.

- Induction of Year 7 students is good.
- There are good procedures for assessing students' academic and personal development in Years 10 to 13, but because those in Years 7 to 9 are not linked to national curriculum levels guidance on targets and improvement is less effective.

Commentary

57 The school continues to take good care of its students. Child protection arrangements remain secure. The senior staff designated as the persons responsible for liaising with outside agencies are properly trained to carry out the duties associated with this role. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and followed closely. All necessary risk assessments are now carried out as a matter of routine and regular checks are made around the buildings and grounds. Arrangements to prevent students from viewing unsuitable websites on the internet are also good.

58 The school values students' views about the way it operates and regularly seeks their opinions through a process called the yearly 'health check'. These arrangements provide good feedback and information, which is analysed and acted upon. The school is now very keen to extend the range of opportunities it provides for students' involvement, and has plans to introduce a school council by the summer term 2004.

59 Arrangements for the induction of students in Year 7 are very good and work successfully. Students are very happy with them and settle quickly into school life.

60 The recently appointed assistant headteachers have a major role to play in co-ordinating the support available to students, based on a comprehensive system of monitoring. Well designed systems provide form tutors and heads of year with good information which stems from regular formal tests. In Years 10 and 11 these are firmly rooted in national standards and there are good links to students' personal targets. In Years 7 to 9, however, students' progress is measured by relating their performance to that of other students, which gives insufficient information about attainment in relation to national standards, as judged by National Curriculum levels. Target-setting takes place throughout the school; students know their targets. However, within subjects, not enough is done to support students' progress from one level to the next through specific learning objectives and short-term targets linked to homework and other assignments. Procedures for monitoring students' personal development are good: a strength is the way this information is linked to information about academic progress. However, these systems are relatively new in Years 10 and 11, and it remains to be seen whether they will be really effective in raising attainment and helping all students to realise their potential.

61 All students with special educational needs have effective individual education plans (IEPs) which form the basis of support in lessons regularly provided across the curriculum by teaching assistants. Teaching assistants review the progress of students on a weekly basis with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Students are fully involved in the review of their learning targets. The welfare and safety of these students is considered carefully at these meetings, with the result that the overall care for students with special educational needs is very good. There is a very good programme of support by a large number of visiting mentors for students with learning difficulties. The one-to-one contact between students and mentors helps to raise the self-esteem of students and improves attitudes to learning. Most students look forward to these meetings. Very good individual intervention sessions by the two school-based behaviour support teachers improve learning attitudes, behaviour, and social awareness. Very good additional support is available for students through the *Breakfast Club*, *Homework Club* and *Gap Zone* (lunchtime club).

62 The provision for careers education and guidance is good with well-advanced plans to improve provision in Years 7 and 8 in order to meet national requirements for 2004 and gain 'quality status'. Although there is no formal careers curriculum time for Years 7 and Year 8, careers education in Year 8 begins with a limited experience of a single day of activity entitled the *Real Game*. The school then provides a good range of careers related activities for students from Year 8 onwards with the help of the North Yorkshire business education partnership. A team of tutors teach

a modular careers curriculum from Year 9 onwards within citizenship. Well produced schemes of work ensure good coverage of the curriculum. There are extensive links with the local business community for work placements and other projects. All students in Year 10 benefit from work experience, which is well prepared for with the help the North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership. Year 11 students benefit from an annual careers evening and specialist careers interviews with the *Connexions* careers adviser. However, the plan to maximise the use of the *Connexions* service has not been fully implemented and currently the school is not making full use of the resources available. More formal arrangements for tutors to meet for mutual support and training are needed.

Sixth Form

Support, advice and guidance are good. The school makes very good arrangements to involve students and act upon their views

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, timely information is available to students about careers and opportunities for study beyond Year 11.
- Tutors and subject staff know their students well and give good support when needed.
- Teachers mark homework diligently, with useful comments for students.
- Very good assessment and monitoring procedures provide the school with the information needed to identify where help is most needed.
- Careers advice, although satisfactory in the sixth form, could be developed further.

Commentary

63 There are good procedures for providing students in Year 11 with information about the sixth form, the courses offered by the school, and opportunities available elsewhere in the area. Current sixth form students play a substantial part in this process. Induction into the sixth form takes place mainly through tutor periods and assemblies. Students say that they were well prepared for life in the sixth form and for the greater freedoms as well as the additional responsibilities associated with study in Years 12 and 13. They quickly form positive relationships with their form tutors and subject teachers. They know where to go for help when they need it, and are confident that staff are monitoring their progress so that they can provide support when necessary. The school has very good arrangements for gathering sixth form students' views and concerns they express through the pastoral system and the sixth form council. Students comment very favourably on how well the school respects and acts on their views.

64 Students' work is regularly assessed, and for the most part teachers give students useful information about how they can improve, for example through diligent marking of homework with helpful comments for improvement. More formal assessments are undertaken regularly, and there is a very good system for recording the outcomes centrally. Similarly good systems link assessment information to judgements about students' personal development and study skills across all subjects, so that help, guidance and support can be given promptly when needed. Individual support by teachers, tutors and the year heads is a strength of the sixth form, whether in response to subject difficulties and personal circumstances, or in relation to university entrance or entry to the world of work.

65 Good information, which is readily available to subject teachers and tutors, makes a material difference to the quality of support students get in the sixth form. Although very good advice based on effective monitoring is generally available to individuals, not enough is done to support the development of students' key skills across the curriculum. This aspect is in need of further development.

66 Provision for careers education and guidance in Years 12 and 13 is satisfactory. All sixth form students benefit from access to advice from a careers advisor, backed by an up to date library of resources. Careers work, including help with university application, is primarily carried out within the PSHE and citizenship period, however much is of an ad hoc nature. Current arrangements in the sixth form lack the strength of a scheduled programme for individual students.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, and very good links with other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' reports are well written and informative.
- Parents contribute well to students' learning.
- The prospectus and governors' annual report do not meet requirements.
- Productive links with local schools, the further education college and the community benefit students.

Commentary

67 The school values its partnership with parents highly and fosters it effectively. General information given to parents is clear and well presented. The prospectus and governors' annual report, however, do not fully meet requirements. The former lacks a clear statement to let parents know they have a right to withdraw their children from religious education as well as from collective worship. The latter does not report on authorised absence, procedures for election of parent governors, and the progress made by the school in addressing issues raised at the previous inspection. Parents contribute well to their children's learning at home; student planners are used effectively to communicate with teachers. However, the school does not have any formal mechanisms for seeking parents' views, although their opinions are sought occasionally on issues considered important at the time.

68 Although some parents have indicated through the questionnaire that they would like more information about their children's progress, inspectors consider that the quality and range of information that the school now provides for them is generally good. Students' written reports, in particular, have improved significantly since the previous inspection and now contain a lot more detail, especially about achievement. They also include suitable targets to help students to do better.

69 Parents are very well informed about the provision of statements of special educational need and individual education plans and are very effectively involved in their review. The school takes good steps to secure the attendance of parents at annual review meetings for students with statements of special educational need. Great effort is made to ensure that parents of other students with individual plans are also carefully informed about the provision for their children through consultation evenings, over the telephone, or through a drop-in facility.

70 Links with local schools and the further education college are very good. There are on-going links with the feeder primary schools and these ensure that students' transfer to the school goes very smoothly and that they settle in well. A very valuable induction visit for Year 6 students with special educational needs in the summer term provides appropriate familiarisation with the site layout and school routines. The special educational needs co-ordinator attends the review meetings of students in feeder primary schools to ensure that suitable provision is available on transfer to secondary education. There are close links with Harrogate College, which provides vocational courses for Year 10 and 11 students. Courses to give a 'taste of experience' are also provided and help to create smooth transfer arrangements for students to post 16 courses. Joint training arrangements for staff from the school and another in Harrogate are also mutually beneficial.

71 Links with the local community are very good. There are particularly good links with the North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership, and numerous local businesses help by providing

work placements for Year 10 students. The school also has a very good relationship and shares a range of facilities with the community education service based on site. High numbers of students enrol on a wide variety of community education courses, both sporting and academic. Two local youth clubs are well supported by Granby students and participate in a wide variety of community activities which contribute to improving basic skills and increase self confidence.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory and by other key staff is good. Management is effective. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have a high degree of commitment and involvement but have not ensured all statutory obligations for the National Curriculum are met.
- The new senior leadership team is working well together but it is too soon to judge its effect.
- The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness accepts ordinary performance too readily and judges the quality of education to be better than it is.
- Managerial responsibilities are clearly delegated to heads of department; most provide good leadership and undertake their roles well.
- A whole-school approach for improving the quality of education is not yet in place. Known barriers to learning are not clearly addressed in the school development plan.
- Students with special educational needs benefit from provision that is very well led and managed. The management of provision for gifted and talented students is being developed.
- Good induction arrangements support newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school.
- Budget and financial control is very good and the school applies the principles of best value well.

Commentary

72 The governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The governors are well informed about the school through close and regular contact with it. Their arrangements for reviewing its progress throughout the year are secured through an appropriate and active sub-committee structure, the receipt of regular reports from the headteacher and occasional visits to meetings and lessons in school. Governors are highly committed and very keen to support the work of the school. They share, in common with the headteacher, high aspirations and a clear vision of promoting *The Community School*. The realisation of this vision is within their grasp, because it draws upon a well-placed knowledge of the strengths of the school in physical and community education. They are aware of marked inconsistencies in the quality of work between departments, and that weaknesses in some subject areas should be dealt with. However, governors tend to be insufficiently challenging of the school's leadership to address them. Most importantly, governors have not ensured that the school meets statutory obligations for ICT in Years 10 and 11, and for religious education and a daily act of collective worship, which were key issues for attention raised at the last inspection. This is an unsatisfactory situation because students are not achieving as well as they should be in these areas.

73 The leadership of the school is satisfactory overall. Overall, the headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. He has a clear vision for the future which is shared with the governors. He successfully promotes an inclusive school characterised by mutual respect and a caring ethos throughout, which in turn fosters conditions that are conducive to learning. He ensured that the national strategy for improving attainment in Years 7 to 9 was implemented effectively. He has created the recently established senior leadership team, which is beginning to function effectively, for example, in strengthening the arrangements for tracking and supporting students' progress and forging management links with subject departments. It is too early, however, to see its effect in terms of raising attainment and realising good achievement consistently throughout the school.

74 However, leadership by the headteacher is unsatisfactory in relation to addressing unsatisfactory teaching, and the neglect of long-standing inadequacies in the curriculum identified by the previous inspection. Too much responsibility is delegated to heads of department without effective direct monitoring of teaching by the senior leadership team. The need now is for a clear lead and direct involvement to bring about consistently better learning and achievement, particularly by boys. Systems for staff performance management are in place, and meet the necessary procedural requirements. However, they are not effective in developing teaching and learning because many objectives for improvement focus upon administrative aspects and the evaluation of teaching lacks clear focus. In-service training is satisfactory as teachers attend a wide variety of courses related appropriately to their professional development. Teachers evaluate training they have attended, but evaluations are often descriptive rather than giving clear judgements of how they might lead to improved teaching and learning. Overall, the school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness has its sights set too low, and in turn ordinary performance is accepted too readily, leading to a belief that the quality of education is better than it is.

75 Development planning draws upon joint review meetings between the leadership team and heads of department. They focus sharply upon thorough discussion of examination performance but are dependent more upon departmental monitoring of teaching and learning than the less extensive first-hand knowledge of the leadership team. Furthermore, the school development plan fails to tackle many of the known main barriers to raising achievement.

76 A clear delegation of responsibilities amongst the leadership team and middle managers at head of department and head of year level leads to a good understanding of roles. Frequent regular meetings between senior and middle managers, and information bulletins for staff, ensure that routes of communication are efficient and transparent. Most heads of subjects provide good leadership and management. In their departments a clear vision is converted into reality by good organisation and a strong sense of teamwork. Heads of subjects lead by example in the classroom. In the better managed subject departments, teaching and learning are frequently monitored for quality and consequently students benefit from good provision. However, there are major shortcomings in science and modern languages.

77 Induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers is good. Newly qualified teachers value the good support they get from their heads of department and the senior management. There are good links with Leeds Metropolitan and York Universities and the school provides good opportunities for initial teacher training.

78 The leadership and management of provision for students with special educational needs are very good and help to create very good teamwork and a good sense of shared aims. These are facilitated by the weekly monitoring meetings with the other teachers and teaching assistants in which the co-ordinator reviews the progress and achievement of all those students on the register. Staff expertise and learning resources are effectively co-ordinated and provide very good access for all students. A recently appointed governor for special educational needs has a keen interest in the quality of provision.

79 In contrast, the leadership and management of learning for gifted and talented students are at a very early stage of development. The newly appointed co-ordinator is diligently building a portfolio of ideas and appropriate approaches for identification and provision. However, as there is no consensus in the school about modifying the curriculum and teaching accordingly, the present arrangements are inconsistent between subject departments.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,245,657**	Balance from previous year	201199
Total expenditure	4,425,189**	Balance carried forward to the next	21667

Expenditure per student	3633.20
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80 There is a good link between the school's educational priorities and financial planning. For example, the formulation of the annual budget is closely connected to ensuring appropriate staffing and resources are available for the school curriculum. However, the links between the annual budget and the school development plan and those of departments are not sufficiently strong. Nevertheless, the school applies the principles of best value well. It is operating with a balanced budget and financial control is very good.

Sixth Form

Leadership and management of the sixth form by key staff are good. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of sixth form has a very clear understanding of what sixth form students need, and a clear vision for the future developments in Years 12 and 13.
- The overall provision is well managed, so that students get the support they need, at the right time, within a good range of curriculum subjects.
- Students are given good opportunities to develop their independence and ability to take on increasing responsibility appropriate to their age.
- The head of sixth form, the head of Year 12, and form tutors know their students well, and are a rich source of advice and guidance for them.
- Management has not ensured adequate arrangements for developing ICT skills across the curriculum, and statutory requirements are not met for a daily act of collective worship and for religious education.

Commentary

81 The head of sixth form provides very good leadership to his team of head of Year 12 and ten form tutors. His vision for the sixth form as an inclusive part of the school, separate, yet with strong links with the main school, pervades the sixth form. He communicates his vision to the staff who work with the sixth form, creating a high level of unity of purpose.

82 The sixth form is well managed. Good support systems are in place, and students are right to value them strongly. A good database of information about students' progress and development is readily available and helps staff to give students the support they need. Staff have a wide range of expertise, and its deployment is well co-ordinated between subject teachers and year and form staff. Students respect staff they work with, and make very good use of the opportunities available to them. The work of the pastoral team and departments is well coordinated so that students have access to well-informed impartial advice, but not enough has been done to ensure that students see tutor periods and PSHE lessons as a valuable part of their personal development. The management of the curriculum does not ensure adequate arrangements for developing students' key skills, particularly ICT, nor that it meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

83 Taking into account the many areas of development, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING,

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the department are excellent.
- Strong and effective teaching leads to good achievement.
- Learning support for students with special needs is good in Years 10 and 11, and very good in Years 7 to 9.
- Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 improved in 2003, especially at the higher levels.
- Overall standards in GCSE English language in 2003 rose above the national average.
- Standards in writing, in particular that of boys, have not improved sufficiently.
- The low aspirations of a small minority of disaffected students present a challenge yet to be fully overcome.

Commentary

84 Students enter the school with poor attainment in English and some with very poor literacy skills. Standards in the 2003 Year 9 national tests rose marginally above the national average and well above the average of similar schools. More girls than boys attained at the higher Levels 6 and above. This is very good achievement. Standards at GCSE in English in 2003 showed a significant improvement, rising above the national average for the first time since the previous report in 1997. However, no pupil attained grade A*. Attainment in English literature in 2002 and 2003 (with fewer students entered) was also above the national average.

85 Successful teaching and very good support arrangements enable students at every level of capability to achieve well. By Year 9, students become confident in their speaking and more attentive in their listening; they read with fuller understanding and enjoyment. The reading clubs held in the resource centre attract students from all age groups. The improvement in writing, however, does not rise to the same degree, and boys' attainment remains below that of girls. In Years 10 and 11, achievement at all levels of attainment is good. By Year 11 the standards of higher and middle attaining students rise above the national average. However, weaknesses in writing hinder the attainment of low attaining students, particularly boys.

86 Good teaching is a consistent strength throughout the department. Teachers create an atmosphere which encourages effective learning; the vast majority of students are busy, positive, co-operative, and interested in learning more. Teachers constantly strive to raise the aspirations of the small, but challenging, minority of disaffected students. Students with special educational needs are inspired to an interest in Shakespeare. In withdrawal lessons their vocabulary and spelling are improved. In an excellent lesson Year 7 students revealed an unusual level of enquiry and debate. The teachers are excellent role models for their students, providing motivation and encouragement, and insight into their subject.

87 The department makes effective use of carefully selected resources; for example ICT provision is successfully embedded in the curriculum. Extra lessons provide further opportunities after school. Theatre and educational visits motivate students and add to their social and cultural growth.

88 The head of department provides excellent leadership. Excellent management has translated her vision of a successful department into reality. Teachers' skills benefit from a variety of training courses. Teachers gain valuable administrative experience by sharing in departmental responsibilities. The department contributes successfully to a university training scheme for teachers. The department uses its analysis of attainment data to show that attention should be focused on appropriate resources, on preparation for examinations and on improving boys' writing. Effective contacts with primary schools ensure that Year 7 students settle quickly into secondary school methods. The significant rise in standards over the period 2001 to 2003 testifies to the success of the department, and the very good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

89 Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is **very good**

90 Students enter the school in Year 7 with very low standards in literacy. Available data is used immediately to identify students requiring most support. By Year 9 standards have improved and are close to national expectations. By Year 11 overall standards match the national average. This is because the literacy programme is very well managed and most, but not all, subjects operate it effectively. Productive initiatives, for example shared reading schemes, regular reading lessons and high quality material from the resource centre, contribute to improvement in reading standards. Good support from learning assistants increases students' vocabulary and improves their spelling and the quality of their writing. Most departments display key words and insist on their correct spelling. Opportunities are taken, for example in English in Year 7, for students to discuss worthwhile topics and to listen attentively to one another's views. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively; their support for students with special needs in literacy frees class teachers to move whole-class learning on at a faster pace.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 are below average.
- Standards in German are low compared to the national average and to those reached in other subjects.
- Many students underachieve because of inconsistencies in teaching within the department.
- Monitoring and review are not used effectively to improve teaching and learning and to raise achievement.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is often good and support assistants are used effectively.
- Assessment procedures do not show students how to improve their performance.

Commentary

91 Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 are low in both French and German and indicate unsatisfactory achievement. Students' speaking and writing skills are weaker than their reading and listening skills. Although many students speak reasonably accurately in activities that are controlled by the teacher, they lack confidence when required to respond spontaneously.

92 In the last two years, GCSE results in French have improved to above the national average, but in German they remained well below the national average. Just over a half of all students continue to study modern foreign languages after Year 9, though none studies both French and German. Standards in French are average by Year 11 and indicate satisfactory achievement in lessons. Although their examination results are above average overall, the most talented do not achieve as well as they should, and the proportion of A* to A grades gained is low. In German,

standards are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. The tasks that students are given are too often at a low level and do not enable them to develop an understanding of the more complex features of the language. Students do not apply their knowledge of language structures in new contexts, and standards of speaking and writing are low.

93 Although there are good features in most lessons, the effectiveness of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory overall. The pattern of teaching is inconsistent and many students make only limited progress. There are lessons where teachers provide a variety of appropriate activities that hold the interest of students and a lively pace keeps students on their toes. Support for students who have special educational needs is generally good. However, there is insufficient challenge for the more gifted students, and homework, especially in German, too often consists of low-level tasks. In both languages, not enough is done to encourage students to develop good learning habits in the early stages by insisting that they use the foreign language in routine classroom exchanges. Teachers use the foreign language in their lessons but they do not always give enough consideration to the level of the language they use. As a result, students become confused and their attitudes to the subject are negatively affected.

94 In Years 10 and 11 about half the year group study a modern language. The quality of teaching in French improves and is satisfactory overall. The GCSE examination provides a firm focus for learning. Teachers are well acquainted with examination criteria, and prepare most of their students well. However, the needs of the most gifted are not met and there is a consequent effect upon standards. Insufficient use is made of ICT. From lessons seen during the inspection, there is evidence that changes in teaching styles in German are beginning to lead to some improvements in standards. More emphasis is placed on oral practice and activities are matched more effectively to students' needs. However, the full impact of those changes is not yet felt, and standards are still unsatisfactory.

95 The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Policies are up-to-date and reflect school policies. Departmental documentation sets out clear procedures. However, not enough action has been taken to address weaknesses such as the inconsistency in the quality of teaching, the poor attainment in German, and low standards in Years 7 to 9. Ineffective monitoring results in inconsistent practice in the classroom. Inadequate use is made of assessment data to raise standards. Clear, specific targets are not set for students, and therefore they do not know how to improve. There is no clear reason for all students to study a second foreign language for one period per week in Year 9 when no students study two languages in Years 10 and 11.

96 Since the previous inspection, provision in the subject has deteriorated. The school has recruited well recently, and the capacity of the department to bring about an overall improvement is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department's analysis of examination results is very good and gives a clear picture of what needs to be done to improve standards.
- The tracking system introduced for students in Year 11 is very good. It enables students to target the improvements they need to make to obtain their predicted grades.
- Students' ICT skills are below average. The requirements of the National Curriculum are clearly identified in schemes of work but students' access to computers is restricted.
- Assessment of written work in Years 7 to 9 does not provide sufficient detail of National Curriculum requirements to help students to improve.

Commentary

97 Standards of attainment in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 declined from 2002. They are in line with the national average overall, but well above the average of results in similar schools. Standards are above average in lessons and in work seen. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 are close to but below the national average. However, standards seen in lessons in Years 10 and 11 are better than this and in line with national averages. Most students have good graphical skills, and can formulate straight-line equations given co-ordinates on the line. They quickly recall basic trigonometric ratios and use them efficiently to find the lengths of sides in right-angled triangles. Skills in using ICT are below average. Although the national curriculum requirements are clearly identified in schemes of work, teachers cannot yet secure consistent and sufficient access to computer rooms to promote improvement.

98 Students enter the school with attainment below average. Since attainment is average at the end of Year 9, their achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is satisfactory, and teachers are introducing strategies to improve it. Students with special educational needs, and those whose first language is not English are well supported and make satisfactory progress. High attaining students are well challenged in lessons and make good progress. Several take part in national mathematics competitions. The new tracking system introduced in Year 11 shows their progress from Year 7 and is used to predict grades at GCSE. Teachers and students in Year 11 are now more able to target the improvements needed to obtain predicted grades. There are plans to extend this good system to students in every class.

99 Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They were good or very good in half the lessons seen. However there is a small number of isolated lessons, in Year 8 particularly, where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In these lessons some students do not know what to do, waste time and learn very little. They have poor attitudes towards learning. This is because teachers do not monitor the learning well enough to ensure good productivity. An example of very good teaching and learning was seen in a Year 7 class, where the teacher organised students in teams to solve complicated numerical problems and set a time limit for them to present their solutions to the class. There was very good mathematical thinking and debate throughout the lesson with standards well above average. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good but the teaching of ICT skills is unsatisfactory. In lessons which are satisfactory, rather than good or better, teachers do not employ a sufficiently wide range of methods to maintain students' motivation and interest, especially in the middle parts of lessons.

100 The curriculum is carefully reviewed and linked to changes in examination requirements. Marking of students' work is good, with praise and diagnostic comments well used. However, assessment does not provide sufficient detail in relation to the national curriculum requirement so that students know what to do to improve.

101 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed head of department is making a difference and beginning to implement changes that are improving provision. There is a new sense of energy and drive within the mathematics team. The adoption of national strategies is leading to improvement. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy for mathematics contributes to the good standards of numeracy by improving mental mathematics and the use of calculators to solve complex numerical problems. The implementation of the school literacy strategy has led to more use of mathematical language in lessons. Now that the good analysis shows what needs to be done, further action planning is required to address these issues and raise standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the department has recently begun and is supporting this drive for improvement. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

102 Competence in mathematics across the curriculum is good. Training has been arranged so that staff are conversant with the national strategy for Key Stage 3. Opportunities have been identified where mathematical skills can be developed, and there is good practice in a number of subject areas.

103 For example, in science, graphs are well drawn to show what happens when liquids cool. In design and technology, students weigh and measure accurately and can use the principle of moments when constructing models. They can calculate correctly, using fractions, the total resistance for series and parallel circuits. In geography, students graph the distribution of car registration numbers and are skilled at drawing inferences from the data. In mathematics, trigonometric ratios are calculated using surds and more complex problems solved with efficient use of calculators. In physical education, recovery rates are drawn and used to plan personal fitness programmes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well by Year 9: standards are above the national average and have steadily improved over the last four years.
- In the best lessons, students are active learners and have good attitudes to work. They achieve well and sometimes very well.
- Teaching overall is unsatisfactory. Although some lessons were very good, a third were unsatisfactory or poor.
- Assessment procedures are good but the use of information in planning for lessons and targeting individual students and groups is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- The number of technicians is insufficient for a school of this size.

Commentary

104 In the 2003 Year 9 national tests, attainment was above the average of schools nationally and very high compared with similar schools. Boys' attainment does not differ significantly from that of girls'. Results at Year 9 have shown an improving trend over the last four years. Achievement is therefore very good in Years 7 to 9. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, results were broadly average. Analysis is complicated by the range of courses, including dual award, single award and triple sciences, and the relatively small cohorts in both the single and triple awards. Since the last inspection GCSE results have remained broadly in line with the national averages, with no significant differences between boys' and girls' attainments. Bearing in mind their attainment at the end of Year 9, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.

105 Work seen in lessons and in students' books reflects the standards reached in tests and examinations. Achievement is mostly satisfactory, but is not yet high enough in Year 11. Students with special educational needs achieve similarly. In a Year 9 lesson students of average attainment achieved well. They showed a sound grasp of the implications of variation in humans and recorded their results competently for input onto an Excel spreadsheet. In a Year 10 lesson, average attaining students are beginning to understand how watching metals reacting with acids can help them to compare the reactivity of metals, but lower attaining students misuse words such as 'evaporation' and 'dissolve' when describing the reaction of a magnesium with hydrochloric acid. In a top set in Year 11, students had an unclear understanding of the Doppler Effect and lacked confidence when trying to explain the red shift: for them, achievement was unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory or poor lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of students were often unsatisfactory because they were bored.

106 Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching varied from very good to poor. About one third of lessons were unsatisfactory, with one poor. At the last inspection teaching was described as sound. Too high an incidence of unsatisfactory lessons leads to unsatisfactory learning and achievement, especially in Year 11. In the best lessons, teachers have very good knowledge and use a wide range of methods to challenge and motivate students. In an excellent Year 10 lesson the teacher's excellent knowledge and teaching skills enabled higher attaining students to achieve very well in using interactive simulation software to investigate photosynthesis. In another very good lesson the teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard and provided challenging investigations involving *force* \times *distance* calculations; as a result lower attaining Year 11 students achieved well. In the least successful lessons teaching is unsatisfactory because of the limited range of methods and resources, and inadequate involvement of students. At the time of the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory, the report commented on the need to make lessons more interesting. This is still the case for a significant proportion of lessons.

107 Many lessons contribute well to literacy and numeracy, and soundly to citizenship. Teachers plan more successfully for the use of information technology than at the time of the last inspection and provision in this area is now satisfactory. Procedures for assessment in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 are good, but the use of assessment to plan future work and target support to individual students is unsatisfactory.

108 Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced for Years 7 to 9, which aims to improve assessment and the implementation of the recent national strategy in this area, neither of which are yet firmly in place. Development planning and review procedures are inadequate because they do not focus sufficiently on central issues, especially teaching. The limited extent of monitoring teaching and students' work is unsatisfactory. Accommodation and resources have improved since the last inspection, but there is insufficient technician time for the number of lessons taught. Overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on students' achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- The resources and accommodation are very good.
- The school does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment data is not analysed and used to inform teachers' planning.

Commentary

109 Students come into the school with below average levels of attainment. They reach average standards by the end of Year 9 as a result of good teaching in ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8, and in English, geography, history, and design and technology lessons in Year 9. Accordingly, achievement for students in Years 7 to 9 is good. Students with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. Students competently use the school's computer network with basic programs for word-processing, producing spreadsheets and making presentations, and they search the Internet to find useful information.

110 In Years 10 and 11, about a third of students study ICT for GCSE and reach average standards. A little more than half of these gained grades A* to C in the 2002 examinations, but this proportion fell to about a third in 2003, which is significantly below average. Bearing in mind their attainment at the beginning of the course, achievement by these students in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall.

111 The quality of teaching seen in ICT lessons in Years 7 to 11 is good and shows that teachers are working to improve achievement in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan their lessons very well. They have very good knowledge of the network system and the programs the students are using. They make very good use of the interactive whiteboard to conduct whole class sessions, for example when introducing new topics or skills. They have high expectations of students' behaviour and this contributes to good learning and good achievement, because students are able to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups. Very good use is made of time and resources when students can work on files prepared and available in their user-areas and can quickly focus on a particular learning objective or skill. The assessment of students' work is a weakness in Years 7 to 9. It is not used to inform teachers' planning about ways in which courses might be modified to challenge the most able students to reach higher standards.

112 Leadership and management of the department are good. An effective and enthusiastic team of specialist teachers work well together. The school makes appropriate use of a range of national strategies and programmes to help to raise standards for students in Years 7 to 9. Resources and accommodation are very good and are well managed to support teaching and learning. Procedures to protect students using the Internet and to ensure that they use it appropriately are very good.

ICT across the curriculum

113 Overall, the development of students' skills in ICT across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory because the school does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is no clear vision of how opportunities throughout other subjects can be used to develop ICT skills. There is no clear structure of responsibility for this aspect across the school. For most students, who do not take the GCSE course, achievement is unsatisfactory.

114 Improvement overall since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Improvements have been made to provision in Years 7 to 9, but for most students in Years 10 and 11 their entitlement to develop their ICT skills across all subjects is not being met.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are dedicated and extremely hard-working.
- Interesting and challenging lessons enable students to achieve well.
- The department provides opportunities for very high quality fieldwork, which students enjoy and which helps them to develop advanced skills in collecting, recording and interpreting evidence.
- Work is marked regularly, and general targets are provided, but some students cannot explain what they should do to improve the quality of their work, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Monitoring systems have not secured consistency in the quality of teaching.

Commentary

115 Many students enter the school with literacy standards that are below the national average and with limited skills in geography. Standards achieved by the end of Year 9 are at the national average so that students have made good progress. For these students achievement is good. Standards overall are similar to those seen nationally. GCSE results are in line with the national average and are improving. The coursework element is a strength, especially where students provide a clear analysis of fieldwork results.

116 Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Effective collaboration between the teacher and learning support assistant helps less able students, and those with special educational needs, to learn well. For example students in a lower set in Year 9 competently linked geographical processes and their consequences in relation to building construction and earthquake damage. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall. Achievement is high as a result of teaching that strongly fosters learning, such as in a Year 11 lesson where students clearly recognised trends and the relative magnitude of change in farming in the United Kingdom over the past 50 years. When students are not able to draw out conclusions, for example about tourism and the environment, they become distracted, learning suffers, and achievement is unsatisfactory. Students have many and varied opportunities to develop literacy skills through geography. However, the boys' tendency to produce short answers, which do not convey their understanding sufficiently, limits their

achievement and attainment in GCSE work. Conversely, students confidently use ICT, and deal with numbers, which improves the quality of their work.

117 Standards of teaching and learning are good overall but range between satisfactory and very good. The most effective lessons have very clear learning goals that are shared with the students, so that they know exactly what they are trying to achieve. Good lessons move at a good pace and use a variety of activities and stimulating materials to maintain interest. Effective use is made of videos and photographs, some produced by teachers, to illustrate key points. Better progress is made in lessons where teachers are careful to monitor learning and to vary their teaching styles. Questions are often used well to check understanding and to encourage students to think more carefully about the effect of natural process or human involvements on the environment. Teachers have a real enthusiasm for their subject; their knowledge is up to date; and they have a shared commitment to securing high standards.

118 The very carefully planned fieldwork trips are a strength in geography. Students like them and use the work to develop their ability to make links between case studies and wider issues. Marking is regularly undertaken and teachers are careful to describe the positive features of students' work. In Years 7 to 9 these comments do not always make it clear what is required to achieve different National Curriculum levels. Individual progress targets are not provided for students. They know what their target level is but they cannot explain how they can achieve it. Marking of GCSE work is more helpful, especially where marks are given for individual questions. Advice on coursework in Year 11 is very good, although a minority of students are reluctant to respond. Records of students' attainment are used to predict grades, but there are insufficient links to lesson planning, especially for the highest attaining students.

119 Leadership and management are good overall. Support for new and non-specialist teachers is good. Changes in the geography syllabus have been well managed, resources are good, and displays in the classrooms effectively celebrate students' work. Increasing management commitments and recent changes in staffing have reduced opportunities to extend the many strengths of the department. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results in 2003 were above the national average.
- The good quality of teaching promotes good learning and high achievement.
- The quality of assessment and guidance ensures that students know how to improve their work.
- ICT is not used enough in teaching.
- Opportunities for developing citizenship are not sufficiently identified in schemes of work.

Commentary

120 The 2003 teachers' assessments for students in Year 9, and the GCSE examination results for Year 11, were above average. The number of students gaining the highest GCSE grades is well above the national figure, and well above the figure for other subjects in the school. Girls' results are higher than boys'. Standards seen during the inspection match these results. Students use documentary evidence effectively to analyse cause and effect. In some lessons their knowledge of the context of historical events is under-developed.

121 By Year 9, achievement is good and it remains good in Years 10 and 11. Both boys and girls achieve well. This is because good teaching ensures that all students are motivated. Students with special educational needs are well supported with tasks matched to their abilities. A student whose first language is Russian receives very good support. In Years 10 and 11 the setting

arrangements ensure that work is carefully matched to ability. Because of this students of differing abilities achieve well. As a result students work hard and behave well in lessons.

122 The quality of learning is good. This is because teachers are well qualified and teaching is consistently good. During the inspection, half the lessons seen were good and the remainder very good, with one excellent. Here the teacher's secure knowledge ensured that students gained a very clear understanding of the causes of English Civil War. Students used appropriate vocabulary and analysed evidence effectively to identify key points. As a result standards were above average and achievement very high. In another lesson lower attaining students achieved average standards because of very good teaching. Effective questioning and excellent relationships help students identify and give accurate spoken answers about the American West. Literacy is promoted effectively; students have good opportunities for discussion and written work. However, there is not enough use of ICT and this reduces opportunities for researching information, handling data and broadening presentation skills.

123 The history curriculum is of good quality. It meets the needs of all students well and provides opportunities for all to succeed. In Years 10 and 11 the choice of study units is carefully balanced to match the interests of boys and girls. The Certificate of Achievement is offered to students who find the GCSE course too difficult. The curriculum is enriched by a comprehensive range of educational visits and special events. For example, Year 8 experience a 'Civil War' day and Year 10 visit the Thackeray Medical Museum. Guidance is of good quality and based on secure assessment procedures. Students' personal development is promoted effectively, but the scheme of work does not consistently identify opportunities for citizenship. Accommodation is satisfactory, but good displays of students' work celebrate their achievement and create a good learning environment. Resources are good overall and support the variety of teaching methods used.

124 The leadership and management of the new head of department are good. She benefits from the valuable support of committed and experienced staff. Data analysis is used effectively to identify priorities that focus upon raising standards and achievement. Policies are clear and the recent self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of current performance and future needs. This is a successful department that achieves good results in relation to the schools' overall performance. Standards are higher now than at the time of the previous inspection, and improvement since then is good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; well planned lessons meet the varied needs of the students.
- Good use of learning activities helps all students to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- The department is well led with regular monitoring and attention to targets.
- The number of students choosing to study for GCSE examinations is increasing.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE groups make good progress.
- Insufficient time is allocated to teach the agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

125 Standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In 2003 GCSE targets set by the department for the students were met. Students attained A* to C grades which were a little below the national average. However, overall, results were at the national average.

126 All students complete a good range of learning tasks in class on their own or in groups. Work is matched with attainment levels and with the targets which are set for individual students every half-term. Year 7 students have made good progress in their understanding, and most can

describe beliefs associated with life after death. Students of all abilities, with help, draw on key vocabulary and religious concepts to support their research and work about creation, animism, ritual and superstition. In one Year 7 lesson for example, a good proportion of the class contributed to discussion on the concept of sacrifice. In Year 8 most students can look up Bible references, for example about the Messiah, and many made links between Old Testament prophecy and events in the New Testament. In Year 9, pupils found some new learning about Buddhism challenging but were able to connect their own experience of suffering with their introduction to the four noble truths. By the end of Year 9 students are achieving satisfactorily and most attain standards close to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

127 Religious studies is becoming a more popular choice for the GCSE examination, especially amongst girls. However, only a fifth of students follow the GCSE course. Most students following the GCSE course soon make good progress and their standards of attainment are above average. For example, in Year 10 students show confidence in their study of ethics and philosophy. Overall achievement is satisfactory.

128 For all other students in Years 10 and 11 not following the GCSE course, religious education is limited to only a short module within their personal, social and health education programme. As a result, the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are not met, the achievement of these students is unsatisfactory, and religious education contributes little to their spiritual development.

129 Teaching within the department is good. Enthusiastic teachers are good role models and are concerned to engage students in the rigorous study of religion. Teachers use the three part lesson to good effect. Short practical tasks, including quizzes and games, help to keep the students' interest and to develop their learning. Towards the end of the best lessons, the learning outcomes, often in the form of key questions, are brought back to the board and illustrated with examples and phrases. Support for students with special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants and support staff plan with teachers and make a good contribution to lessons. They are practical and vigilant in providing one-to-one support in the classroom.

130 The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a strong sense of teamwork and critical attention to self-evaluation, planning and monitoring the work of the department. Since the last inspection the work of the department has improved the quality of provision for students in Years 7 to 9, and for those following the GCSE course. However, the development of religious education for other students in Years 10 and 11 has been unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- Students show positive attitudes to learning and achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good, and all aspects of the subject are very well organised.
- There is not enough specialist accommodation.

Commentary

131 GCSE results in 2002 and 2003 were below average. In 2003, students did not do as well in design and technology as they did in the other subjects that they studied. There were strong performances in textiles, food studies and electronics, but some underachievement in resistant

materials, particularly amongst boys. Current standards are broadly average in Year 9, representing good achievement from students' relatively low starting points in Year 7. They are also average in Year 11 despite the fact that a significant number of higher and middle attaining students do not choose to study design and technology subjects from Year 10 onwards. These average standards thus represent good achievement as in Year 9. Higher attaining students produce good work in all areas.

132 Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. The good progress that students make over time results from the good teaching they receive. There is some very good and occasionally excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11 in electronics, graphics and engineering. Teachers have high expectations of students and manage them well in the classroom. The activities that they organise create a high level of engagement. Particularly good approaches are evident for students with special educational needs, enabling them, often through the skilled intervention of classroom assistants, to achieve really creditable standards. Students show a positive attitude and respect for each other while they work, and behaviour in lessons is often very good. A major strength in the subject is the way that teachers relate work to current industrial practice. Students' full interest and concentration are frequently evident in response to this approach, particularly when it involves demonstrations or photographs. However, one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in Year 10 resistant materials, where teaching failed to inspire the class and resulted in restlessness and inattention. A further strength is the way that teachers routinely develop students' competence in writing, illustration, mathematics and ICT in the context of technology subjects. This helps them with technique for GCSE examinations and enables them to enhance their design portfolios by incorporating these features. However, a major barrier to further success is the shortage of specialist accommodation for textiles and food studies.

133 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers responsible for aspects of the subject lead by example in the classroom and monitor teaching and learning for quality. Organisation and assessment are good and enable them to monitor and evaluate progress accurately. A significant problem is the frequent reduction of lesson time to 40 minutes following morning registration. The time that is left limits opportunities for practical work. In spite of these difficulties, improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, particularly in relation to the quality of experience that students receive, the rigorous nature of assessment and the improvement in students' design and communication skills.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of teaching is very good.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- The achievement of all students is very good.
- There is a good variety of courses available.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Not enough use is made of ICT.

Commentary

134 Recent teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 show that the percentage of students gaining Level 5 and above is in line with the national average. Girls out perform boys more than they do nationally, particularly in achieving the highest grades. Standards of work seen in lessons are currently above average. By the end of Year 9, students have good levels of skill in

drawing and use of colour, and in choice and use of a range of media. They use a basic technical vocabulary in discussing their work.

135 In GCSE, the percentage of students gaining grades A* to C has risen from well below the national average at the time of the last inspection to above the national average in 2002, and was close to average in 2003. The subject is a more popular option choice for girls who significantly outperform boys in gaining the top grades. In the recently established Applied GCSE, results have been very good with all students achieving one of the top three grades. Work produced by current Year 11 students shows that standards have improved in relation to previous years. By Year 11 students have developed a range of artistic skill and have a very good understanding and command of the basic elements of art. Finished work is well composed and benefits from above average levels of drawing skill. Students are also able to develop their ideas, often inspired by the study of famous artists.

136 The standard of teaching is very good. Some excellent teaching was observed and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and prepare individual lessons meticulously. Teaching emphasises the development of skills, and resources are well prepared. Homework is regularly set and marked. The achievement of students with special educational needs is very good as a result of individual support and work that can be carried out successfully to different levels. Students' respond well to the teaching and work productively. Their behaviour is good and often very good. Teacher assistants are used well and give valuable individual support. Sketchbooks used in Years 7 to 9 are too small to support the creative process as well as they should.

137 Good coverage of the national curriculum is enhanced by regular visits to local, national and European art galleries. The *Artists in Residence* scheme is used effectively to provide extra stimulus in the classroom. A strong team of teachers has a good range of complementary skills which are used across all courses and age groups.

138 Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has a clear educational philosophy centred on raising the achievement of students of all abilities. Supportive documentation is thorough and includes clear targets for improvement. Regular departmental meetings are supplemented by an annual review day. Lessons are monitored regularly and teachers benefit from in-service training. However, the number of boys opting to study the subject at GCSE is currently less than the national average. The use of ICT is not being fully exploited, both to develop students' ICT skills and to extend learning in art. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good with improving standards and a greater range of courses available.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision for development.
- Students achieve very well in Year 11 because of the high standard of teaching.
- The extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons add value to the subject.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 do not know their standards reached, as a National Curriculum level, because teachers do not use them when marking work.

Commentary

139 Teachers' assessments were a little above average for Year 9 students in 2003, but inspection evidence puts them securely at average. Results in the GCSE examinations were well above average and continue a rising trend. There was no significant difference between the work of girls and boys.

140 By the end of Year 9 standards are average. This represents good achievement considering that most students enter Year 7 with undeveloped musical skills. By Year 11 standards are above average and students achieve very well compared with their prior attainment. Very good teaching is a key factor in improving the quality of learning. Many students, including some who have special educational needs, play instruments and take part in the highly acclaimed bands and orchestra. The 200 instrumentalists reach high standards of playing due to the expertise of visiting teachers.

141 Good teaching in Years 7 to 9 inspires students to do well. The high standard of planning, pace and challenge ensures that students are motivated and work hard even though they start from a low level of musical understanding. Because all students use ICT regularly in music lessons this also improves their general ICT skills. Although students' work is regularly assessed, national curriculum levels are not used, and students do not know the standards to which they might aspire to raise their achievement. Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to a positive commitment from students. Because of this they do well in examinations, and particularly in the composition and performance modules. Good assessment procedures, the first class accommodation and excellent resources all support learning well.

142 The department is managed very well. The inspired leadership of the head of department ensures that music has a high profile within the school and the local community. Progress since the previous inspection has been good.

DRAMA

143 Although there is not enough time for a full drama programme within the cramped time available in Years 7 to 9, drama is a popular GCSE option in Years 10 and 11. Lessons were sampled in Years 10 and 11.

144 In 2003, standards matched the national average with most students attaining grades B or C at GCSE. However, there were no A* or A grades. Analysis of examination data revealed that students gained significantly higher marks for their acting than for their written work.

145 Teaching is good and students achieve very well. For example, Year 10 students produced a delightful pantomime for an enthusiastic audience of primary children. Year 11 students give vitality and expressiveness to their acting, and reveal character to their audience in subtle ways, by posture, gesture and tone of voice. Students learn the value of working together in corporate effort, gaining in confidence and self-esteem.

146 Drama makes a significant contribution to the growth of students' personalities, and the department would like to extend courses to A level. However, drama has to share accommodation with other curriculum areas and this creates administrative complications. .

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is very good and the management is excellent.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- Students are very interested in the subject, and work hard in lessons.
- Students attain results above national standards at GCSE.
- Some units of work are too short to ensure good progression.

Commentary

147 Teachers' assessment of students' work in Year 9 in 2003 indicates that standards are just above the average for schools nationally. GCSE results of students in Year 11 in 2003 were well above those seen nationally, with over three quarters gaining A* to C grades compared with a national average of just over a half.

148 Standards of students' work in Years 7 to 9 are average, and similar to those seen in most schools. However there is some variation in standards in different activities. In Year 7 gymnastics, standards are good; students are making good progress in developing paired routines incorporating a range of gymnastic skills. In rugby in Year 8, students have a satisfactory understanding of positional play, and are learning how to beat a player using sidesteps and swerves. In Year 9 standards vary considerably. In dance they are lower than might be expected, in soccer they are above that seen in most schools, and they are very high in girls' basketball, where the school reached the last sixteen of the national championships. In Years 10 and 11, core physical education standards are at levels expected, and in GCSE groups standards are good. Students understand how to analyse sporting actions and aim to improve towards perfection. In GCSE theory, students understand skeletal and muscular systems, methods of training and fitness testing.

149 Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9, as they improve their standards in the familiar games such as soccer and netball which they have experienced in primary school, as well as in new games such as basketball and rugby. Good provision for students with special educational needs in Years 7 to 11 leads to good achievement. In GCSE groups achievement is very good. Students gain on average one grade above their predictions, and for most students this is their best GCSE result.

150 Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which is well used to give detailed explanations and demonstrations, leading to good learning. Lessons are well planned and prepared with challenging practices suitable for students of different attainment levels. In a Year 8 rugby lesson, students were given good opportunities to evaluate each other's performances, and so improve their own. In a GCSE theory lesson excellent teaching helped students to make significant progress in their understanding of the muscular system and movement at the joints. Students are very interested in the subject; they respond well to teachers, and have good relationships with them. They show independence by taking responsibility for their own warm-up at the start of lessons.

151 The very good leadership and excellent management have helped to establish a well focused team, committed to providing very good opportunities in physical education for all students. There is a clear vision to raise standards. During the inspection week the school was chosen to lead the School Sports Coordinator Scheme in Harrogate. Gaining *Sportsmark* twice confirms the very good extra curricular provision, providing opportunities for all students, and particularly the gifted and talented, to reach their full potential through school, area and county teams. Standards are exceptional in girls' basketball and good in netball and in girls' and boys' soccer. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly appointed subject co-ordinator has successfully implemented a programme that links personal, social, and health education (PSHE) with the new citizenship requirements.
- Teachers, including many non-specialists, use carefully prepared materials to present interesting and enjoyable lessons that help students to develop awareness of personal and community issues.
- There is a clear subject development plan that aims to refine teaching materials and to develop a system for assessing standards and progress.

Commentary

152 There are no detailed national guidelines on standards, but the quality of students' work in lessons is overall satisfactory. Students often lack confidence to offer more than simple answers, and are over-dependent on teachers asking supplementary questions. Much written work contains inaccurate spelling, grammar and incorrect use of specialist words. However, the major and successful contribution to citizenship development stems from an appropriate emphasis on activities in the school and the wider community, for example, through involvement in "active citizenship days". A growing number of students play an energetic part in the life of school. In addition to participating in teams and groups, students raise money for charities such as Children in Need and the local hospice. A highly valued Christmas entertainment for senior citizens involves students from several year groups. Activities such as these enhance students' personal education and give good support to their development as young citizens.

153 Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons, clear learning objectives and a variety of activities lead to well planned opportunities to discuss key issues. Students enjoy such lessons and respond well because they recognise that the issues relate to their own lives. Mutual respect between teachers and students encourages them to contribute to lessons. Students with statements of special educational needs and the few students with English as an additional language are well supported and play a full part in lessons.

154 Citizenship, which became part of the National Curriculum in September 2002, is taught as a separate subject, mostly by a large team of form tutors. The statutory requirements are fully met, with personal, social and health education now successfully included in the citizenship programme. Effective co-ordination within other subjects, such as English and geography for example, helps to identify particular topics that contribute to awareness of society. In physical education there are strong links with health and fitness elements of PSHE. The school has designed its own study booklets to support students and also ensure that teachers have access to high quality information.

155 Although not part of the co-ordinated citizenship programme, opportunities to develop PSHE occur in registrations and assemblies, often as part of the *thought for the day* programme. However, very limited time is available during registration and this results in hurried sessions with inadequate reflection or discussion. In turn, opportunities are lost for this aspect of students' personal development.

156 Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a clear vision for the future and has worked very hard with colleagues to provide a good range of interesting materials. Because most classes take place at the same time, monitoring the standards of teaching and learning is limited, with a high reliance upon feedback from teachers. There are good links with specialist agencies which provide support for the teaching of the health, drugs and sex education units. Parents are well informed about the content of the programme. Students' reports provide detailed information about the extent to which they contribute to lessons, to the school and to the wider community. The management plan addresses issues of developing teaching and assessment. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in implementing the new requirements.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English Literature		Fewer than five entries in 2002					
Mathematics	6	66.7	74.2	16.7	34.3	21.7	31.3
Chemistry	7	57.1	84.8	0.0	36.9	15.7	35.2
History	5	80.0	91.8	0.0	37.2	22.0	37.8
Art and Design		Fewer than five entries in 2002					
Music		Fewer than five entries in 2002					
Physical education		Fewer than five entries in 2002					
Information Technology		Fewer than five entries in 2002					

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 Literature	11	100.0	98.5	81.8	43.7	98.2	84.3
Mathematics	6	100.0	93.3	50.0	52.2	90.0	84.7
Chemistry		Fewer than five entries in 2002					
Information Technology	5	100.0	97.1	60.0	22.4	96.0	64.1
History	15	100.0	96.9	40.0	96.9	80.0	79.7
Art and design	5	100.0	96.7	80.0	52.3	110.0	85.1
Music		Fewer than five entries in 2002					
Physical Education	10	100.0	95.4	10.0	29.5	66.0	73.2
Business education (VCE)	9	100.0	87.1	0.0	16.5	65.3	60.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was on English literature. Lessons in English language at AS Level in Year 12 and French in Year 13 were also sampled.

AS Level English language, introduced to the curriculum in 2003, is one of the most popular options in the sixth form, catering for 30 students in two groups. In English language, teaching and learning are good. Students achieve well, using their initiative to decide how best to select the most appropriate vocabulary for their spoken presentations. The size of the group (19 students) in a lesson sampled is a barrier to good attainment because it contains a significant minority of borderline candidates. The teacher made best use of ICT facilities but was frustrated by the brief time he could spend advising individuals.

Only a few students study modern foreign languages in the sixth form. In a Year 13 lesson, the quality of teaching was good. The two students present showed a reasonable understanding of spoken and written French on the work of the *Médecins Sans Frontières* organisation in developing countries. However, their speaking skills are underdeveloped and they are hesitant when trying to discuss abstract topics.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at AS Level in Year 12 are above national expectations.
- In 2003 the department successfully added English language to the AS Level curriculum.
- The number of students following English courses at AS Level increased considerably from five in 2002 to 41 in 2003. This marks a significant and successful development.
- Standards at A Level English literature in Year 13 are below average, with attainment within the middle and lower pass grades.
- Not all students are sufficiently independent in their methods of study.

Commentary

157 Standards at A Level in English literature have fluctuated. In 2002, all eleven students passed the examination, with higher than average results. In 2003 all students passed the examination, but their average points score was lower than in 2002. In 2003, in AS Level, four of the five Year 12 students passed the examination, all at the middle and lower pass grades. With these numbers of students, statistical comparisons are unreliable.

158 Achievement at A Level in Year 13 is good, bearing in mind students' previous performance. The quality of their written work indicates that attainment lies within the middle and lower pass grades and standards are below average overall. Although students do not possess the perceptive powers of successful scholarship, they persevere in their studies. Achievement in English literature at AS Level in Year 12 is good. Attainment is close to the national average. Students' written work contains accurate critical analyses of texts; for example students show a growing appreciation of how dialogue in Shakespeare reveals the essence of his plays and how changes in rhythm heighten or slacken tension.

159 Good teaching in Year 13 leads to good learning. Teachers know their subject well and select an interesting variety of texts for study. However, students depend too heavily on their teachers; they are slow to conduct independent research outside the classroom and do not undertake enough wider reading. In a good lesson where teaching was lively and challenging, students enjoyed sharing the subtle humour and irony in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

160 Teaching at AS Level in Year 12 is good because it leads students to a deeper appreciation of the power of great literature. For example, in their reading of Shakespeare students show a perceptive understanding of the complexities of Hamlet's relationships. In one very interesting lesson they followed with interest the tortured movement of Hamlet's inmost thoughts. However, students do not sufficiently revise their knowledge of the texts.

161 The subject is very well led and managed. The department operates an inclusive entry policy, accepting borderline students eager to achieve well. The teaching is shared amongst seven specialists, offering students a variety of interesting approaches. All teachers have recently benefited from training courses, bringing their knowledge and best practice up to date. Teaching methods and students' performance are regularly assessed, enabling attention to focus on important issues. For example, the department is working to support students in becoming more independent in their study habits. The increase in numbers choosing to study English in the sixth form is testimony to the enthusiasm of the department.

162 In the period since the last inspection, standards in examinations have fallen overall, but have begun to rise over the last two years. The number of students studying English has risen. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

163 The school has undertaken an audit of the development of English language and literacy skills across subjects in the sixth form. Nearly all departments work with students to develop their skills in communication, both in writing and in discussion. Teachers encourage students to enhance their skills in independent study, and to increase their experience of research from subject texts. However, for many students, still more could be done to help them to communicate their ideas precisely, using correct grammar and spelling, in conjunction with the technical vocabulary of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

The focus for the inspection was on the AS and A Level mathematics courses. Students study a modular course selecting options from pure mathematics, applied mathematics and statistics. In addition the provision for those retaking GCSE at age 17 was sampled.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The analysis of examination results and the work of students in the sixth form are very good. It shows what needs to be done to raise standards.
- Teachers' knowledge of mathematics and specific syllabus requirements is very good. It enables students to be clear about what is expected of them in A Level examinations.
- Not all students currently complete the course, and advice and guidance for entry into sixth form courses are unsatisfactory. However, they are under review.
- Standards in lessons are too low. Students do not always have the background knowledge of mathematics they need to acquire new concepts at A Level

Commentary

164 Standards in the 2002 A Level examinations were above the national average. Small entry numbers makes precise comparisons unreliable, but the overall points score was slightly lower in 2003. Standards in the work seen and in lessons are below average. Several students do not yet have a quick recall of basic mathematical techniques, for example involving surds or standard results in calculus, and their confidence is low.

165 Achievement at the end of Year 13 is satisfactory. Despite prior attainment being lower than is normal, all students work hard to understand their mathematics, and give extra time after school with their teachers to catch up and improve techniques. Several students in Years 12 and 13 start the course with low prior attainment and take additional time to understand new concepts.

166 Teaching is good overall, but learning is satisfactory. Teaching in over half the lessons is good or very good. A Year 13 group extended their skills in calculus by considering how to differentiate implicitly. The teacher carefully structured the lesson so as to build sequentially on students' prior knowledge, including re-teaching skills and knowledge that had been forgotten. Teaching showed very good diagnostic skills, which enabled particular barriers to learning to be clearly identified and overcome.

167 Leadership and management are satisfactory because, despite standards in lessons being low, achievement is satisfactory. A strong team of teachers is committed to raising standards, and recent changes are having a good effect. The recently appointed head of department is beginning to implement changes that are improving provision. Examination results and work during lessons are analysed and show clearly what needs to be done to improve them. Teachers have expert knowledge of their subject and of examination requirements. They are able to diagnose individual difficulties well and to tailor the scheme of work accordingly. Students gain from knowing what is required of them in examinations, and are well challenged mathematically.

168 Examination results in mathematics remain a concern to the school, and the nature of advice and guidance to students on entry to the sixth form is currently under review. As at the time of the last inspection, too many students fail to complete the course, or to gain a pass grade in their examinations. Improvement since the previous inspection is therefore unsatisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

169 The school recognises its responsibility to develop students' skills in numeracy across the curriculum and has undertaken an audit for all subjects. Several departments, and especially the sciences and design and technology, ensure that a lack of numeracy skills is not a barrier to learning. However, still more could be done to develop this area of the school's work within a programme of key skills development to encompass all subjects.

SCIENCE

170 The focus was on chemistry, but lessons in physics and biology were also sampled. In physics lessons a good level of industry and teaching that was satisfactory or good led to satisfactory learning. Achievement was satisfactory. However, the teacher did not explain the purpose of the lesson clearly enough so learning was not as good as it could have been. In a satisfactory Year 12 biology lesson students investigated the action of an enzyme on starch and carried out their practical work carefully. However, students' theoretical understanding is below average.

CHEMISTRY

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Vibrant teaching in many lessons leads to very good learning and progress.
- Very good relationships, based on mutual trust and respect, mean that students get the most from their lessons.
- Practical skills are very well developed.
- Lessons are not always well-matched to students' needs. When this happens, learning suffers as a result.

- Monitoring of lessons and sharing of good practice are insufficiently developed.
- Not enough use is made of short-term targets to help students to progress.

Commentary

171 Students' levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form are below average. Group sizes have been small for several years, making statistical comparisons unreliable. In 2002, thirteen Year 12 students took AS modular tests. Four of the seven who cashed their results in for an AS Level award achieved a pass grade. In 2003 six of the eleven students gained a pass grade, including one grade A.

172 Numbers are smaller at A Level because most students who fail to gain a pass grade at AS Level choose not to study the subject in Year 13. In 2003 nearly all students passed the examination, including two with grade A and one with grade B. Some students do well in the Advanced Extension Award. In 2002, one student gained a distinction and in 2003 one gained a merit.

173 Overall, these results represent underachievement in Year 12, where too many students fail to gain a pass grade. In Year 13 achievement overall is satisfactory. Examination results are broadly in line with those expected from students' GCSE grades two years earlier, with some students showing very good achievement.

174 Standards in lessons and from the work scrutiny vary considerably. Practical skills are developed well from the beginning of Year 12, and within a few weeks students carry out quantitative work swiftly and efficiently, with good attention to accuracy. This work is of very high standard. In theoretical work, students' modest standards on entry are more evident. In some lessons, teachers take into account these limitations very well, leading to rapid progress: but in others the progress of the lesson is disrupted by the need to explain simple concepts. In these lessons, levels of attainment are below average. Nevertheless, overall standards seen in lessons were better than is indicated by the modest examination results over the last two years, and overall achievement is therefore satisfactory.

175 The quality of teaching is good. Both very good and excellent lessons were seen, but satisfactory and poor lessons were also seen. In the best lessons, which represent half of those seen, vibrant teaching, underpinned with excellent subject knowledge and a clear appreciation of how these students learn best, led to rapid progress. A good variety of activity catered for different learning styles, and very good relationships meant that students were not afraid to ask for help when necessary. In less good lessons insufficient attention was paid to the learning needs of individuals, and inadequate structuring of the subject matter led to students becoming confused by complexities that should not have arisen.

176 Students' work is carefully marked, and helpful comments by teachers make a material difference to their learning. Assessment is well used to identify problem areas and as the basis for good targets. However, not enough use is made of short-term targets to make clear to students exactly what they need to do in order to improve.

177 Leadership of the department is good. The head of subject, who is an excellent chemist, has a very clear vision of how the department will progress and puts his ideas into practice in his own lessons to excellent effect. However, not enough is done to share the abundance of good or very good practice available in the department in order to help all students to realise their potential.

178 Taking into account significant developments in teaching styles, and the very good accommodation and displays in the department, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on information and communication technology (ICT) at AS and A Level, but the provision for students who do not take examination courses in ICT in the sixth form was also sampled.

Provision in ICT is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of education provided at Advanced Level is good.
- Teaching is good and has a positive impact on standards.
- Standards at A Level are above average.

Commentary

179 A Level results in 2002 were well above the national average: all students attained grade C or better. Attainment in 2003 was in line with the school's expectations and two fifths gained grades A or B. Similar above average standards were also seen in the 2003 AS Level examinations. The newly established AVCE course is making good progress. Standards seen in lessons and the students' work samples show at least average standards with many students working in the A to C grade range. Achievement is good, particularly that of students with lower GCSE grades on entry to the course.

180 Teaching is good. It is the key feature contributing to the high standards and good achievement. Teachers have very good subject expertise and use it well to teach difficult concepts effectively. They are enthusiastic about the subject and transmit this enthusiasm to their students. They prepare well and give good lessons that are stimulating and interesting. They provide a good range of learning styles and give excellent support when students are working independently on extended assignments. Learning is enhanced by the very good relationships, with much effective collaborative work in evidence.

181 The quality of the leadership and management of the accredited courses is good. The head of department ensures that learning programmes are well planned and keep to schedule. Interim assessments tell students how they must improve and help teachers to modify their short and medium term planning. The head of department promotes a very supportive and effective collegiate approach amongst the staff to ensure that their varying specialist knowledge is shared and made available to students in the courses taught.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

182 Provision is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of how students can use ICT to improve their learning. Some students have a very good grasp of the ways in which they can carry out research and process information from the Internet to aid their study in other subjects. They use this skill well to carry out assignments. However, most students have ICT skills below those required to raise standards in their examination courses. The school does not have a programme of development for all students, built upon systematic assessment.

HUMANITIES

183 The focus was on history, but work in geography, psychology and religious studies was also sampled.

184 One Year 12 **geography** lesson was sampled. Students were confidently using computers to produce PowerPoint presentations of a case study of coastal flooding at Towyn in 1990. Their good fieldwork skills helped them use a wide variety of information very effectively to explain the causes and consequences of the disaster. The teacher's expertise and use of probing questions made a significant contribution to the high quality of the work produced.

185 **Psychology** courses started in 2002 and have become a popular choice. One lesson was seen in each of Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning in both were good. Year 12 students considered aspects of memory theory linking it to their own recall of song lyrics. Year 13 students analysed child studies and related them to theories about the development of children's ideas of right and wrong. Students are enthusiastic about their course and are very appreciative of the support and guidance from their specialist teachers.

186 Standards reached in the **religious education** examination at AS level in 2002 were below average with most students gaining a pass grade in the range C to E. In the two lessons seen, students made good to very good progress reflecting the quality of teaching.

187 Provision of **religious education** in the sixth form does not fulfil the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for students who are not working towards a qualification in the subject.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The examination results for A and AS Level in 2003 are above the national average.
- The good quality of teaching promotes good rates of learning and achievement.
- Students receive good guidance and know how to improve their work.
- Students have positive attitudes that help promote high achievement.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning.

Commentary

188 The 2003 examination results for students in Year 12 and Year 13 are above average. Standards seen during the inspection match these results. Students display a secure knowledge of topics studied and make good use of evidence to develop greater understanding. Their written responses do not always focus sharply enough on the question asked.

189 Achievement by Year 13 is good because of consistently good teaching. In the best lessons, achievement is very good. Students build effectively upon prior knowledge and improve their use of historical skills as they move from Year 12 to Year 13. For example, they accumulate information and describe events accurately. As students progress through the course, they increasingly use their judgement effectively to compare the interests of different groups, for example recognising that in American history Plains Indians and Mormon settlers shared a common understanding.

190 The quality of education is good. Students benefit from consistently good teaching, by teachers who know their subject well. During the inspection two good lessons and one excellent lesson were observed. Difficult concepts are taught effectively through skilful presentation and questioning. As a result students' thinking is challenged. They discuss such concepts as 'manifest destiny' and recognise its powerful influence in shaping the American west. In other lessons, information is presented clearly, relationships are good and students work hard, though they do not always contribute well to group discussions. Literacy is promoted effectively where there is a focus on vocabulary in oral work, and this helps to raise the quality of written responses. Whilst there is evidence of students using ICT to present information, there is not enough planned use of ICT in the

scheme of work. As a result, opportunities are missed to broaden the provision for independent learning.

191 The well chosen curriculum topics present students with a varied and stimulating range of work that sharply contrasts differing models of social and political order. These topics draw heavily upon contemporary source material and provide good opportunities for students to improve higher order historical skills. The curriculum is enriched through educational visits and study courses. For example, Year 12 students visit 'Beth Shalom' Holocaust Memorial. Guidance is of good quality. It provides students with a clear understanding of examination requirements and helps them to identify personal targets for improvement, based upon effective assessment procedures. Teachers are well qualified and demonstrate a good understanding of their subject. This, together with good resources and satisfactory accommodation, creates a positive learning environment.

192 Leadership and management are good. History courses are efficiently organised and there is a clear priority on improving standards. As a result, students enjoy their studies and identify how success in the subject will contribute to their future education and career prospects. This is successful post-16 provision which is helping raise standards; improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

193 No subject in this curriculum area was the focus of the inspection, but one lesson in **design and technology** was sampled. It is important to recognise and celebrate the school's success in this area.

194 Results in design and technology at AS and A Level over the last three years have been well above average, and students have nearly always done better than in the other subjects that they studied. Half of the results in this period were at the higher grades, A or B, and only one student was unsuccessful in the range A to E. This all represents very good achievement, often from a starting point of quite moderate results at GCSE. Students' final products are often aesthetically very pleasing and make a strong visual impact. They demonstrate ingenuity in the development of designs and precision in manufacture, using an interesting range of materials. The products are often of commercial quality. One very good Year 12 lesson on design schools was observed and this helps to confirm that success is continuing.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design and music.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and leads to well above average standards of work.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- The attitude of the students is excellent.
- A variety of courses are available.
- Students do not fully exploit the potential of using ICT.
- The number of students opting to study A Level art, especially boys, is low.

Commentary

195 Results at A Level have been consistently well above national average, with all students normally achieving a pass grade. Similar success has been achieved in the recently introduced Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE), which has proved popular with both students and teachers.

196 Work seen in all A Level classes is well above the national average and matches the examination results currently being achieved. Work on all courses is well composed, and shows a high level of individuality with sophisticated use of colour and different media. The standard of drawing skills amongst A and AS Level students is well above average. AVCE students develop a better balance of skills in both two and three dimensional art, but drawing standards are generally not as good. Students benefit from having local artists in the classroom to show and discuss their work. They also are highly skilled at research into the work of famous artists and deriving ideas from it.

197 The standard of teaching is very good. Teachers are skilled in providing individual support and facilitating small group discussion. They have a broad subject knowledge and demonstrate a wide range of skills and techniques. Their relationships with students are excellent; sixth form lessons have a mature working studio atmosphere where students are given freedom and encouragement to develop as artists. Students regularly review progress in small groups using a sophisticated specialist vocabulary. Constant individual support ensures that the achievement of students of all abilities and backgrounds is very good.

198 Leadership and management of the department are very good. Leadership, based on clear principles, focuses on creating an environment where all students are able to develop as artists to their full potential. The new AVCE course has increased numbers and now caters for a wider range of students' needs and abilities. In turn, a good proportion of students continue to study art into higher education. Students prepare for an annual exhibition and also participate in a range of competitions involving the community. The department does not fully exploit the possibilities for developing artwork using ICT. This is partly due to a lack of expertise amongst some staff.

199 Improvement since the last inspection is very good with improved standards and a greater range of courses available in an expanded department.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are above average.
- Students are highly motivated, show excellent attitudes and achieve well.

Commentary

200 Results were well above average in 2003 with a large proportion of higher grades in both AS and A Level examinations.

201 Standards are above average at the end of Year 12 and Year 13, with girls, who are in the majority, achieving better than boys. The standards of students currently in the sixth form are good. Although Year 12 students understand musical conventions and talk confidently about their compositions, not all are secure in their knowledge of fugal analysis. Year 13 students perform well and this helps them in their realisations of contrasting works by composers such as Shostakovich and Bach, Vivaldi and Rutter. However some students find that Latin texts hinder their effective analysis of religious works. All describe the processes by which they develop their music and show a good understanding of style and shape. Students' independent work is improving and by the time they reach Year 13 they display good research skills. About half the students in Year 13 are

interested in a career connected with music but advice is not always clear about the up-to-date career opportunities available.

202 There is a high standard of teaching and very good learning, which is why achievement is so good. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and know how best to prepare students for examinations. Students' work is regularly assessed to give them a good indication of their present performance and likely grades. Students are attentive and highly motivated and there is a relaxed and businesslike atmosphere in lessons.

203 The leadership and management of the subject are very good and the clear policies and schemes of work make a good contribution to the high standards set by the head of department. Because all students are capable instrumentalists they play a leading part in the many extra-curricular musical activities arranged by the music staff. This adds value to students' musical understanding and gives them a secure foundation that enhances their learning in class. The first class accommodation and resources contribute to students' achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

The focus was on physical education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes and value the subject.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- Leadership is very good and management is excellent.

Commentary

204 Standards in AS and A Level physical education in 2002 were below those of similar schools, but students' performances in 2003 examinations show improved results. Most students achieve their best results in the subject.

205 Standards of work seen by students in both Years 12 and 13 are good. Students have a good knowledge of muscle anatomy and the effects of muscle actions at the joints. They make good use of the knowledge they have from GCSE, and are able to extend this knowledge to the higher level needed for this advanced course. In psychology, students understand the concepts of 'need to avoid failure' (NAF) and 'need to achieve' (NACH), and can categorise climbers and other sportsmen using these principles. Students have a good understanding of the cultural issues involved in the participation of women in sport. They are able to relate social change and the influence of the media on elite women's sport. Students make use of their wider knowledge of the subject to produce personal exercise portfolios and most make good use of ICT skills such as word-processing to create well presented studies.

206 Students make satisfactory progress in the subject as they study more advanced theory such as aerobic and anaerobic energy systems, and biomechanics applied to sporting activities. They achieve well as they learn new concepts which they have not studied in GCSE, and apply this knowledge to their own and others' sporting performances.

207 Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and give in-depth explanations of the theory of physical education. Teachers challenge students to think by using focused questioning. Lessons are very well prepared, and there is very effective use of slide show presentations with good supporting written documentation. Students' work is well marked, with clear indications of their strengths and weaknesses and how to improve. Students have excellent attitudes and relationships with teachers, which is a major contributor to the quality of learning in lessons. Students value the subject, and many intend to use the qualification for entry to more advanced courses such as sports science and physical education teaching.

208 There are further opportunities for sixth form students to take part in recreational activities and in accredited courses such as Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA), as well as taking lifeguard and swimming teachers' qualifications through the community education programme.

209 Leadership in the subject is very good and management is excellent. The detailed data analysis, by which teachers know the capabilities of their students, is well used to set students realistic targets. Students are given considerable support in the subject, with a variety of well prepared information sheets and notes, which allow them to study independently. Revision days

provide additional help for students in preparation for their examinations. Since the last inspection, courses in AS and A level physical education have been introduced, and standards have risen. Improvement since the last inspection has therefore been good.

BUSINESS

BUSINESS EDUCATION

Provision in business education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average.
- The best teaching helps students to apply earlier learning in up-to-date situations.
- Students do not have enough contact with the business community to make their research work sufficiently relevant.
- Teaching does not promote achievement as much as it should,
- Management and coordination of course provision is satisfactory overall but leadership has not adopted up-to-date strategies to improve it.

Commentary

210 Standards reached by the small number of students on the AVCE course in business studies are close to average. All students gained a pass grade in 2002. The small entry makes comparisons with earlier years unreliable. Fewer students completed the AVCE course in 2003, with a mix of success and failure to gain a pass grade.

211 Year 12 students are making satisfactory progress and achieving well in lessons through their grasp and application of business theory. They apply new learning well, and readily ask questions to help their understanding. By Year 13, students extend their learning, for example in the construction and use of a cash flow forecast. They can use statement and balance sheets to estimate revenue and profit margins from the perspective of business stakeholders. However, some elementary principles are less well consolidated and require revision. Students make good use of books and learning materials when researching but they have insufficient contact with business people and industry to make their work more relevant. Their written work shows progress in the use of business concepts and vocabulary, but their portfolios are generally not sufficiently well organised to help reinforce their understanding. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.

212 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject. They teach with confidence and promote interest in their subject. Where teaching is good, students learn business theory through examples of live business practice, as in a Year 12 lesson using video material from an American company. Students successfully analysed the essential features and discussed with understanding the impact of work culture on the work force and on productivity and, with help, related this to their own experience of work. Teaching makes good use of up-to-date business news to simulate interest, for example in company restructuring and the effects of changes predicted for a local football business. However, teaching does not ensure that all students achieve as well as possible. Lesson planning shows weakness in catering for the full range of students' abilities. Teachers do not check that students understand new work sufficiently before they are asked to apply it to unfamiliar situations. An over-reliance on "right" answers does not reflect the speculative nature of some of the work. Teaching reinforces a dependence upon one-to-one assistance rather than encourage confident independent work and collaborative approaches to learning.

213 The management and co-ordination of course provision is satisfactory. However, key aspects of the leadership of the department are unsatisfactory. The department's documentation is too general and is lacking in vision and planning for development. Schemes of work lack sufficient detail to provide a useful supportive framework for teaching. The department is not building upon current improvements in teaching business studies. The small number of students who choose business studies calls the future viability of courses into question.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

214 During the inspection, lessons were sampled in PSHE and Citizenship as well as tutor periods and assembly. Provision for personal development was discussed with several groups of students. Interviews took place with the head of sixth form and other staff, and school documentation was scrutinised.

215 In addition to examination courses, all students in the sixth form have access to recreational physical education, which offers a wide range of activities. Some students represent the school in a range of sports activities. Students also participate extensively in music and drama activities, which provide them with valuable opportunities to develop their ability to take responsibility and to work effectively with others, including younger students. Sixth form students are also well supported in working in the community, for example in fund-raising activities and charity events. Students organise and present the sixth form information evening for Year 11 students each year. The support they get in this major undertaking makes a significant contribution to their own personal development.

216 The school does not currently provide any cross-curricular courses in key skills. An audit has been undertaken for provision in individual subjects, and instances were seen in which students were given good support in communication and use of number skills. Isolated examples of effective ICT development take place. However, co-ordination is currently underdeveloped, and lack of key skills is a barrier to learning for many students.

217 Registration periods and PSHE and citizenship lessons are designed to make a good contribution to students' general education and personal development. They incorporate a *Thought for the Day*, intended to provide a stimulus for discussion, which may be extended through assemblies and more widely through the curriculum. In practice, many students gain little or no benefit from these sessions. Students often arrive late or are absent altogether; instances were observed during the inspection where only a quarter of the group was present. With so few students present, and others arriving throughout the period, it was almost impossible for the teacher to conduct a useful discussion and such periods failed to fulfil the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. In the sixth form assembly, although there was a good presentation on the book *Touching the Void*, insufficient opportunity was taken to develop the theme and to generate genuine reflection by the students present. Apart from those students who take an examination course in the subject, the school does not fulfil its obligation to provide religious education for all students who are not withdrawn at the request of their parents.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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