

INSPECTION REPORT

KIMBERLEY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Kimberley

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122856

Headteacher: Mr J May

Lead inspector: Dr A R Beaver

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th November 2003

Inspection number: 259242

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 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1402
School address:	Newdigate Street Kimberley Nottingham
Postcode:	NG16 2NJ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Goater
Date of previous inspection:	16 th – 20 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kimberley Comprehensive School is situated in Kimberley, Nottinghamshire. Most pupils come from Kimberley and the surrounding area of Nuthall, Watnall, Gilthill and Awsworth. Some come from Nottingham itself. The school is bigger than most secondary schools and provides for 1402 girls and boys of whom 187 are sixth-formers. Slightly more boys than girls attend the school. The numbers on roll have increased considerably each year since the 1998 inspection. Numbers have now levelled out, but there are still 133 more pupils in the school than there were in 1998. Pupils come from an average range of advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds, but the percentage that claims a free school meal is below average. Approximately three per cent of pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian. No pupil is at an early stage in learning English. The number of pupils who joined or left the school, other than at the usual ages of 11, 16 or above, is average. The percentage of pupils identified by the school to have special educational needs is below average. These needs are mainly for learning difficulties. A few have physical impairments and use wheelchairs. Only seven pupils have statements of special educational need. However, arrangements for, and numbers of, pupils in this local education authority who have statements of special educational need are not easily comparable to the national situation. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school at age eleven is broadly average. Entry to sixth-form courses is also average for the level of course followed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20224	Dr A R Beaver	Lead inspector	
13346	Mr C Bailey	Lay inspector	
10316	Mr N Bertram	Team inspector	History Citizenship
23393	Mr B Dower	Team inspector	English
32115	Mr J S Foster	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
14691	Mrs J Hall	Team inspector	Science Biology (sixth form)
2067	Mr J Hall	Team inspector	
11969	Mr J Hardy	Team inspector	Business
32736	Mr D K Lang	Team inspector	Mathematics
32169	Mr G R O'Hagan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Sociology
19867	Mr M Pettitt	Team inspector	Art and design
24894	Mr C Petts	Team inspector	Design and technology
3731	Mr W G Robson	Team inspector	English (sixth form)
31159	Mr C L Simmonds	Team inspector	
11300	Mr B Smith	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language
32122	Mrs J M Straw	Team inspector	Religious education
19295	Mr P G Wall	Team inspector	Physical education Health and social care Leisure and tourism
31660	Mrs M Young	Team inspector	Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Kimberley Comprehensive School is **moderately effective** and provides a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve satisfactory standards by age 16. The teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11, but just satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Although leadership is satisfactory, the management by key staff is unsatisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money for its well below average income.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's good ethos sees pupils as of equal worth; girls and boys of differing competence and ethnic and social backgrounds have fair and equal access to the education provided.
- Achievement in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations should be more consistently of a higher standard.
- Although pupils achieve good standards in religious education and Spanish throughout the school, the standards they achieve in art and design and citizenship should be higher.
- Many pupils do not receive their statutory entitlement to information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 10 and 11 and standards for these pupils are not high enough.
- The teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are good. In Years 7 to 9, although most teaching is at least good, there is also a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching, particularly that provided by temporary and inexperienced teachers.
- Pupils' attitudes, relationships and behaviour are good, but occasionally poor behaviour, especially that of boys, prevents them from learning and achieving well enough.
- The management of the school by key staff is not effective enough in ensuring that the standards achieved and the quality of teaching are consistently good.
- The use of assessment data to guide teachers' work is unsatisfactory; marking is inconsistent.
- Learning opportunities through the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities are good.
- Pupils are not involved or consulted enough and their views have little impact on decisions.
- Most accommodation is worn, shabby, overcrowded and dirty. Pupils and staff deserve better.

Since the last inspection in March 1998, the school has been moderately effective. The teaching and learning are now good in Years 10 and 11, but some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9. The leadership and management of most subjects are now at least satisfactory. However, heads of year have only recently become formally involved in improving standards. Planning has improved, but is mainly restricted to the timescale of a single year and this restricts continuity in judging performance and setting priorities. Subject departments evaluate their performance better, but monitoring and evaluation have not yet raised standards to consistently higher levels. ICT is not provided for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. Religious education is now very well provided for and standards are good. Pupils do not have the opportunity for an act of collective worship every day.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. For Year 9, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6. For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9. ** Very wide variation between grades in 2002 and 2003 of results compared with similar schools make this comparison unreliable. 2003 data are not yet validated.*

Overall, girls and boys of varying abilities and ethnic backgrounds achieve **satisfactory standards** throughout the school. They achieved average standards in the 2003 Year 9 National Curriculum

tests. In 2003 and 2002, performance compared with that of similar schools was well below average. In the last five years, GCSE examination results have varied from average to well above average. Results in 2003 were above average. Girls achieve higher GCSE standards than boys, but boys perform well enough, compared with boys' results nationally. In the work seen during the inspection in all years, pupils achieved at least satisfactorily, and well in some subjects. However, the standards achieved were unsatisfactory in art and design and citizenship, and in ICT for many pupils in Years 10 and 11. Average standards are usually reached in the sixth form, but results in 2003 were the school's best ever.

Pupils' personal development is **good** overall. Their moral and social development is **good**. Their spiritual understanding and self-knowledge and their cultural development are **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes to the school are **good**. Their behaviour is **generally good**, but a small minority of boys does not behave well enough. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** standard of education. The teaching is **satisfactory in Years 7 to 9** and **good in Years 10 and 11**. Recruitment of teachers has been difficult and some temporary and new teachers, in particular, are not always effective enough. The curriculum provides a **good** range of worthwhile learning opportunities. The school takes **satisfactory** care of its pupils. Links with parents and with other schools are **satisfactory**. Links with the community are **good**. The accommodation is **unsatisfactory**. Resources for learning are **satisfactory**.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher successfully ensures that pupils' personal development is a priority. Governors are supportive and determined to raise standards further, but do not meet all statutory requirements. Management by key staff is **unsatisfactory**. School performance and provision have not been monitored and evaluated well enough to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well, especially in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests, and that teaching is effective in all subjects.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents, overall, are satisfied with what the school provides but want more information; some want behaviour to be better. Pupils are generally satisfied with the school, but many think that behaviour is not good enough and do not consider their views are listened to by the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards achieved in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests, in GCSE examinations, and in art and design and citizenship.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good and minimise unsatisfactory teaching.
- Ensure that behaviour is consistently good in all lessons.
- Make management more effective in monitoring and evaluation to ensure consistently higher standards and consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- Use assessment more effectively to help raise standards.
- Involve pupils more in active participation in decisions about the life and work of the school.
- Further improve the accommodation.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide all pupils with the opportunity for an act of collective worship every day.
- Provide ICT for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is **effective**. Students reach average standards overall. They generally achieve the standards predicted by their GCSE examination results. However, results in A-level and AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education) examinations in 2003 were well above average and the school's best ever. The teaching and learning are good. Provision is cost effective. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good planning is taking place to make provision yet more cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students generally achieve the standards predicted by their GCSE examination results.
- The teaching and learning are good.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to the school and to learning are good. The vast majority of students completes courses successfully.
- Leadership is satisfactory and management ensures that provision is cost effective.
- The curriculum provides students of varying competence with extensive, worthwhile learning opportunities.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good. Good teaching and students' positive attitudes enable students to achieve well.
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Students' poor algebraic skills prevent them from achieving as well as they could.
Science	Unsatisfactory in biology. Standards are well below average and students' achievement is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not involve students enough in discussions. Good teaching and learning were seen in chemistry. Very good teaching was seen in a physics lesson.
Information and communication technology	Good. The AVCE course is attracting an increasing number of students. Good teaching enables them to learn and achieve well
Humanities	Satisfactory in geography. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Year 12 students are achieving well but Year 13 students lack interest and are not achieving as well as they should. Satisfactory in history , where standards are below average but good teaching enables students to achieve well. Students are well taught in psychology and religious education.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Very good in design and technology , where there is a good range of courses. Students achieve well in food technology and product design. They achieve very well in electronics.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory in art and design. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students' achievement is satisfactory but poor accommodation and inadequate resources impair their experiences of art. Good teaching and learning were seen in media studies and photography. Some very good teaching was seen in drama, where students achieve well despite poor accommodation. Very good teaching and learning were seen in the one music lesson observed.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good in physical education. Good teaching and students' mature attitudes enable them to learn and achieve well.
Curriculum area	Evaluation
Business	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a very

	good command of the subject but do not encourage students to take enough responsibility for their own learning.
Health and social care	Very good teaching was seen in the AVCE course and students achieved well in lessons.
General education	In general studies, students broaden their understanding of many topical issues because of their positive attitudes and teachers' good knowledge. Students reach good standards in the use of English and attain well in the key skills examination in communication. They use ICT competently and mathematics satisfactorily across the curriculum.

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 receive **good** advice, guidance and support from teachers and tutors when they choose sixth-form courses and career and higher education opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is clear vision for the sixth-form's development. Provision is cost effective.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are pleased to be members of the sixth form and think they are well taught and supported.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, girls and boys of varying abilities and ethnic and social backgrounds achieve satisfactorily throughout Years 7 to 11. Pupils with special educational needs that restrict the standards that they can reach, achieve well. Standards are average overall, but should be higher, especially in Year 9 National Curriculum tests.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall to reach average standards, but they should gain higher standards in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and attain consistently higher standards in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in art and design in all years.
- Standards and achievement in Spanish and religious education are good throughout the school.
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11, where many pupils do not receive their entitlement to the subject.
- Standards and achievement in citizenship are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11.
- Students currently achieve satisfactorily overall in the sixth form; A-level results were very good in 2003.

Commentary

2003 data are not yet validated.

1. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, their attainment spans the full range but is average overall in English, mathematics and science. They usually reach average standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9, but results in the tests do not compare well with those of similar schools and should be higher. The school disputes the 2003 test results in English, and findings from the inspection show that the current Year 10 group's achievement does not indicate the well below average standards shown by the test results. However, the school does not make preparation for the tests a high enough priority. The trend in performance in the tests over five years has not kept pace with the rising national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.3 (33.2)	33.3 (33.3)
mathematics	34.8 (34.5)	35.3 (34.7)
science	33.5 (33.0)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 234 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Performance data for 2003 are not yet validated.

2. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory overall. They have attained average standards in GCSE and GNVQ examinations in three of the last five years, but well above and above average standards in two of the last three years, based on their average point score for all the GCSE examination subjects that they take. The trend in performance has been above average. However, results are not consistently good and could be better. When pupils' average point score based on their best eight GCSE examination subject results is compared nationally, performance is not above average, as indicated in the

table below for results in 2003. Girls outperform boys in GCSE examinations, but not usually to an extent beyond the national difference in performance. There is no significant difference in the performance of different ethnic groups.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	49 (44)	53 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (92)	89 (92)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (95)	95 (95)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.7 (32.6)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 247 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Performance data for 2003 are not yet validated.

3. In the work seen during the inspection, girls and boys of varying competence and ethnic background achieved satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with others in lessons in gaining subject knowledge and understanding. With additional support, they often achieve well. This was particularly noted in lessons in English, geography, physical education and religious education. In literacy classes, they also make good progress. However, the negative attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of boys adversely affected their progress and achievement. Clever pupils were seen to progress best in classes of common ability. In classes of pupils with widely differing subject competence, teachers did not always adapt work well enough for them and, in some cases, this restricted progress.
4. Pupils' achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11. Their use of mathematical and linguistic skills is equally satisfactory across the curriculum. Achievement is good in Spanish and religious education, but unsatisfactory in art and design and citizenship. In art and design, the teaching does not challenge pupils enough to reach the standards that they should. The provision of citizenship is not co-ordinated effectively enough to provide pupils with a coherent experience of the subject. In Years 10 and 11, many pupils, mainly girls, are not taught ICT and consequently they do not achieve well enough in this subject.
5. Overall, pupils' achievement since the inspection of 1998 has been satisfactory.

Sixth form

6. Students achieve satisfactorily overall in the sixth form. Their standards are broadly average on entry to advanced and intermediate courses and most students achieve at least the standards predicted from their GCSE and GNVQ examination performances in AS, A-level, AVCE and intermediate courses. Average standards were reached in 2002, and boys outperformed girls. Results in 2003 were the school's best ever, and are likely to be judged well above average when 2003 results data are validated. The year group gaining these 2003 results was one that attained the school's best ever results in GCSE examinations in 2001.

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	92 (93)	92 (98)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	29 (16)	36 (36)
Average point score per pupil	301 (237)	253 (255)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2002. Performance data for 2003 are not yet validated.

7. Of the ten subjects inspected and reported in full in this report, students achieved satisfactorily, apart from in design and technology subjects, ICT and physical education, where they achieved well. In biology, students did not achieve well enough.

Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory** and there is little lateness. Their attitudes and behaviour are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. It is regularly monitored, recorded, recognised and rewarded.
- Pupils generally enjoy school and their behaviour is usually good, but deteriorates at lunchtimes when supervision is restricted.
- The school promotes good relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff.
- Instances of bullying are sometimes not followed up quickly enough.
- In the sixth form, students' attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships are very good, but attendance and use of study time are not closely monitored.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	1.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.2

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

8. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons is usually good, as at the last inspection. The behaviour of a small minority of boys sometimes deteriorates in lessons taken by inexperienced teachers and occasionally at lunchtimes. Pupils are willing to accept responsibility, but the school does not always provide sufficient opportunity. Behaviour around the school is good, especially when there is supervision by teachers, but sometimes deteriorates at lunchtimes. The cramped arrangements for dining are not conducive to the development of social skills. No pupils were excluded permanently in the last year, but the rate of fixed-term exclusions was above average, although broadly in line with that of other local schools.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1327	106	0
3	0	0
8	0	0
4	0	0

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	2	0
Chinese	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	0	0

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

9. Relationships are good. There is a high level of racial harmony and no instances of racial abuse or harassment were noted during the inspection or reported by pupils. The school has effective arrangements to discourage bullying and this is reinforced through personal and social education lessons. However, inspectors found a few instances of bullying which had not been followed up vigorously enough; this had caused unnecessary distress to a small minority of pupils.
10. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards the support they receive. They work hard and are fully included in lesson activities. They behave well and there are many examples of how those with special educational needs receive valuable support from their friends, as well as the teaching and support staff.
11. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. However, not all departments include this aspect of development in their schemes of work.
12. The development of pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is satisfactory. Assemblies are pleasant, well-supervised occasions which develop a sense of community, but there is rarely a moment for prayer or personal reflection and the school does not comply with the requirement to provide an act of collective worship for all pupils every day. The religious education department makes an outstanding contribution to this aspect of pupils' experience. The views of pupils are respected.
13. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong in assemblies, tutor periods, personal and social education lessons and in the procedures of daily school life. Some subjects – for example religious education, history, geography, citizenship and ICT – encourage the discussion of moral issues. During the inspection, pupils in ICT lessons were using the Internet to research arguments for and against topics such as vivisection, compulsory identity cards and smoking.
14. Social development is encouraged through the many opportunities to take part in fundraising within the community and in numerous lessons which encourage pupils' interaction. Pupils responded with enthusiasm to a request to help with fundraising for a school in Burkina Faso. Considerable funds are raised for charities on Red Nose Days. The school has a strong ethos. There is a good sense of community.

15. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The curriculum provides some opportunities to promote understanding of pupils' culture and that of others in the local and world-wide community, including that of Europe and Africa.

Sixth form

16. Students attend regularly, although their attendance and use of study time are not closely monitored. Students are eager to learn and show positive attitudes to their courses. They behave very well and enjoy very good relationships. Students take a full part in school life. For example, they help Year 7 pupils with reading and run stalls at the Christmas fayre to raise money for the school. Students' personal development is good. They take part in assemblies, in discussions of important moral and social issues during general studies lessons and in many other subjects and tutorials. As individuals, and in groups, their responses are thoughtful and articulate. They have a sense of responsibility towards their school community. The provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and personal development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Pupils receive a **satisfactory** quality of education in the main school. Teaching is **satisfactory** in Years 7 to 9, but there is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching, particularly by temporary and recently recruited inexperienced staff. The teaching in Years 10 and 11 is **good**. Curricular provision is **good** and learning resources are **satisfactory**. Overall, the accommodation is **unsatisfactory, and some is very poor**. Care and support for pupils in their learning are **satisfactory**. In the sixth form, teaching and most other provision are **generally good**, but the accommodation is **unsatisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** in Years 7 to 9, and **good** in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching meets the needs of pupils of differing competence and social and ethnic backgrounds at least satisfactorily, and well in Years 10 to 13.
- Religious education and sociology are very well taught in Years 10 and 11, and pupils learn and achieve consistently well in these subjects.
- The teaching of art and design is not challenging enough for pupils to achieve the standards that they should in Years 7 to 11.
- Slow pace and low expectations, particularly by non-specialist teachers, make the teaching of ICT unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- The teaching of music by temporary staff is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Practice in the use of assessment in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, and the quality of marking is too inconsistent.
- In the sixth form, the teaching and learning are good. Much very good teaching was seen in drama, music, physics, psychology and religious education.

Commentary

17. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. Good practice was seen in Years 10 and 11, where pupils' needs are well met. Of the 169 lessons seen in Years 7 to 11, well over half were good or better, with 22 graded very good or higher – two lessons, in sociology and Spanish, were of excellent quality.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 223 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (1%)	28 (13%)	106 (48%)	71 (32%)	13 (6%)	1 (0%)	2 (1%)

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. Percentage figures do not total 100 because of rounding.

18. The teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 contained a significant amount of unsatisfactory or worse teaching. Some of this teaching was by temporary teachers and some by inexperienced teachers – for example in the teaching of music in Years 7 to 9. It was not effective in ensuring that pupils learned well enough and made the progress that they should. Some unsatisfactory teaching was also attributable to regular teachers in art and design and to some non-specialist ICT teaching in Years 7 to 9. In these lessons, teachers' expectations were not high enough and pupils were not challenged sufficiently to make the progress that they should. Teachers do not always adapt work well enough to meet the needs of competent pupils in some lessons and, consequently, they are not challenged sufficiently.
19. Regular teachers usually plan their lessons well and share objectives with pupils. Some conclude with effective summaries to reinforce the learning that has taken place. Well-organised lessons enable pupils to work well. In most lessons – including some where the regular teacher was absent – pupils concentrated on their work and made at least satisfactory progress.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, by both teaching assistants and teachers, is good. Work is well planned and appropriate to pupils' needs. Teachers provide good support for individual pupils. In a modern foreign languages lesson, for example, the teacher worked well with one pupil individually to ensure that good progress was made.
21. Consistently good teaching throughout Years 7 to 11 was seen in English, geography, history, Spanish and physical education. Religious education and sociology were very well taught in Years 10 and 11.
22. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, many teachers lack confidence and expertise in applying the national criteria to decide the standards attained by pupils. Although there are recently composed policy statements on the assessment and marking of work, practice remains inconsistent within and between subjects. Where pupils have targets, their progress towards them is not monitored with sufficient rigour, and many pupils do not know what they should do to reach them. However, some marking is good and helpful to pupils' progress – for example in English, history and Spanish – where every key piece of work is thoroughly marked and assessed with clear written pointers to the pupils on how to improve. The identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are thorough and result from the good liaison between the school and the primary schools with which it is linked. The tracking of these pupils' progress is good and there is regular testing of reading and spelling to measure their successful acquisition of these skills.
23. Since the last inspection, when the improvement of teaching and learning was made a key issue, improvement has been satisfactory. Although most lessons seen were well taught, there was too much unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9. Much of this can be attributed to extended illnesses of staff and difficulties in recruiting effective, specialist, temporary teachers. However, some unsatisfactory teaching was also by regular teachers, and management has not been assiduous enough in recognising ineffective teaching and taking action to remedy it.

Sixth form

24. Teaching and learning are good. Consequently, students achieve at least the standards that they should, as indicated by predictions from their GCSE examination results. Of the 54

lessons seen during the inspection, two-thirds were at least well taught; eight lessons were very well taught. In no subject was teaching unsatisfactory overall, but one art and design lesson was unsatisfactory because it did not challenge the students enough to learn as well as they should. Some very good teaching was seen in drama, music, physics, psychology and religious education.

25. Lessons are usually well planned. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to help students to learn. They have good relationships with students. In most lessons, their expectations of the standards that students should reach are high enough to enable the learners to achieve their potential in the subject. Teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory, and some marking is very helpful and enables students to know what they should do to improve their work.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is **good** in the main school and **good** in the sixth form. Accommodation is **unsatisfactory**, but provision of learning resources is **satisfactory**. Significant rates of absence of some regular teachers result in some **unsatisfactory** teaching by some temporary and inexperienced staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a wide range of courses, including vocational opportunities, to meet all pupils' needs and interests well in both the main school and sixth form.
- Provision in religious education in Years 10 and 11 is very good and much improved since the last inspection. However, pupils do not receive their entitlement to an act of collective worship every day.
- Provision in citizenship is unsatisfactory, and provision in ICT does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- Enrichment opportunities for learning outside the school day are good.
- Absence of teachers results in some unsatisfactory teaching by replacement, temporary staff.
- The accommodation has improved since the 1998 inspection, but is unsatisfactory overall; some is of very poor quality, too small for use in music and drama, poorly maintained and not clean enough.

Commentary

26. The school provides fair and equal access to a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities. Good opportunities are provided to meet pupils' needs and interests. The curriculum provides well for girls' and boys' interests. Provision has improved since the last inspection. However, pupils do not receive their entitlement to an act of collective worship every day.
27. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is well supplemented by drama, religious education and personal, social and health education, which includes some aspects of citizenship. However, citizenship is not well enough co-ordinated across the other subjects of the curriculum, and overall provision for it is unsatisfactory. Drama shares the same lesson time with music in Year 9, and there is not enough time for pupils to develop their musical skills adequately. However, the school is planning to revise this provision from next September. Generous provision in modern foreign languages does not result in a keen interest to study these languages in later years.
28. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a wide choice of subjects within a compulsory framework. The range of vocational courses on offer is extensive, and includes effective alternative provision for pupils at risk of not completing their secondary education. The extensive variety of science courses on offer ensures that the needs and aspirations of all groups of pupils are well met.

Provision in religious education is now very good and has greatly improved since the last inspection, when it did not meet statutory requirements. Provision in ICT is unsatisfactory, and does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are eligible for all activities and no-one is disqualified by a particular need. They receive good, specialist support in literacy. Pupils miss very few lessons in other subjects. Information on pupils is comprehensive and individual education plans are informative. Teachers have good information on pupils, but the information is not always to hand in some lessons, and some subjects do not give subject-specific target setting a high enough priority. The support provided by teaching assistants is good and enables pupils to follow the curriculum well. In Years 10 and 11, pupils may follow work-related studies, can be placed on college courses and gain a Certificate of Achievement in mathematics.
30. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. For example, field trips, visits, a school camp and study trips abroad are provided. All pupils benefit from a residential experience, for instance in geography, so as to extend their understanding of the subject. A homework club operates every day. Some valuable initiatives take place to challenge higher achievers. Opportunities for sport and music outside the school day are good, in spite of staffing difficulties in music.
31. In the last academic year, there were high levels of absence among teachers due to sickness. Replacements with specialist subject qualifications were not always available. This affected learning adversely in several subjects, especially mathematics, English and art and design.
32. The accommodation is unsatisfactory and some is very poor. Some good improvements include refurbished science laboratories and a new design and technology building with a resource centre, which is beginning to support pupils' independent learning well. A new expressive arts block is under construction. However, many classrooms show signs of wear and neglect, with leaking roofs, missing roof panels and a poor standard of internal and external decoration and maintenance. These classrooms present a shabby appearance with unsatisfactory standards of display and cleanliness; they do not provide an environment conducive to learning. There is a considerable amount of litter around the school. The dining area is too small for a school of this size and cannot accommodate all pupils, many of whom go off the premises at lunchtime. Some rooms are too small for the size of classes that must use them – for example in music. The drama studio is acoustically inadequate. Nevertheless, all areas of the school are accessible to pupils with special educational needs, including those in wheelchairs.
33. Resources are satisfactory overall, and ICT equipment has improved since the last inspection.

Sixth form

34. Students have open access to an extensive range of academic and vocational courses, including AS, AVCE and A-levels. Provision of vocational courses has expanded considerably since the last inspection and is now very good for a sixth form of this size. Planning for enhanced joint provision of the 14 to 19 curriculum, in conjunction with other schools and a local college, is good and at an advanced stage.
35. The curriculum caters well for the needs of all students. The percentage of students who complete their courses is high. GCSE examination courses are offered for students wishing to improve their results. There is now adequate provision of religious education. No courses are currently run in modern foreign languages, because of insufficient demand. Few students follow some courses – for example Year 13 English and technology.
36. There is no provision for sport on the timetable, although some students take advantage of opportunities provided for both sport and music out of school hours. All students take part in community service. A comprehensive general studies course enriches the curriculum further.

37. The accommodation is unsatisfactory and generally shabby with poor standards of display and maintenance. The students' social area is well below the provision enjoyed in most schools. Students have a pleasant room for private study in the new resource area. Learning resources are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils receive **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are **satisfactory** overall. Nevertheless, there are some significant health and safety weaknesses for the school. The extent of the school's involvement of pupils and students in its work and development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst health and safety procedures are in place, the school has been slow in monitoring and ensuring that action is taken to rectify identified problems.
- Pupils receive good advice and guidance in some subjects where teachers help them to improve the standard of their work, but good practice is not consistent across the school.
- The school is slow to act upon pupils' views and suggestions for improvement and their involvement within the life and work of the school.
- Good arrangements are followed to help pupils settle in, and to help them transfer to the next stage of education.

Commentary

38. Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are satisfactory overall. However, despite regular audits of provision, the school has not produced an action plan and has, consequently, not been rigorous enough in monitoring and ensuring that action is taken to address issues promptly. As a result, inspectors brought a number of health and safety issues to the attention of the headteacher. Child protection procedures are in place but more training is needed to ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and confident about steps to take if they encounter an incident.
39. In some subjects – for example English, design and technology, history, music and religious education – teachers know their pupils well, problems are anticipated and good support given to groups and individuals. However, in other subjects – for example art and design, geography and science – pupils are not well supported and receive insufficient constructive advice on how they can improve the standard of their work. Not all pupils have realistic, academic targets to aim for, and these are sometimes insufficiently challenging. Nevertheless, the school's annual review day is good practice and provides a valuable, if infrequent, opportunity for pupils to reflect with their tutors on their progress, and to decide short-term targets for improvement. However, the outcomes of the day are not yet reviewed regularly enough to be sure that pupils make the progress that they should. Provision of support, advice and guidance to support pupils' progress has changed little from that of the last inspection, when a lack of consistent practice was indicated.
40. The school council and year councils are currently ineffective. Pupils are consulted about their progress through questionnaires. However, opportunities for them to voice their opinions about school life generally and to make suggestions for improvement are inadequate. Little evidence of action is apparent following any expression of pupils' views about the school. Pupils take part in work experience during Year 10, but often struggle to find suitable placements and are not helped sufficiently to do so.
41. The school meets statutory requirements for provision for the care of pupils with special educational needs, as outlined in statements of special educational need. Reviews of individual

education plans and statements are regularly carried out. Staff contribute well to reviews and much helpful information on pupils is collated, including that from teaching assistants.

Sixth form

42. Students enjoy being in the sixth form and confirm that their teachers provide good personal and academic help and support. Inspectors agree with these positive views. However, concerns relating to health and safety echo those indicated above for the main school, and students have insufficient opportunity to contribute their views and ideas to the development of the school.
43. Support and guidance for students in their work is good. Although mathematics teachers do not always set sufficiently rigorous targets for students to achieve, very good support is given in design and technology where students' needs are well known to teachers. English teachers employ an effective tutorial style when giving students guidance about their work. The review day for sixth-form students enables them to have in-depth discussions with their teachers; these focus on clear criteria and set clear targets for improvement in students' work.
44. Guidance on choice of courses is good. Students are given opportunities to discuss subjects prior to entry to the sixth form. They are subsequently interviewed after GCSE examination results are known to confirm or amend their choices. Analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaire shows almost half of the students do not think that they receive helpful enough advice about careers and further study when they leave school. However, inspectors found that tutors gave good careers guidance and provided good individual guidance so that a variety of paths were discussed, apart from university courses.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **satisfactory** and links with the local community and other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Log books are used well and appreciated by parents.
- Parents give the school good support.
- Links with the community are varied and extensive.
- Reports do not have a common format; they are sent too late in the school year for parents to raise concerns before the start of the autumn term.
- In the sixth form, links with parents and the local community are extensive. Reports are comprehensive.

Commentary

45. Links with parents are satisfactory overall. Parents support the school well and are satisfied, overall, with what the school provides for their children. Parents like pupils' log books, which assist communication and help to keep them informed on progress. A regular newsletter and consultation evenings are provided and are appreciated by parents. Reports provide satisfactory information about pupils' progress, and often – but not always – indicate subject targets for improvement. However, reports do not follow a consistent format and this is unhelpful to readers. Reports are distributed at the end of the summer term for most pupils. Parents justifiably complain that issues of immediate concern cannot be raised with staff who are not available after the start of the summer holiday. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents give a well-rounded picture of the school and meet statutory requirements.

46. The school has good and well-established links with its feeder primary schools for the transfer of pupils. It uses the neighbouring leisure centre extensively for physical education. Local mosques, churches and other community organisations are used well to enhance educational provision – for example in religious education. The school encourages volunteers to support it and receives a wide range of speakers and other visitors who are often involved in lessons. For example, in a Year 10 design and technology lesson, the pupils enjoyed a demonstration of glass painting and candle decoration by a professional craftsperson. The school has good links with Nottingham and Nottingham Trent Universities and local colleges.
47. There is very good liaison with primary schools prior to the transfer of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are closely involved in the process of making individual education plans and setting targets for pupils to achieve. Parents consistently attend reviews. Communication with parents is regular and fruitful.
48. Links with other educational institutions and the local community have developed well since the last inspection.

Sixth form

49. Parents have two opportunities each year to discuss students' progress with teachers and these sessions are well attended. Reports are comprehensive and provide a good summary of students' academic progress. Students have links with colleges and universities through their courses and applications for entry. Many undertake community service in the locality.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership by the headteacher, key staff and governors is **satisfactory** throughout the school. Management by key staff is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is satisfactory.
- The governors have properly high aspirations for the standards that the school should achieve.
- Management of key staff is unsatisfactory; monitoring has not been effective enough in identifying weaknesses in educational provision and in ensuring that higher academic standards are reached, especially by the end of Year 9.
- There has been satisfactory improvement in the effectiveness of subject leadership and management as required by the inspection of 1998.

Commentary

50. Leadership of the school by the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory. The aim of the school is to ensure the personal development of pupils in all worthwhile respects. Since the last inspection, the school has upheld this aim, although many more pupils have been admitted to its unsatisfactory, overcrowded accommodation by the local education authority. Overall, pupils have good attitudes, behave well and relationships are good. The extensive curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities well for pupils of different competence, ethnic and social background, needs and interests. The vocational opportunities, in particular, are related well to pupils' needs in the local context. School improvement since the inspection of 1998 has been satisfactory, although circumstances have been increasingly difficult because members of the school's leadership group have had extended absence arising from serious illnesses and this has restricted continuity in working to raise standards.
51. The leadership of subject departments is satisfactory overall. It is very good in religious education where it ensures impressive standards in GCSE examination results and good

teaching. However, leadership in art and design, citizenship and ICT does not give sufficient direction to the development of these subjects. The special educational needs department is well led and good delegation has resulted in a more efficient management of all aspects of provision made by the department. Training has been good and the team of teachers and teaching assistants is effective.

52. The governors' leadership is unsatisfactory in the respect that they do not meet statutory requirements for the provision of ICT for many pupils in Years 10 and 11; nor do they give pupils the opportunity for an act of collective worship every day and assemblies are often not acts of worship. However, in other respects, the leadership of governors properly and vigorously aspires to pupils' achievement of higher academic standards. They are supportive of the headteacher and management and understand the difficulties brought about by illness and absence. Nevertheless, they are setting suitably demanding academic targets for the school. They are pressing for these to be achieved, so that pupils reach, for example, the standards that tests on entry to the school predict for performance in GCSE examinations. Recently, many new governors have joined the governing body and, although new governors intend to link with subject departments to monitor standards and provision for themselves, these desirable arrangements are not yet in place.
53. Management by key staff is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of provision has not been effective enough to ensure a consistently good quality of teaching by regular teachers in all subjects. Nor has there been enough improvement in remedying identified inadequacies in the accommodation. The standards reached, particularly in Year 9 National Curriculum tests, but also in GCSE examinations, could be higher, and management has not yet driven standards up to the levels of performance projected by testing of pupils on entry to the school and other predictors. Provision in three subjects is unsatisfactory overall. The key issue of the last inspection to involve heads of year in raising standards has only recently formally become a target in school improvement planning. Improvement planning has largely a single-year timescale, and this does not ensure enough continuity in setting and evaluating progress towards the important priorities that the school sets itself.
54. The use of assessment data has not been effective enough in ensuring better academic performance. However, this is a current priority, and planning and development for better use of performance data are very good. Nevertheless, effective monitoring systems have yet to be established and new procedures are not yet used consistently. Senior management has introduced a system of self-evaluation of performance for subject departments, and this has contributed to improvement in the performance of heads of subject departments – a key issue for improvement identified in the last inspection. There is some senior management monitoring of literacy and numeracy, which are well provided for. Nevertheless, although performance management of staff is generally satisfactory, senior managers do not monitor teaching and other aspects of provision enough themselves to identify and remedy under-performance. Many responsibilities of senior managers are administrative matters which could be managed by other staff, enabling senior management to focus its efforts more on raising standards and the quality of educational provision. Since the 1998 inspection, there have been some valuable initiatives to improve teaching, but the impact and benefit of these are no longer consistently evident.
55. A particular difficulty in raising achievement has been the considerable rate of absence of some teachers. Many staff have given long service to the school. However, temporary teachers in specialist subjects have not always been available, and the quality of teaching of some temporary staff has not been good enough. Arrangements for trainee teachers to develop their skills are good.
56. Management has had considerable difficulty in ensuring that the school's well below average income has enabled it to maintain a balanced budget. However, this has currently been accomplished, and the school is not in deficit, partly because seven teachers accepted the terms offered on which they could leave the school in the last academic year. Best-value

principles are applied satisfactorily. Performance is average when compared with all schools, but does not consistently compare well with similar schools. The curriculum provides good challenge and opportunity. Consultation with parents is undertaken, but some parents want more information. There is some consultation with pupils, but they are not convinced that their views are taken into account. The school manages competition for the services it uses satisfactorily, although the quality of some of these is not good enough – for example the quality of cleaning. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,346,732	Balance from previous year	18,479
Total expenditure	4,327,381	Balance carried forward to the next	19,350
Expenditure per pupil	2,932		

Sixth form

57. The leadership of the sixth form by the headteacher, key staff and governors is satisfactory. The head of the sixth form leads and manages the sixth form efficiently day-to-day. Leadership provides students with a comprehensive curriculum which meets their needs and enables them to develop well, academically and socially. Good vision is shown in planning for the further development of the sixth form in co-operation with neighbouring institutions.
58. Management is satisfactory. Although monitoring of teaching and other provision is not extensive enough for management to be assured of its quality, teaching is good. The day-to-day management of the sixth form is good. Provision is cost effective, and the school makes the most of its funding for sixth-form students. Good planning is taking place to make provision yet more cost effective.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to study; they enjoy learning Spanish and achieve well.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Spanish is used extensively in most lessons, but opportunities for pupils to practise speaking skills are sometimes missed.

Commentary

59. Spanish was introduced in 1996 as a second language choice, but is now established as one of the three languages available from Year 7. The small number of girls who took the GCSE examination in Spanish in 2003 did better in this than in their other subjects.

60. By Year 9, standards are above national expectations, and pupils achieve well. Their speaking skills are good and some speak fluently. Pupils develop a wide vocabulary and express themselves well in writing. Those with special educational needs achieve well.
61. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress, maintaining above average standards and achieve well. They write accurately and at length, and their knowledge of grammar is good. The few pupils who are currently studying Spanish in Year 11 have attained very high standards. Their spoken Spanish is outstanding. Pupils enjoy Spanish. Their behaviour and attitude to study are very good in all years.
62. Teaching and learning are consistently good in all years, and often very good. Teachers' presentation of new learning is generally good and, at times, excellent. Frequent opportunities to work in pairs or groups ensure that pupils develop the capacity to learn independently. The pace of lessons is very brisk. Work is challenging and makes pupils think hard about the language. Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious; pupils enjoy lessons and concentrate well. Spanish is used extensively in lessons and pupils develop good accents. However, English is often used unnecessarily in some classes, and opportunities for practice are missed. Marking is good. Work is well corrected and targets for improvement are set.
63. The subject is well led, and teachers work well together as a team. Management is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards attained in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations by pupils from all social and ethnic groups are below average and should be higher.
- There is an improving trend in the standard of work seen, because of the quality of the teaching and the good working relationships in the classroom.
- Some pupils cannot express themselves fluently and coherently when speaking and writing.
- Very effective teamwork has enabled teachers to address the problems created by recent staffing difficulties.

Commentary

64. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The work of the current Year 9 is an improvement on what was attained in the 2003 Year 9 National Curriculum tests, when standards were below the averages of all schools and well below those of similar schools. Pupils' performance in the tests in English compared unfavourably with their standards in mathematics and science. Achievement seemed unsatisfactory for boys and girls. However, those results bear no resemblance to the higher standards the pupils who sat those tests are now attaining in their first term of Year 10. Girls attained results in the 2003 GCSE examinations in English language and literature comparable to those gained by all girls, and their achievement was satisfactory. Boys did less well than boys nationally, and made unsatisfactory progress. However, there is a marked improvement in the quality of boys' work seen in the current Year 11 and they are now working at national average standards and achieving well enough. Girls are attaining similar standards and are progressing well. GCSE examination results of pupils from all ethnic groups have been of a similar standard in 2002 and 2001.
65. The standard of pupils' written work in all years reaches the levels expected nationally. The work of the most competent boys and girls and those with special educational needs is above expected standards when account is taken of their attainment on entry to the school, or on entry to Year 10, and they achieve well. All pupils make good use of computers to develop and present their writing. Reading, speaking and listening standards are average. Pupils can use standard English correctly when the occasion demands. There are a number of boys and girls whose extended writing is poorly organised and lacks fluency. These pupils lack confidence when speaking to large groups.
66. Teaching and learning are good. In all the lessons seen, teachers display a good command of their subject and teaching methods and they have established strong working relationships. Pupils respond positively and work hard. Levels of achievement are satisfactory because teaching methods are varied to engage pupils and sustain their interest. In the best lessons, questioning techniques are rigorous and require pupils to reflect and answer at length. The most effective assessment and marking tell pupils how to improve their work, but such good practice is not applied consistently. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to become confident and fluent speakers.

67. The leadership and management of the subject are good because of the effective work of the co-ordinator for Years 7 to 9 and the co-ordinator for Years 10 and 11. They are well supported by the head of department and by committed and capable teachers who work effectively as a team. During a recent period of staffing difficulties, the preparation for pupils' GCSE examination work continued unabated because teachers worked closely to share the additional responsibilities. Appropriate systems are in place for the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress and for sharing good teaching practice to improve the quality of provision. These factors have had a bearing on the quality of work seen. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection because of better development planning, the provision of more opportunities for pupils to use computers and the better levels of achievement of the most competent pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Pupils' English language and literacy skills are of an average standard. Most pupils are able to speak fluently about their learning and all can adapt their writing to the varying demands of the curriculum. Reading standards are in line with national expectations and pupils are able to understand a wide range of specialist subject texts. Discussion and listening skills are sufficient to enable most pupils to benefit from small group and paired work and to share ideas, using the correct terminology of their subject disciplines.
69. The school has done much to raise the standards of literacy across the curriculum. Provision is made each week for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 to work with their form tutors on improving their language and literacy skills. Teaching materials for Years 7 and 8 have been developed by the head of the English department and the special educational needs co-ordinator, and the work of the tutors is monitored on a regular basis by a member of the senior management team. Work is ongoing to improve provision in Year 9. More attention should now be given to the linguistic needs of lower attaining pupils in literacy in Years 10 and 11 where, although there is currently some provision, this is insufficient to help them refine their literacy skills well enough.
70. Good practice was seen in geography where pupils are taught to use prepared frameworks to give a logical structure to their writing. Good descriptive writing is undertaken in science. Pupils in design and technology have well-developed skills of annotation and are able to explain their work clearly when giving whole-class presentations. Such speaking skills are not evident in all curriculum areas, however, and opportunities are lacking in many subjects for pupils to talk about their work. Some are hesitant when expressing themselves and are not sufficiently confident and fluent speakers.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in French and German is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys do not achieve well enough.
- There is a strong team of committed teachers.
- Teachers are good linguists, but do not use the foreign language enough in class.
- Teaching is sometimes not well adapted to suit all pupils' needs.
- The curriculum is enriched by frequent opportunities to go on language trips abroad.

Commentary

71. Almost all pupils in Year 11 have taken a GCSE examination in either German or French in recent years. In 2001 and 2002, they did significantly worse in these languages than in their

other subjects. In 2003, results improved considerably. Girls did much better than boys. There is no significant difference in the performance of ethnic groups.

72. By Year 9, overall, standards in French and in German are in line with national expectations, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Girls attain higher standards than boys. Most girls achieve well, but many boys underachieve. Pupils' writing skills are sound, although presentation is often poor. Speaking skills are less well developed, especially in boys. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, but varies from poor to excellent.
73. By Year 11, standards are average overall in both French and German, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils develop sound reading and writing skills. However, many are passive learners and their speaking skills remain below average. The poor behaviour of a minority of boys disrupts learning in some lessons.
74. Teaching and learning in both French and German are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are well planned. In the more successful lessons, presentation of new material is clear and leads to rapid learning. Teachers use a variety of activities to enable pupils to practise skills and to gain knowledge. Their enthusiasm and energy dispel pupils' inhibitions about speaking the foreign language.
75. However, although teachers are good linguists, they often use too much English and miss opportunities to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills. Often, tasks are not adapted well enough to match the needs of all pupils. Pupils of lower competence sometimes struggle with more difficult work, and more competent pupils are not stretched enough because inexperienced or temporary teachers are not as effective as other staff.
76. Currently, all pupils study one of the three languages (French, German and Spanish) provided from Year 7, and some begin a second language in Year 8. In Years 10 and 11, almost all study a foreign language, but very few choose to study two. ICT is not extensively used to aid learning. There are frequent opportunities for residential study visits abroad to boost learning of the foreign language.
77. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. However, assessment procedures are inadequate, and assessment information is not used effectively to raise achievement. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The strong team of committed permanent teachers has the capacity to improve provision further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11; overall, lessons have clear learning objectives, plans and structure, but there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to raise performance further.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good; good relationships help to increase pupils' confidence and achievement.
- Subject leadership is committed and hardworking; there is good teamwork among staff.
- Assessment of pupils' work and the quality of marking of homework are inconsistent.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning.

Commentary

78. Pupils' attainment in the subject on entry to the school in Year 7 is average. Standards in the 2002 Year 9 National Curriculum tests were average in comparison with all schools, but below

average compared with similar schools. Similar standards were reached in 2003. Trends in performance over five years are in line with the national performance. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys from different ethnic groups. Standards of work seen during the inspection were in line with test results. Pupils' achieve satisfactorily, and the significant amount of absence of teachers that occurred in the year prior to the tests did not result in underachievement. However, standards in the national tests could be higher.

79. Standards are average at the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, some lack confidence in using algebra and this creates difficulties with a range of topics. In 2002, the percentage of pupils gaining grades A* to C in GCSE examinations was below the national average but above for grades A* to G. Girls performed less well than boys irrespective of ethnic origin. In 2003, results were slightly lower and similar to those reached in English but below those in science. Fewer pupils than in 2002 gained grade A*. Standards in the work seen during the inspection by both girls and boys were average. Competent pupils produce work of a good standard.
80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Some unsatisfactory lessons are taught by inexperienced teachers who have difficulty in judging the right pace of learning for some Year 7 classes. In Years 10 and 11, teachers are confident and well organised, explain clearly and question pupils skilfully to draw out the reasoning and ideas behind subject concepts. Special work to begin lessons quickly engages the pupils in Years 7 to 9. Subject schemes of work encompass the national strategies and ensure good planning of lessons for these year groups. This good practice is now being extended into Years 10 and 11. Good relationships are apparent in most lessons and ensure positive attitudes and behaviour. Teachers' assessment and marking of homework are inconsistent and unsatisfactory.
81. Leadership is satisfactory. The head of department sets a good example and has a clear focus on raising standards. She is well supported by a hardworking team of teachers. Their commitment and teamwork have taken the subject forward. However, difficulties caused by teachers' absence and recruitment problems have prevented the standards achieved from being higher. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Some of the mathematics teaching rooms are cramped and unsatisfactory, making it very difficult to create conditions in which good learning can take place because teachers have difficulty in physically reaching individual pupils.
82. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teaching and learning methods are more varied and teachers have higher expectations. ICT is not used enough. However, the department has recently purchased sets of graphical calculators for general use, and some very effective use of spreadsheets and the Internet was seen.

Mathematics across the curriculum

83. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory. The mathematics department has responded helpfully to the National Numeracy Strategy by providing training for staff working in other subjects. Consequently, pupils use their mathematical knowledge and skills effectively in other subjects. For example, in textiles and food technology, pupils analyse questionnaire results competently; in history, pie charts and line graphs are used to display data; in geography, pupils use scales and angles effectively, and in Years 10 and 11 they use statistics well. Numeracy is used extensively in science – for example, Year 7 pupils use percentages confidently to compare the energy contained within different substances.
84. However, no survey of how and where numeracy is used has yet taken place. Some subjects – for example ICT, do not explicitly identify opportunities for use of numeracy within the subject scheme of work. Although modern foreign languages is developing a pupil record of use of numeracy, a whole-school policy is not yet in place to ensure that guidance is provided for all staff on suitable approaches to arithmetical calculations, use of data and the correct use of mathematical vocabulary.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Competent pupils achieve well because they have good learning skills and a mature approach, but a considerable number of other pupils waste time in lessons.
- The staff are a strong team but teaching and assessment are not monitored rigorously enough.
- Marking and the use of assessment are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers use interesting methods but do not use ICT enough.
- Pupils with special educational needs sometimes do not achieve well enough, when funding cannot provide support assistance in large classes.

Commentary

85. Standards achieved by the end of Year 9 are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress from the average standards they have on entering the school in Year 7. Competent pupils achieve well because they do not waste time in lessons and take advantage of much good teaching. Boys and girls achieve broadly similar results, irrespective of ethnic origin. In Years 7 to 11, pupils learn a good range of scientific vocabulary. They use their mathematical skills well to record the results of investigations. They rarely use computers, however, neither do they write at length, nor make oral presentations to support their learning and improve their scientific explanations. Average results have been gained since 2000 in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests. In 2002, performance in the tests was well below the average of similar schools and pupils could attain higher standards.
86. Standards by the end of Year 11 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards reached by higher attaining pupils who take three science subjects in Years 10 and 11 are above average. Standards are slightly below average in the GCSE double science course. The lowest attaining pupils almost always achieve an entry-level certificate or a GCSE examination grade. GCSE A* to C examination results are improving but the percentage of A* and A grades in each science subject is usually below that of most schools. There is no special provision to challenge gifted and talented pupils.
87. The teaching and learning are satisfactory in all years. In a third of lessons they are good, and occasionally very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Use of an 'interactive register' gets pupils thinking about science as soon as the lesson starts. Special revision methods help pupils to memorise topics and promote co-operation. Teachers respect pupils' efforts. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not match the demands of their questions to the range of abilities in classes. The quality of marking and advice to individual pupils is inconsistent and not good enough. Teachers do not analyse performance well enough to take action when the achievement of pupils fluctuates in end-of-topic tests. Pupils lack sufficient guidance to improve their performance in coursework. The reporting of assessment information to parents is inconsistent. Support from technicians is good. However, there are not enough support assistants in lessons and pupils with special educational needs in large classes do not always achieve well enough. Nevertheless, overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.
88. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teamwork is strong. The two science co-ordinators are especially effective. Examinations are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teaching and learning and the use of assessment are not monitored and evaluated well enough. Improvement since the last inspection is generally satisfactory. Accommodation has improved, but weaknesses remain in insufficient use of ICT and assessment information.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not meet the statutory requirement to teach ICT to many pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Expectations are too low and pupils, particularly the more competent, underachieve.
- Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.
- The use of assessment is improving but remains unsatisfactory.

Commentary

89. On entry to the school, pupils' skills in ICT are below national expectations. During Years 7 to 9 their progress is unsatisfactory, and standards by the end of Year 9 are significantly below those expected nationally. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow different ICT courses. Overall, by the end of Year 11, the standards of those following courses in the subject are below average, but they achieve well enough. However, many pupils do not receive their statutory entitlement to the subject in Years 10 and 11, and they do not achieve as well as they should. There is no difference in performance attributable to pupils' ethnic backgrounds.
90. In work seen, more competent pupils in Years 10 and 11 are encouraged to follow a double award course which is taught effectively in only half the recommended time. They achieve well and considerably better than those following the GCSE ICT course where attainment is well below average. However, in all the courses, the most talented pupils make proportionately least progress; those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in gaining understanding of the subject. Pupils' skills of selecting and presenting information are developed satisfactorily, while those of using ICT to control mechanisms and for modelling outcomes are not good enough.
91. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In Years 10 and 11, teachers have good subject knowledge, but in Year 7 to 9 some teachers lack the skills to be effective. Teachers make good use of digital projectors and have good classroom management. They work hard and provide for all pupils equally well, with good care, advice and support. However, their expectations, particularly of the talented, are often too low and tasks lack challenge. There is too little use made of homework to extend learning. Pupils' attitudes are good, but they receive insufficient opportunities to work or to experiment independently. Teaching provides insufficient opportunities for discussion, or for pupils to work in pairs or small groups. Pupils respond well when guided to take on challenging, open-ended tasks. Shared use of computers and pupils' below average subject skills slow the pace of some lessons. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is of inconsistent quality. Few pupils understand what standard they are working at or what they must do to improve.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The development plan is sound. Work in Years 7 to 9 now reflects the national strategy, but opportunities to contribute to literacy, mathematics and citizenship are not identified. Performance data are not used enough to evaluate performance, and there is little teamwork, monitoring or sharing of good practice. Those who are gifted and talented in ICT are not identified. Curricular arrangements which restrict pupils from ICT because of other subject commitments are unhelpful to management of the subject.
93. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Subject time in Years 7 to 9 is sufficient, there are more specialist staff, there is sufficient equipment, and ICT is used

more in other subjects. However, provision in Years 10 and 11 still does not meet statutory requirements for half of the pupils, whose attainment is, therefore, not reported to parents.

Information and communications technology across the curriculum

94. In Years 7 to 9, pupils have sufficient opportunities and skills to develop and practise their ICT skills in other subjects. While there are further opportunities to practise these in Years 10 and 11, pupils' skills are not further developed for the half who choose not to follow an ICT examination course. Some effective use is made of ICT in design and technology, history, sociology, music and mathematics, but the survey of use completed by the school is inadequate and pupils' experience of ICT across the curriculum is not monitored. The subject development plan does not identify where the programmes of study will be taught. Teachers' ICT skills are generally good, and present no barrier to further development. Further cross-curricular provision was identified as an urgent priority in the last inspection and the ICT equipment available has improved considerably. Improvements in use have been modest and unco-ordinated. Wordprocessing and web searching are widespread. However, most pupils gain little or no experience of e-mail, vector-graphics drawing, digital-image processing, computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacture or sound mixing. An intranet has been established but its use to support pupils' learning is at an early stage, with best use currently seen in history and science.

HUMANITIES

95. The focus was on geography, history and religious education, and sociology was sampled. Although GCSE examination results in sociology were well below the national average in 2002 and 2003, the subject was taken largely by less competent pupils whose results were similar to their attainment in other subjects, and they achieved well. Two very well taught lessons were observed. Some impressive learning was seen in which pupils led an investigation into the place of gender in the mass media and used the Internet to find out whether media ownership is in the hands of men or women. Pupils reported back confidently and made their own notes using a wordprocessor. Expectations are high, but homework tasks do not always extend pupils' learning enough, particularly that of the most competent.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning are good, but National Curriculum levels of assessment are not used enough.
- Numeracy is used well in all years.
- Pupils' written work is not well developed.
- Fieldwork is provided for all.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject, have good relationships and behave well.

Commentary

96. Until two years ago GCSE examination results were consistently above average. After a dip in 2002, results are again improving, but are currently below the national average.
97. Standards in Year 9 are at the expected level and pupils make satisfactory progress from the average skills they have on entry to the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they, along with all girls and boys regardless of ethnic background, are able to participate in lessons and demonstrate understanding of their work. However, pupils generally do not have enough practice in writing extended pieces and this restricts their retention of subject knowledge.

98. Standards in Year 11 are average, but competent pupils, grouped according to their ability, are working at above average standards. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. They can hypothesise, gather and analyse evidence and reach correct judgements. This is supported well by the very good programme of fieldwork and visits that widen pupils' experience and understanding. There is also good use of numerical skills, introduced in Years 7 to 9, and further extended into use of formulae and statistical methods in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are being well prepared for examinations and build a good knowledge of useful case studies. They successfully practise coursework methods in Year 10 work in north Derbyshire and visits to Newark. Lower attainers work hard, but their grammatical and spelling skills are sometimes less developed than they should be, and teaching does not fully ensure that their written skills are developed enough. The use of a correct technical vocabulary is encouraged by teachers and results in good verbal contributions, particularly by higher attaining pupils.
99. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, it is also good, but occasionally lacks rigour and inspiration. Particularly good are the planning and provision of appropriate resources, subject knowledge and the usually high levels of expectation and challenge. Teaching is best where pupils are expected to think for themselves and good questioning reinforces learning. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, does not give an accurate analysis of achievement, and teachers and pupils do not understand priorities for improvement clearly enough. National Curriculum levels are not used enough and pupils lack good understanding of their standard and rate of progress.
100. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good. Achievement of objectives for the subject is well evaluated. Teaching is not monitored enough to ensure that good practice is shared. However, the experienced and united team of teachers has ensured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and is now well set to restore the high examination standards of previous years.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils know what is expected of them and work hard to achieve well.
- Management plans and assesses well, although National Curriculum levels are insufficiently used in Years 7 to 9.
- Competent pupils do not know how to achieve higher levels in individual lessons.

Commentary

101. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with broadly average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 9 in 2003, the vast majority were assessed by staff to be, overall, at the standards expected nationally. Standards seen during the inspection indicate that this assessment was correct. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, results were average. This was an improvement on the 2002 result when standards were below average. Standards seen during the inspection were average at all ages. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 were achieving well; achievement in Years 10 and 11 was satisfactory.
102. Teaching is good in all year groups. None is less than satisfactory and some is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons meticulously from the departmental scheme of work, which assures a consistent delivery. High expectations of hard work from all pupils set the tone for purposeful teaching that helps pupils to understand the significance of primary and secondary evidence. However, the most competent pupils are not always aware of how they can reach the next level to be attained in some lessons. All teachers inspire good attitudes in pupils, who behave well. Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject lay a sound basis for study for the rest of their school career. Teachers vary activities to reflect the

nature of the topic and skilfully use a wide range of resources to enable most pupils to work to their highest levels. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils used the local street to obtain evidence at first hand and to observe features of Victorian architecture. Display of statistical data was used well to show changes in political parties in the 1920s and 1930s.

103. The department is well led and managed and staff form a close-knit team. Assessment is regular and helps to shape future teaching to meet well the needs of all girls and boys from differing social and ethnic backgrounds, including those with special educational needs. However, there is as yet no portfolio of examples of work marked to National Curriculum levels to ensure consistency across the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and standards have been maintained.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE examinations are well above average and pupils achieve well.
- An outstanding contribution is made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Marking and assessment, especially in Years 7 to 9, are not effective enough.

Commentary

104. GCSE examination results for both the full course, taken as an option, and the short course taken by most pupils, were well above average in 2003. Results for the short course improved significantly in 2003.
105. In all years, girls and boys from all ethnic and social backgrounds achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make effective progress and achieve well because work is adapted to their needs. All pupils know that their opinion is valued. Standards in Year 9 are just above national expectations. Pupils have a good knowledge of the origins of religious belief and an introduction to six world faiths. They are articulate in discussion and much of their written work is neat and well presented. They develop a good understanding of religious symbolism and are able to compare and contrast different beliefs and practices. Standards in Year 11 are above average. All pupils follow the course leading to the short course GCSE examination and appreciate the opportunity to take the examination. They are confident in learning about religious teaching and in applying what they have learned to modern controversial issues, such as the use of genetically modified crops or the arguments for and against euthanasia.
106. Teaching and learning are good. The energy and expertise of subject specialists motivates the pupils. Teachers have high expectations, very good class control and the pupils respond well by working hard. Non-specialist teachers are very well supported with learning resources and are enthusiastic. The teachers are concerned with pupils' personal, as well as academic, development; this shines through all the work of the department. Pupils trust their teachers and are willing to engage in serious discussion and to offer their views. Lessons are interesting, challenging and varied. Most pupils enjoy their work and achieve well. However, marking is of inconsistent quality and some pupils, particularly those in Years 7 to 9, do not know their current standards. Assessment data are not used well enough in setting targets for improvement.
107. Leadership and management are good. The head of department leads a talented and effective team. The teachers share the same vision and ensure that their pupils achieve as well as they can. Regular monitoring of lessons by the head of department and very good resource materials ensure that all pupils have the same opportunity to do well. The department has improved markedly since the last inspection.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge with which to teach their subjects.
- Most pupils are interested and enthusiastic.
- Relationships are very good.
- The planning of lessons does not always take enough account of some pupils' differing needs.
- The organisation and layout of pupils' design folders are not good enough.
- A systematic approach to the use of computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacture (CAM) is lacking.

Commentary

108. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is below average. By the end of Year 9, their work is at the standard expected nationally. Progress is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and pupils achieve the standards that they should. They are able to respond confidently to a design brief, generate ideas and analyse solutions competently. However, their rate of progress in completing projects is hindered by a lack of planning of design proposals and their underdeveloped graphical skills. Their experience of using CAD and CAM is insufficient and the quality of finished products in textiles and resistant materials is adversely affected. The range of materials, components and fittings that pupils use is sometimes not extensive enough to provide the most competent pupils with extended challenge.
109. Standards by the end of Year 11 are average and pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Overall, across the different subjects, average GCSE examination standards are reached. Girls and boys attain similar standards, although girls manage coursework more effectively. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a secure grasp of design principles and are able to apply design criteria boldly to new situations. However, they do not research enough through the Internet, and depend too much on cut-outs from catalogues. Graphical presentation lacks enough technical information to ensure pupils get full marks. Pupils' skills in use of CAD are underdeveloped, and standards of construction and finish in resistant materials are too low. Pupils have insufficient experience of using a wide enough range of modern materials.
110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is consistently good in food technology. In general, teachers manage pupils well. However, the deployment of immature Years 7 and 8 boys in practical areas is not always planned well enough, and their rate of progress suffers. A hardworking team of staff have secure specialist knowledge. However, methods and approaches do not always fully challenge and inspire pupils enough, or make full use of new accommodation.
111. Leadership and management are good. There is clear vision and a strong sense of direction. Protracted staffing difficulties have been well managed. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and staff performance in general. Risk assessments are not fully incorporated into units of work and the planning of lessons. The means of evaluating planned improvement are not rigorous enough. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There is good, new accommodation which now allows the curriculum to be taught effectively and pupils respond well to the much improved learning environment.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

112. The focus was on art and design and music.

113. Two drama lessons were seen, in Year 9 and Year 11. Year 9 pupils did not achieve as well as they could because of their lack of interest and motivation. Despite the teacher's detailed planning and high expectations, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. Several girls did not want to work in groups with boys. Pupils' understanding and use of dramatic conventions are weak. Their achievement over time is unsatisfactory because they only study drama for one lesson every other week. As a result, too much time is spent revising work that has been forgotten from previous lessons. The school has plans to provide more timetabled time for the subject from next September.
114. Drama is a popular option in Years 10 and 11. GCSE examination results in 2003 were below average, but all pupils gained a graded result. Year 11 pupils are achieving well and current standards are average. Good teaching in the lesson seen enabled pupils to develop their skills of acting and self-evaluation well. The subject is well led and managed. The head of department has introduced an effective system of assessment for Years 7 to 9 and pupils are now more aware of what they need to achieve and how well they are doing. However, their achievement is restricted by poor accommodation, especially the lack of blackout and very poor acoustics in both drama rooms.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teaching does not challenge pupils and expectations are low.
- Current assessment procedures do not show pupils how to improve their skills.
- Weaknesses in the curriculum, accommodation and resources impact adversely on pupils' capacity to learn effectively.
- Pupils' experience of art and design is extended well through visits to national art collections.

Commentary

115. GCSE results are below the national average.
116. Standards in Year 9 are below national expectations. This represents unsatisfactory achievement for many pupils, including those with special educational needs, in relation to their standards when they join the school in Year 7. Girls achieve better than boys. Pupils of all abilities have inadequate observational drawing and painting skills, their sketchbooks rarely record a sufficient range of images and their knowledge and understanding of other artists' work are weak.
117. Standards in Year 11 are below average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement over the course in Years 10 and 11 for many pupils, not excluding those with special educational needs. More competent pupils achieve proportionately better than others, and girls continue to outperform boys. There is no difference between the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. However, achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Some pupils produce imaginative work from careful research of chosen artists, but most show insufficient quality and precision in completed work across a restricted range of media. Few pupils have a secure understanding of artists' styles. Pupils do not evaluate the quality of their own and others' work well enough.
118. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Pupils make inadequate progress because teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers offer little challenge because they do not adapt work well enough to meet pupils' needs. Time allotted to work is tight and does

not progress learning well enough. Teachers rarely ask incisive questions to check pupils' understanding. Pupils' creative effort is restricted by the absence of both planned opportunities for evaluation of art and the poor range of resources provided. Pupils are unclear how they might improve their work because assessment procedures lack rigour and clarity. Inaccuracies in pupils' writing are uncorrected. Homework is rarely used to consolidate class work enough in Years 7 to 9.

119. Leadership and management are poor. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The poor accommodation does not stimulate pupils to achieve well, but a new expressive arts block is under construction. Pupils' work is poorly stored and is not displayed and celebrated enough around the school. The curriculum provides insufficient work from different periods and cultures. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is poorly managed. ICT provision is unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in teaching are not identified from monitoring. However, visits to art galleries enhance pupils' experience of the subject well.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 because teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' musical capabilities.
- Year 10 pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
- There is insufficient challenge for more competent pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- The quality of accommodation and resources restricts what can be taught.

Commentary

120. Teachers' assessments of Year 9 pupils' work in 2003 indicate attainment to be significantly above national expectations, with girls attaining higher than boys. However, this assessment was over generous, and acknowledged to be so by the department. Current staffing problems mean that for most pupils, by Year 9, their attainment is below that expected nationally and they are not achieving well enough, irrespective of their ethnic background. For pupils, including some with special educational needs, whose lessons have not been affected by staff absence, standards are average and they are achieving satisfactorily.
121. Pupils' standards in Year 11 are below average. However, pupils are achieving well enough and they have a good understanding of chords and melodic structure, but they struggle to develop their pieces effectively and to use musical language correctly. Year 10 pupils' standards are above average. Their achievement is good and reflects teaching of good quality. More competent pupils know how to sequence chords and how to use harmonies adventurously. Pupils' written work is good and shows awareness of the musical styles which have influenced their compositions. Too few candidates took the GCSE examination in 2003 for reliable national comparisons to be made. However, over half the candidates attained grades A* to C. This was a considerable improvement on the results of 2002.
122. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, but in Years 10 and 11 it is good. Teaching and learning for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because of the high proportion of classes where lessons are taught by temporary staff. Normal planning is suspended in favour of copying and video watching. On occasions, pupils do not see value in this work and their attitudes and behaviour deteriorate. In these lessons, competent pupils in Years 7 to 9 receive insufficient challenge and underachieve. Cramped accommodation often restricts what can be taught. Otherwise, teachers recognise pupils' abilities and challenge them well. Pupils use ICT notation and sequencing programs well to develop their compositions. However, the poor

quality of keyboards restricts other aspects of composing. Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to do well. Working relationships are strong and pupils support each other well in ensembles.

123. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. New assessment procedures are being refined and used. These are not yet shared enough with pupils so that they know how to improve their work. Schemes of work and other documentation are not updated. There is a clear understanding of departmental priorities, as shown in the development plan, but progress is hampered by outside factors such as staffing difficulties. Despite this, ensembles meet regularly and pupils have good opportunities to perform regularly in musicals and concerts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment information to track individual pupils' progress or to monitor the effectiveness of the work of the department.

Commentary

124. By the end of Year 9, pupils' standards are at the level expected nationally. However, teachers' assessments of Year 9 pupils' standards in 2002 did not reflect this and were inaccurate. Standards of work currently seen in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations and, when set against the below average attainment of most pupils on entry to the school, this represents good achievement. By Year 11, average standards are well sustained. In both the compulsory physical education classes and the GCSE examination classes, most pupils are making satisfactory progress. As many begin their examination course in Year 10 with below average standards, they achieve well by the end of Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others. There is no difference in pupils' performance consequent on their ethnic backgrounds.
125. There are two key factors that influence these standards. First, the quality of teaching, and consequently of learning, is consistently good. The strengths of the teachers lie in their good command of their subject and their skills in planning, devising and managing well activities designed to promote improvement. This ensures that all pupils know what to do in order to improve. However, there is further need for all teachers to assess how successful pupils are and subsequently set more challenging targets to assist progress. Second, the positive attitudes of most pupils make a significant contribution to their success. They attend well, work eagerly and the behaviour of most is of a high standard.
126. The head of department leads and manages the subject well and has encountered and overcome significant difficulties of staffing and long-term absence. The time and energy that have had to be given to managing this situation over many years have hampered the development of the subject. Consequently, improvement in standards and teaching has been no more than satisfactory since 1998. Assessment procedures are properly in place, but insufficient use is currently made of the information available to focus the work of teachers and pupils to ensure that pupils make better progress. Some progress has been made, but arrangements do not yet track pupils' progress well enough. In addition, and of equal importance, is the need to increase the use of all performance data in measuring the overall effectiveness of the work of the department.

127. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. Despite difficulties in staffing, the teaching has improved. Staffing levels have been improved and a team approach established. These factors have ensured that the department is now well placed to ensure further improvement in standards.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

128. The focus was on business, but the vocational GCSE courses in health and social care and a work-related course were sampled. The vocational courses are supported by lessons in key skills, and a lesson in key skills was seen in which pupils satisfactorily developed their skills in presenting their work and research with use of ICT.

129. Two lessons were seen in the vocational GCSE course in health and social care. The teaching and learning in both were very good. The teaching was very well adapted to pupils' needs. This enabled most pupils to discuss sensitive issues in a mature and thoughtful manner and to write considered, detailed pieces containing good examples to support their point of view. Pupils' attitudes to the course were very good and they achieved very well in the lessons seen. In the GNVQ intermediate level health and social care examination in 2003, 11 of the 22 candidates attained distinction or merit results; all at least passed. At foundation level, two of the five candidates gained merits; the remainder passed the examination.

130. One lesson was seen in the work-related programme followed by a small group of Year 11 pupils for whom the school makes a special arrangement for work experience twice a week. In the lesson seen, the teaching and learning were good and the pupils learned how to present and compose a formal letter. Their attitudes to the work were positive. This course showed well the school's concern to meet the needs of all pupils by adapting educational provision effectively to meet the needs of individuals.

Business

Provision in business is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- Feedback on pupils' oral and written work is good.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to work, but there is, at times, a lack of involvement of pupils in their learning.
- Individual pupils do not receive subject-specific targets beyond predicted grades.

Commentary

131. Standards are average. GCSE examination results are broadly average, but few boys gain higher grades. Girls are more effective at presenting, analysing and evaluating work. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds have a sound understanding of business concepts and apply them with reasonable accuracy. The work seen in the applied GCSE business course, which has not yet reached its first examination, is in line with the standards expected of Level 2 courses. Standards are currently higher in this course than in the regular GCSE business course. In Year 11, where the gender balance is more equal, the performance of boys is similar to that of girls. In 2003, the final year of the part one GNVQ, all 16 pupils at least passed the examination and four gained merits. In the regular GCSE course all pupils gained a grade and one in three gained grade A* to C, a result below the national average.

132. Achievement in both courses is satisfactory. In the regular GCSE examination course, more competent pupils are achieving satisfactorily; less competent pupils are achieving less well. In the lesson observed, pupils' attitudes lacked commitment, despite the best efforts of the teacher. Support for pupils with special educational needs is effective and enables them to

achieve at a similar rate to others. Pupils on the applied GCSE business course in both years had greater commitment. The work seen indicated better application and presentation. Achievement overall is satisfactory for both boys and girls.

133. The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good. Teachers have a good command of their subject, and plan well for both courses. Good planning of lessons engages the pupils and much encouragement is given through effective feedback during the lesson. This is particularly evident in the applied GCSE course. Control is sound. Teachers ensure that the least co-operative pupils achieve at least a basic level of productivity. In the larger groups some boys are poorly motivated. Teachers use a variety of methods, but sometimes lessons are over-directed and give insufficient opportunity for pupils to contribute. Much use is made of worksheets, some of which lack challenge for the more competent pupils. Assessment processes enable teachers to guide pupils in their work and advise them on how to improve. Although teachers do not set subject-specific targets, pupils are aware of the grade they are expected to achieve.
134. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Business education is within the vocational faculty and lacks a specific leader to focus development in the subject. The faculty is evaluating the relative benefits of offering both the regular GCSE and applied business courses. The accommodation is adequate. Resources meet the needs of students and are effectively supplemented through the work of teachers who produce extensive notes. Courses and personnel have changed since the previous inspection, but standards have been maintained. Improvement has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

135. The school provides three lessons for all pupils each week in personal and social education (PSE). These lessons are intended to encompass some provision of citizenship. Nine lessons were seen. The three which had a citizenship focus are reported in the citizenship report below. The teaching and learning in the others was never less than satisfactory and mainly good. Pupils successfully gained knowledge and understanding of a wide range of important matters that contributed well to their personal development. Their attitudes and behaviour were good. One Year 11 lesson was part of a course in enterprise education and involved relaxation techniques that were presented by a visitor to the school. The pupils listened intently and maturely and responded very well to the experience provided.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole-school events open up a worthwhile world of experience to pupils.
- The subject is not taught sufficiently across the curriculum.
- Insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning takes place.
- Assessment to track pupils' progress in the subject is lacking.

Commentary

136. Standards are below those expected nationally for pupils of differing levels of competence and ethnic background, because the provision for the subject is inconsistent. Some subjects make little contribution – for example art and design, design and technology and science. Where citizenship is more established – for example in history, geography and religious education – there are good examples of pupils being taught knowledge and understanding relevant to the

subject. There is a more coherent programme of work in PSE. Some satisfactory written work was seen, but much work was missing. In the three PSE lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 which had specific citizenship content, standards were below average and pupils did not achieve well enough, partly because their attitudes and behaviour were so negative towards the subject matter.

137. Some whole-school events are well established and these support pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship effectively. Democracy day involves local and national figures who come into the school to give the process reality. However, the school council and other councils which could give pupils personal responsibility and an active role in decision making within the school are moribund; pupils express little interest or confidence in them. Little contact is made with the Broxtowe Youth Council as part of pupils' democratic experience. Consequently, the National Curriculum expectation of pupils' involvement and responsible action is unsatisfactory.
138. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In the three lessons seen as part of the PSE programme, the teaching of two was unsatisfactory and another was very poor. The teaching showed little interest or commitment to the subject and the pupils, especially some boys, unsurprisingly did not behave well enough. Pupils' performance and achievement are not assessed well enough. However, in some subjects there are assessed tasks, but this practice is not consistent through the school and, consequently, teaching is not well enough focused on areas that should be improved.
139. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no apparent monitoring of provision. Lines of delegation are diffuse; some heads of department and teachers are unclear to whom they are responsible for delivering citizenship education. Overall, provision lacks coherent organisation and management.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

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
Art and design	13	77	90	0	42	22	39
Biology	11	55	82	0	33	15	33
Drama	5	100	95	60	38	44	39

Economics	13	62	86	8	42	20	37
General studies	21	62	79	0	26	15	30

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	11	100	96	18	49	67	85
Biology	14	86	92	14	36	56	74
Business studies	9	89	96	22	33	67	77
Business AVCE	7	87	87	0	17	53	60
Chemistry	13	92	94	23	46	74	81
Communication studies	25	96	98	12	37	64	81
English language	23	100	98	13	37	70	80
English literature	14	100	99	29	44	81	84
General studies	48	77	90	15	29	50	69
Geography	26	96	97	31	41	72	81
Health and social care AVCE	6	100	90	0	16	60	63
History	9	100	97	0	41	67	81
Information and communication technology (ICT) AVCE	11	91	84	0	25	53	64
Mathematics	8	100	93	38	52	83	85
Physics	6	100	93	17	43	77	79
Physical education	8	100	95	13	30	63	73

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well and standards are improving; A-level results in English literature in 2003 were very good.
- Good teaching and students' very positive attitudes enable them to learn well.
- The evaluation of courses is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

140. The school offers courses in AS and A-level English literature and a joint English literature and language course. A-level results in English literature were in line with the national average in 2002. They were well below average in the joint course. Results improved significantly in 2003,

when half of the 14 students gained the highest grades in English literature. In the joint English literature and language course, 2003 results are likely to be close to the national average.

141. Year 13 students are building well on their AS results in which all gained at least grade D. Current standards are average and students are achieving well. Most students structure essays well and make good reference to the text to back up the points they make. English literature students have a good understanding of key themes and biblical allusions in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. However, few have yet developed confident, personal responses to texts. Students on the English literature and language course are beginning to analyse texts in good detail, but only the most competent students regularly use specialist terminology with precision.
142. Year 12 students are also achieving well and making good progress from their work in Year 11. English literature students are developing their understanding of ways in which Shakespeare creates character in *Othello*. The most competent students make mature responses to challenging questions, but the less competent are still reliant on the teacher when analysing the text.
143. The quality of teaching is good and enables students to learn well. Teachers' very good knowledge of texts is a strong feature in most lessons. They often use this well to ask incisive questions that help students to develop their understanding. However, they do not always give students enough time to answer and sometimes displace students' emerging ideas with their own as a result. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of resources and teaching methods that interest and motivate students. For example, Year 12 students recorded extracts of radio programmes of their choice and analysed the language. Further analysis of a transcript provided by the teacher prepared them well for the production of a radio advertisement of their own. Teachers often provide very good support for students to improve their work through individual tutorials. However, they do not all refer sufficiently to assessment objectives when marking students' essays. In addition to good teaching, students' very positive attitudes and good relationships with teachers enable them to achieve well.
144. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Very good teamwork has enabled teachers to deal effectively with lengthy staff absences caused by illness. However, the head of department also leads the media studies course and responsibilities for managing sixth-form English courses are not clearly allocated. The use of data to evaluate the success of courses and students' overall achievement is not rigorous enough to identify priorities for improvement. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

145. Students have good language and literacy skills, which enable them to study the subjects of their choice successfully. Their written work is of a good standard in most subjects. Many well-organised folders reveal good note-taking skills and an ability to write at length. Students speak articulately in class discussions and listen carefully to each other's contributions. Most subjects provide good opportunities for them to use and develop their skills. Many students take the opportunity to gain the key skills qualification in communication at Level 3 and achieve good standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between students and teachers are good.
- The behaviour and attitudes of students are good.
- Teachers have the necessary subject knowledge and skills to provide effective support for

- students.
- The use of ICT to enhance learning is underdeveloped.
- Lack of skills in using algebra is holding back students' achievement, particularly that of the less competent students.

Commentary

146. Standards in A-level mathematics have improved since the last inspection when results were well below the national average. Results were close to the national average in 2002 and 2003, when all students passed the examination. AS results in 2002 were in line with national expectations. In 2003, AS results in pure mathematics were below those predicted because of staff absence at a critical time.
147. Students' attainment on entry to AS and A-level courses is below average. Current standards of work are in line with the national average in both Years 12 and 13 and students are achieving well enough, given their starting points and irrespective of their social or ethnic backgrounds. However, their skills in using algebra are below average and this prevents them from achieving higher standards. In both Years 12 and 13, some students can quickly see solutions to problems; others make elementary algebraic or arithmetical errors. Students in Year 12 are more confident than those in Year 13, but all are interested in their studies. Their positive attitudes help them to make satisfactory progress. The course structure gives students a good choice of options leading to their final examinations. No mechanics or statistics lessons were being taught during the inspection. However, scrutiny of students' work indicates that they are making satisfactory progress in these areas.
148. The department provides opportunities for students to re-sit their GCSE, if necessary. In 2003, more than half of these students attained grade C in the GCSE examination. Teaching and learning in the lesson seen were good.
149. The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their expertise is well matched to the content of the courses that they teach. They give additional lessons and individual tutorials that help students to learn more effectively. Relationships are good, and the students appreciate the extra help that teachers provide.
150. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers work collaboratively to manage and lead improvements in different aspects of subject provision. This is a satisfactory arrangement, although good practice is not always shared well enough. There is little evidence of students using ICT to enhance their understanding of mathematics. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

151. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory and enable students to make the progress they should from use of number. Some good practice was seen during the inspection. For example, in ICT students designed comprehensive spreadsheets, including a good range of calculations and functions. Electronics students used very good estimating skills in designing circuits and a high degree of accuracy in various methods of calculation, including some beyond the demands of the syllabus. In several subjects – for example geography and physics – students use advanced statistical techniques effectively.

SCIENCE

152. The focus was on biology. Chemistry, physics and GCSE double science were sampled. In 2002, AS and A-level examination results in physics were average; they improved in 2003. One Year 12 physics lesson was observed where the teaching and learning were very good. Standards were above average for the AS course and students achieved well. Students'

thinking skills were well above GCSE examination standard in the difficult topic of quantum mechanics. AS and A-level examination results in chemistry were below average in 2002 but were average in 2003. One Year 13 chemistry lesson was observed. The teaching and learning were good and satisfactory standards were achieved. Students were skilled in learning independently. One lesson for students retaking the GCSE double science examination was observed. The teaching was good and students improved their skills in investigation, but the rate of attendance was poor. In 2003, half the students attained grades CC, when retaking the GCSE double science examination.

Biology

Provision in biology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in AS and A-level biology; achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Students in Year 13 have an unsatisfactory attitude to learning. Attitudes are generally better in Year 12.
- Teachers have good specialist knowledge but do not involve students well enough in theoretical work.
- There is not enough time to monitor and evaluate the department's work effectively, because the co-ordinator has other extensive responsibilities in the science department.
- Students do not receive enough individual support and guidance from teachers.

Commentary

153. Standards in AS and A-level biology are well below average. In 2002, A-level results were well below average. In 2003, they improved. Results have declined from the average standards reached from 1998 to 2001. Few students gain grades A or B. This is partly because students' attainment on entry to Year 12 is relatively low for an advanced course. However, their achievement is unsatisfactory. Most students with GCSE examination grades of BB or above on entry in 2002 failed to achieve an AS grade at all. In the 2003 AS examination, most gained grade E at best. There is no significant difference in performance as a result of students' social or ethnic backgrounds.
154. Current standards of work in Year 13 are well below average and students' achievement continues to be unsatisfactory. Students do not prepare well enough for lessons and are generally passive. They do not have the skills or confidence to give oral presentations and explanations, or use scientific vocabulary with any fluency. More boys than girls study biology, but overall their achievement is similar. In the current Year 12, students' attainment on entry was marginally higher than last year. Their achievement is generally satisfactory for what might reasonably be expected after half a term on the course. Students' attitude to the work is better than that in Year 13. For example, most Year 12 students prepared well for a lesson about the division of cells.
155. Teaching and learning in Year 12 are satisfactory. Teaching in Year 13 is satisfactory overall, but learning and achievement are unsatisfactory. This is, in part, because many students, especially boys, have negative attitudes to the subject. Also, teachers do not always plan well enough for active, independent and challenging learning in theory lessons. Teachers have good specialist knowledge but do not involve students enough in class discussions. Relationships between teachers and students are good, but the students need more individual support and guidance than they receive.
156. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is not enough time, however, to evaluate all the work of the department, especially teaching, support and guidance, because the co-ordinator also has considerable responsibilities in Years 10 and 11. Senior management has

not satisfactorily resolved the need for monitoring and evaluation of subject performance. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards have gone down.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is popular and students from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
- Leadership is good, and there is a focus on continuous improvement.
- More talented students are not encouraged to experiment independently.
- Good assessment procedures help students to improve their performance.

Commentary

157. The attainment of students on entry to the AVCE single award course in ICT is below average overall. During the two years of the course, they make up ground and achieve well. Results have fluctuated in recent years, but they are usually close to average. The work seen during the inspection was of a similar standard. Although the underlying trend in performance shows improvement, talented students could achieve better standards.
158. Teaching and learning are good. In the main, there is a purposeful atmosphere and students concentrate well. Teachers plan lessons well, with a clear structure. They monitor individuals' progress carefully. They make good use of targeted and probing questions, but rely too much on explaining, and give students insufficient opportunities to discuss in pairs or groups. Most students respond well to opportunities for independent enquiry and keep good quality notes, but talented students in particular do not have enough opportunity to explore and experiment with a wide range of software. Teachers' use of homework is satisfactory but they do not set sufficiently challenging tasks for gifted and talented students. Teachers use assessment well to enhance students' learning and to give individuals regular guidance on their progress, with clear indications of what they need to do to reach higher grades.
159. The AVCE course is well led and managed by an assistant headteacher who has many other responsibilities. There is a focus on continuous improvement. Performance data are used well to evaluate the course's success and to identify possible improvements. Teamwork and corporate planning are good. There are good opportunities for further professional development, but monitoring of staff is still rudimentary. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Very few students studied computing to A-level at the time of the last inspection but, since its introduction, the AVCE course has grown in popularity to become the second most popular subject choice in Year 13.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

160. Although ICT is no longer taught as a key skill in the sixth form, students have good opportunities to practise and extend their skills in it in other subjects. Overall, they are competent enough to apply ICT skills in their subject courses well enough and have satisfactory access to equipment. For example, their work seen in electronics was particularly impressive. Most teachers are skilled and confident in the use of ICT within their subjects.

HUMANITIES

161. The focus was on geography and history, but psychology and religious education were sampled. Two psychology lessons were seen in which the teaching was good in one and very good in the other. The students were very interested and greatly enjoyed the challenging

learning experiences provided. Religious education is being taught for the first time this year. One Year 12 lesson was seen. Challenging teaching and excellent student attitudes to independent research resulted in very good learning and achievement.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 12 and students are achieving well.
- Year 13 students lack motivation and their achievement is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

162. In 2002, A-level and AS results were below average. In 2003, although the percentage of students gaining grades A or B was still below the national average, the few candidates involved all passed the examination. Once committed to their courses, nearly all students complete them. There is no significant difference in standards between students from different social or ethnic backgrounds.
163. In Year 12, standards are above average and students are achieving well. Students show a good knowledge of geographical processes and have the vocabulary and understanding to explain complex ideas such as the long profile of a river. They use the examples of fieldwork well to explain theoretical work. Students' written skills are well developed and they are proficient in using formulae and statistical methods. They have positive attitudes and are keen to contribute in lessons. These students are becoming active geographers, not passive learners of the subject.
164. Current standards in Year 13 are below average. Most of these students gained A or B grades in the GCSE examination and, therefore, their current achievement is unsatisfactory. They have less positive attitudes than the Year 12 students. Students are not motivated enough and appear to have little enthusiasm for the subject. They have not developed independence of thought or work. Despite having a good start from lessons, these students have gaps in their knowledge, and struggle with the interpretation of data. For example some boys – surprisingly at this stage in their course – needed the concept of 'ranking' explaining to them. Students in this group lack general geographical knowledge and are not learning to interpret a variety of sources of evidence well enough for them to make the progress that they could.
165. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but Year 13 students' attitudes prevent a better quality of provision. In some lessons they are very good. Teachers plan lessons well, but sometimes students are not required to do enough. There is plenty of humour and relationships are good, but not all lessons have the same vigour. In some, teachers provide information and data that have not been updated to take account of the rapidly changing situation in the cases being studied. Other lessons are very challenging and involve students in a variety of tasks that require their input. This was seen in a very good Year 12 lesson in which the teacher's explanation of complex processes was very clear, enabling students to develop ideas further and then give good verbal explanations.
166. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory, but there is insufficient monitoring to ensure more uniformly good teaching and learning. Schemes of work and development plans are of good quality and teachers work well together as a team.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and students are inspired to achieve well.
- Standards are below average.

Commentary

167. A-level results in 2002 were below the national average. They were lower in 2003. Results in AS level examinations were also below average in 2002. Despite these standards, students achieve well in Years 12 and 13. This is because there is open access to the subject and students begin the subject in Year 12, in some cases not having studied it since Year 9. Students have a wide variety of prior attainment. Many students gain few A* to C grades in GCSE examinations. The subject is popular. Groups are large in Year 12 and most students continue into the second year of study.
168. Standards seen were below average. However, students are working hard and achieving well, given their standards and subject knowledge on entry to the courses. More competent students write essays that make valid inferences and draw thoughtful conclusions from sources of evidence. Most do not reach this standard, but are still sound in use of fact and deduction. These students' writing is often expressive, but over-elaborate in narrative, and lacks analysis.
169. Teaching is good and enables students to learn well. Good interpersonal relationships result in ready and enthusiastic discussions between teachers and students. Teachers use resources well. These range from textbooks of good quality to the use of highly technological methods – for example the use of iconographic evidence about attitudes to Jews in Spain during the Inquisition. Teachers deal well with the wide range of students' attainment in classes by ensuring that all receive individual attention and support when necessary. All teachers are very enthusiastic and inspire students to work hard, to the limit of their abilities, at topics that require close study of detailed evidence. They teach note-making skills well. Students' notes then provide them with a wealth of information for their essays. An example of this was seen in the meticulous work on the Acts of Supremacy in the 16th century.
170. Leadership of the subject is good. The head of department leads by example and good management ensures that teachers work well as a team. Students appreciate the high level of subject knowledge of teachers and pay tribute to the care and support they receive at all times.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in electronics.
- There is a very good range of curricular opportunities and the team of specialist teachers is developing courses well.
- Students confidently apply design criteria to complex design problems.
- Teachers do not require students to use ICT enough.

Commentary

171. Three AS and A-level courses were inspected: food technology; product design, systems and control; and electronics.

172. Results in the 2002 AS examinations were good and those in 2003 were of a similar standard. A-level results in 2002 and 2003 were good, and very good results were gained in electronics.
173. The current standard of work in Years 12 and 13 is above average and girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds are achieving well overall. Achievement is very good in electronics in both years. In lessons, students are keen to apply their knowledge and skills acquired in earlier work to demanding design briefs. They are confident in their analysis of design solutions; they identify technical specifications in good detail. Their standards of communication are secure and improving. Students make increasing use of a range of software to analyse and test systems and to manufacture products. They apply design methodology to product analysis very well. All students display a good understanding of consumer issues and values. However, they do not have enough experience of different materials, such as the use of 'smart materials', to extend their technological capability as well as they could.
174. Overall teaching is good and enables students to learn well. It is often very good in electronics. Teachers plan units of work and lessons thoughtfully. They teach with appropriate pace and challenge. The team of talented teachers has high expectations and, as a result, students pay good attention to detail when making products and evaluating their work. Teachers use assessment well to inform students how well they are doing and to plan future work. The modern accommodation is of high quality. Good equipment is providing a very good basis for course development and improvement of standards. However, teachers do not encourage students to use ICT enough to promote more exploration and innovation. Successful enrolment to the current Year 12 courses is resulting in lively teaching groups. Taken as a whole, students in both years are well motivated, take responsibility for their own work and display pride in their products. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Teachers provide a high quality of guidance and support, enabling students to persevere when faced with challenges.
175. Leadership and management are very good and ensure very good development of courses. The head of department leads a knowledgeable team of teachers who are working hard together to prepare a bid for specialist technology school status. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Significant progress has been achieved in the development of courses and the improvement of standards.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

176. The focus was on art and design. Music, media studies, photography and theatre studies were sampled.
177. In music, standards of students' work seen in Year 12 were average. There are no students studying music in Year 13. Two lessons were observed in which the teaching was very good. The teachers' command and knowledge of the subject enabled students to understand musical structure and compare pieces of music to develop their analytical skills.
178. In media studies, two lessons were seen. The teaching was good in both. Standards seen were below average but teachers enabled students to think for themselves and use initiative in the completion of motivating tasks.
179. Two lessons were seen in photography. The quality of teaching was good. The teacher had secure understanding of the examination syllabus and enabled the students to learn effectively through focused assessment and well-devised individual target setting. Students benefited from excellent new facilities in this subject by using these effectively to enhance their work.
180. By contrast, accommodation and resources for drama and theatre studies are poor. Despite this, students achieve well in the subject. In a Year 12 lesson, very good teaching allowed

students to develop their devised improvisations very well. The teacher used her excellent knowledge of the subject to advise and support students professionally and sensitively, boosting their confidence and providing very clear guidance for improvement. Year 13 students understood how semiotics could help their analysis of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* because of the teacher's entertaining explanations and high expectations.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students have passed A-level examinations in the last three years.
- Teachers offer good levels of individual support based on secure understanding of examination requirements.
- Visits to art galleries enrich students' experience.
- Students are more secure in their practical skills than in their understanding of the artists and styles they study.
- Accommodation is poor and resources are inadequate.

Commentary

181. A-level results are average. At AS level they are below average.

182. Standards in Year 13 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement for all students, irrespective of social or ethnic background, in relation to their attainment in art and design on entry to the course. A minority of students achieves above average standards. In Year 12, students achieve average standards. Groups for art and design are usually small, but 15 students are currently studying the subject in Year 12. Students are competent in drawing, design and painting, and often develop imaginative final pieces from careful and systematic research. Their experience of a range of media is limited. Their depth of understanding of the artists and styles they study is often weak and few have secure evaluative skills.

183. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Students learn effectively because they work with a range of teachers who have secure specialist knowledge of the examination requirements, and provide them with good levels of individual support and advice. Students do not have opportunities to explore a wide range of artists or work in a wide range of media because teachers are limited by the availability of resources. Insufficient use is made of ICT to generate and modify images.

184. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, most notably in the numbers of students achieving higher grades. The poor state of accommodation, storage and display of students' work impacts adversely on the quality of students' experience of art and design. However, a new expressive arts block is under construction. The provision for visits to galleries in England and abroad considerably enriches students art and design education.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Many students from different social and ethnic backgrounds achieve well in the subject.
- All students have very mature and positive attitudes.
- The department lacks a dedicated classroom for the teaching of theory.
- The tracking of individual student progress against predicted targets is not fully developed.

Commentary

185. A-level results in 2002 were close to the national average and were similar in 2003.
186. Current standards are average but there is a broad range of attainment in Year 13. Based on their attainment on entry to the course, most students are achieving well. In theory lessons, almost all students are confident in using specialist terminology to answer questions in class discussions. They also use this in their written work. Most students present their work well and use their ICT skills well in their personal physical fitness portfolios. In Year 12, students also had a broad range of attainment at the start of the course. Their achievement at this stage of the course is good. A particularly strong feature is the improving ability of most students to combine theoretical knowledge with practical applications.
187. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In some lessons it is very good. Almost all specialist teachers of physical education make a valuable contribution to the A-level course. All know the subject well and are able to pose or answer questions in class with confidence and clear understanding. This instils confidence in the students and they value the expertise available to them. Teachers are very skilled in providing pertinent examples drawn from the sporting world to illustrate the areas of study. This encourages all students to attempt to support their answers with similar examples from their own sporting experiences. This approach ensures that all students take an active part in their studies and, by so doing, increase their knowledge and deepen their understanding. In practical lessons, teachers devise tasks that require students to learn co-operatively in finding ways of checking the validity of theoretical concepts in a practical setting. The success of this approach stems from good teaching, combined with a most mature and positive attitude from the students. However, this style of working is restricted by the lack of a dedicated classroom for the subject. This restricts students' opportunity to research and learn from each other.
188. The subject is well led and managed and courses have gained in popularity in recent years. The department makes insufficient use of assessment data to determine the suitability of the courses for some students before they commence their studies. During the courses the progress of students is not tracked closely and regularly enough against predicted targets in order to ensure success. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The course has become well established and popular. The positive attitudes of the current students, along with the improved quality of teaching, indicate that the department has good capacity to move forward and improve standards further.

BUSINESS

Provision in business is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- Teachers assess students' work accurately and provide good feedback on performance.
- Teachers provide extensive resources to support both courses.
- Most students have positive attitudes to study.
- An inadequate range of teaching styles results in over-direction by teachers.

Commentary

189. Students who are taking the combined business and economics course attain average standards. However, few students are involved and national comparisons are unreliable. All students gained a pass grade in 2003 and one student gained grade A. Current standards seen during the inspection were average. Students show competence through a good range of written exercises but tend to make insufficient oral contributions in taught sessions. There is no significant difference in performance related to students' social or ethnic backgrounds.
190. A similarly small number of students on the AVCE course also gained pass grades in 2003. No higher grades were gained. Higher attainers analyse problems well and carry out competent evaluations. They consider business scenarios and draw realistic conclusions. Lower attainers rely more heavily on their teachers' guidance. Overall, the AVCE group has a similar reluctance to contribute to lessons without teachers' prompting.
191. Achievement is satisfactory. Entry requirements for the courses are in line with whole-school policy, although some discretion is exercised where reasons for a student's previous performance are well known. In general, students' attainment is broadly average on entry to the courses, and their achievement matches that average level. There are a few students on both courses who find the work challenging. However, given their starting points on entry to the courses, they achieve well.
192. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that students receive accurate teaching with good use of current examples from the business world. Students are encouraged to explore and make use of the local business environment to support their studies. Discussion with students shows that most are committed to the subject and have positive attitudes to work. However, the attendance of some Year 13 students at some lessons is below the level expected. Teachers provide good feedback to students about their performance; this ensures that students know what is required in order to achieve their potential. Teachers make good use of questions to test students' knowledge and understanding. They direct their questions to individual students and ensure that they maintain concentration. On occasions, teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and their desire to help students to succeed result in over-direction. Consequently, students become passive receivers of information and take insufficient responsibility for their learning.
193. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curricular decisions have not yet been made on the longer-term purpose and value of providing two similar courses. There is an effective team of teachers. Professional development is just adequately supported from the very limited budget. Accommodation and resources are adequate for the needs of the courses offered. Improvement has been satisfactory since the previous inspection.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

194. The AVCE course in health and social care was sampled. Most students achieve well in this course. Most commence their studies with below average levels of attainment in GCSE examinations and complete the course with at least average results at the advanced level. Two lessons were seen during the inspection. The teaching and learning were good in one and very good in the other. The few students had very positive attitudes to the subject and very good relationships with each other and with teachers and were achieving well.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

195. General studies was sampled. The course is compulsory for all students, although a few are unable to attend all lessons because of clashes with other subjects on their timetables. It broadens students' understanding of important issues and areas of knowledge about which they have little awareness at the start of the course. For example, Year 12 students developed an understanding of arguments for and against genetically modified foods. Year 13 students learned about the basic policies of different political parties in Britain. Teaching was

satisfactory in Year 12 and good in Year 13. In both lessons, students had positive attitudes and willingly shared their ideas in class and group discussions.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	4
How inclusive the school is		3
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		3
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
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	4	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	5	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	4
The leadership and management of the school		4
The governance of the school	4	5
The leadership of the headteacher		4
The leadership of other key staff	4	4
The effectiveness of management	4	5

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

