

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HANSON SCHOOL

Bradford

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107440

Headteacher: Mr A R Thorne

Lead inspector: J Jones

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

Inspection number: 259254

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

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

*Students in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at school.*

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 – 19
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1913
School address:	Sutton Avenue Swain House Road Bradford
	BD2 1JP
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	01274 776200
Fax number:	01274 776686
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Susan Williamson
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hanson School is much larger than the average comprehensive school. There are 1937 boys and girls, of whom more than 400 are in the sixth form. The school was one of the earliest technology colleges. It is also part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. About ten per cent of students come from ethnic minorities, mainly from families who came from the Indian subcontinent, and have been established in Britain for one or two generations. These students speak good English and do at least as well in examinations as other students. The socio-economic background of the students is broadly average in terms of free school meals, but the standards of students when they enter the school are below average overall. There are, however, a significant proportion of able students. There are 243 students identified as having special educational needs. This represents an above average proportion. Of these, 66 are supported by Statements of Special Educational Need. This represents an above average proportion.

There is a visually impaired unit for ten students, of whom two are totally blind. The school population is stable; most students who complete their compulsory education in the school have been there since the earliest date they could have entered. This is not Year 7 for all students, because until September 2000 the school took students in at the start of Year 9. Following reorganisation of education in Bradford, the school expanded to take in Years 7 and 8.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12460	J Jones	Lead inspector	
19743	A Taylor	Lay inspector	
18676	R Meakin	Team inspector	Mathematics
3943	D Innes	Team inspector	English, special educational needs
27050	V Blackburn	Team inspector	Science (sixth form)
22524	S Innes	Team inspector	Design and technology
31680	P Redican	Team inspector	Art
13734	H Davies	Team inspector	Geography, general studies
19915	P Hooton	Team inspector	Citizenship, history
28171	J Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
27665	O Lees	Team inspector	Music
22906	B Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
30072	J Skivington	Team inspector	Religious education, psychology
20729	J Berry	Team inspector	Chemistry, health and social care
4676	M Griffiths	Team inspector	Physical education
11044	J Hedge	Team inspector	English (sixth form)
30702	P Bowyer	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)
20380	N Pinkney	Team inspector	Science

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is **good** and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are good and they lead to good achievement. The school provides **good** value for money. The leadership is good. The headteacher and senior managers have successfully led the school through a period of great change, due to the reorganisation of secondary schools in Bradford. In September 2000 the school successfully absorbed an additional 900 students aged 11 and 12 and around 40 teachers. It is highly regarded in the community. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

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

- Students achieve well, particularly in Years 7 to 9, because teaching is good.
- Leadership is good and the reorganisation two years ago in which the school took in Years 7 and 8 for the first time has been very well managed.
- Assessment, although satisfactory, is not sufficiently fine-tuned to help teachers raise standards faster in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards are below average in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school gives its students a good foundation for the future and unusually wide opportunities for education beyond the conventional school curriculum.

### Changes since the previous inspection

Standards are rising and most of the issues raised then have been dealt with satisfactorily: the taught week is now longer, and there are better strategies for meeting the needs of boys, and for teaching literacy. Tutor time is usually used constructively although the 'Thought for the day' does not always meet requirements for a collective act of worship. The curriculum now includes greater opportunities for all students. The school still does not provide enough time for all students to cover the agreed syllabus for religious education.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	B
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	D	C	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

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

Achievement overall is good.

By the end of Year 9 achievement<sup>1</sup> is good and standards are average.

By the end of Year 11 achievement is satisfactory and standards are average.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are average by the age of 14, and remain average in all three subjects by the age of 16. Standards in ICT are below average. Although students use ICT well in all other subjects, most students have not been given enough tuition in basic ICT skills. For example, they use databases well in history but they do not know how to construct them. There are now separate ICT lessons for younger students but older ones still have not made up the lost ground.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** and enables students to learn well and show good achievement in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory achievement in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is satisfactory but is not used sufficiently to help focus the good teaching where it is most needed. The curriculum has many strengths. It includes a good range of subjects including practical ones related to the world of work. However, it is judged **unsatisfactory** because there is not enough time in Years 10 and 11 to meet fully the requirements of the lengthy locally agreed syllabus for religious education, and because the ICT curriculum does not enable students to build skills in some aspects of computer use.

Care and guidance are **very good**. Partnerships with parents and the community are **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**. Students' behaviour and attitudes to their work and school are **good**. Their personal development is **very good**. Their spiritual development is satisfactory, and their moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and share the school's ambitious aims. They are closely associated with decisions about management but are not sufficiently critical of the curriculum. Leadership by the headteacher, senior managers and other staff with responsibilities is **good**. Management is **good**.

## PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have **good** opinions of the school. They feel that the school gives their children a good education and provides a very good range of activities outside lessons. Most students like school.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to raise standards, the school should:

- Improve assessment, both in the main school and in the sixth form, by making marking more consistent and by using the information from assessment to help teachers focus their teaching more accurately on what students need to learn in order to improve.
- Provide more tuition in ICT skills beyond Year 7.
- Improve the numeracy course in the sixth form key skills course to provide science students with the mathematics essential to their courses.

and, fully to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide more time for religious education in Years 10 and 11. This was an issue at the time of the previous inspection.
- Ensure that the 'Thought for the day meets statutory requirements as an act of worship for all students.

## THE SIXTH FORM AT HANSON SCHOOL

Hanson School is a technology college with a much larger than average sixth form of 402 students.

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is **effective** and provides well for its students. Almost all students progress well and their achievement is good. Most teaching is at **least good**. Leadership is **very good** and management is **good**. The school has maintained the standards noted in the previous report while at the same time widening the opportunities available to students. The sixth form shows **good cost-effectiveness**.

#### The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Leadership is very good and the sixth form is managed well.
- The very good enhancement programme contributes significantly to students' personal development.
- There are excellent links with colleges and universities.
- Strategies to raise students' and parents' aspirations with regard to further and higher education are very effective.
- There are some current staffing problems in health and social care and psychology, which are affecting standards achieved.
- The provision for key skills in numeracy, particularly for science students, is a weakness.
- Centrally generated assessment information is not always used effectively by some subject departments. Regular updated training in its use would be beneficial, especially for new staff.
- Supportive relationships between teachers and students create a very good ethos for learning

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

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
<b>English, languages and communication</b>	<p>English literature at AS/A levels was the focus of the inspection. One lesson of media studies was observed in Year 12 where teaching and learning were <b>very good</b> and standards <b>average</b>. One lesson of English language was observed. Teaching was <b>good</b> and standards <b>average</b>.</p> <p>In English literature teaching and learning are <b>good</b> and students achieve <b>well</b>. Standards are <b>average</b>. Provision is <b>good</b>.</p> <p>French was the focused subject but two lessons of Spanish were also observed. <b>Good</b> teaching in Spanish is promoting <b>good</b> learning.</p> <p>There is <b>good</b> provision in French. <b>Good</b> challenging teaching leads to <b>good</b> learning. Achievement is <b>satisfactory</b>.</p>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<p>There is <b>good</b> provision in mathematics. Teaching and learning are <b>good</b>. Students' attitudes are <b>good</b>. Standards are <b>average</b> at A level but students achieve <b>well</b>. Provision for students to re-sit GCSE is <b>unsatisfactory</b>.</p>
<b>Science</b>	<p>The focus was on AS/A level chemistry and AVCE science. Biology and physics were also sampled. Results in 2002 in A level biology were very high in comparison to national averages and significantly better than other A-level subjects in the school. In the lesson observed in Year 12, teaching was <b>good</b> and learning and achievement was satisfactory. In physics in Year 12, standards were <b>below average</b> and achievement</p>



	unsatisfactory. In Year 13 standards are above average and students achieve well. There is <b>satisfactory</b> provision in Chemistry. Standards are <b>average</b> . <b>Good</b> teaching combined with positive student attitudes enables students to achieve <b>well</b> .
<b>Information and communication technology</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> provision. Standards are <b>below average</b> as a result of inadequate provision in the main school. Students achieve <b>well</b> in relation to their skill levels on entry to the sixth form. <b>Good</b> teaching leads to <b>effective</b> learning.
<b>Humanities</b>	Psychology was the focus of the inspection. Geography and history were sampled. In geography, teaching and learning were <b>good</b> . Standards are <b>above average</b> in history. Teaching and learning are <b>very good</b> . There is <b>good</b> achievement. There is <b>satisfactory</b> provision in psychology. Students achieve <b>satisfactorily</b> because of <b>satisfactory</b> teaching. A lack of specialist psychology teachers is a barrier to effective advice and feedback to raise standards.
<b>Engineering, technology and manufacturing</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> provision in music technology. Teaching, learning and achievement are <b>satisfactory</b> . Standards are <b>average</b> .
<b>Visual and performing arts and media</b>	Art and design, performing arts and media studies were inspected in full. <b>Satisfactory</b> provision in art and design. Standards in recent years have been well <b>below</b> average. They are currently <b>below average</b> . Staffing problems have been resolved and standards are beginning to rise. Teaching and learning are <b>satisfactory</b> . <b>Achievement is satisfactory</b> . <b>Good in performing arts. Achievement is good. Teaching and learning are very good</b> .
<b>Physical education</b>	There is <b>good</b> provision. Students are enthusiastic and achieve <b>well</b> .
<b>Health and social care</b>	There is <b>satisfactory</b> provision despite staffing problems. The curriculum very well organised. Standards are <b>average</b> . Teaching and learning are <b>satisfactory</b> .
<b>General education</b>	Provision in general studies is <b>good</b> . Teaching is <b>good</b> overall with <b>very good</b> teaching in Year 13. Standards in Year 13 are <b>well above average</b> .

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Support and guidance in subjects are **good**. There are **very good** induction arrangements for students entering the sixth form. Students are provided with **good** advice and guidance by the sixth form management team and by tutors. Regular individual reviews are held with students to make them aware of progress as well as dealing with any problems, which arise. Preparation for post-16 studies and employment is **good**, particularly the close links which have been established with a number of universities and colleges. The use of assessment data is variable across subjects. Centrally provided assessment data is not always effectively used by subjects to track progress and set targets for students.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership of the sixth form is reflective, self-critical and innovative and the very hard-working head of sixth form and his management team have a clear vision for its future development. There is a drive for improvement and a clear sense of direction. Performance is reviewed regularly and

students are involved in this evaluation. Leadership is **very good** and management **good**. Leadership and management are variable in subject departments but it is never less than satisfactory. It is **very good** in general studies, performing arts and physical education, and **good** in English literature and French.

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

Pupils are **highly satisfied** with the provision in the sixth form. They are particularly appreciative of the **very good support** they receive from subject teachers, their tutors and the sixth form management team. They consider that they are treated as young adults and staff listen and frequently act on their views. They value the **good teaching** they receive and enjoy being involved in the life of the school. They appreciate the **very good range** of extra-curricular activities and the opportunities provided to find out about further and higher education.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

##### Overall evaluation

By the end of Year 9 **standards are average** in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Overall, since students enter the school with standards that are below average overall, this is evidence of good achievement. Satisfactory achievement in Years 10 and 11 mean that standards, based on average point scores<sup>1</sup>, are broadly average by the end of Year 11.

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9.
- The average point score is rising steadily.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress in most lessons and their achievement is good.
- Standards are above average in design and technology, history and music.
- Standards in ICT are well below average.

##### Commentary

###### *Standards in tests and examinations*

1. Students enter the school with standards that are generally below average, and by the time they reach Year 9 their attainment in 2002 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science **is broadly average**. GCSE results are rising in line with the national trend and the average point score, which gives a measure of how all students performed, was average in 2002. However, the proportion of students getting the higher grades A\*-C was below average, and in spite of a substantial rise in the average point score in 2003, the proportion of students gaining higher grades did not rise – to the frustration of all concerned. Overall results, based on students' average point scores and therefore taking account of all students' grades, are **above the average** for schools with similar results at the end of Year 9.
2. **Good** teaching and provision generally over a number of years have established the design and technology department as a strength of the school. Results are consistently above average and the department is highly spoken of by students of all ages and their parents.

###### *Standards of work seen*

3. ICT is the weakest subject in Years 7 to 11 and this is now being tackled. For the last two years ICT has not been taught as a separate subject in Year 7. In addition, other subjects have agreed to provide different aspects of the curriculum. While this has made other subjects use computers more in their teaching than is seen in many schools, to the benefit of students, it has not provided the thorough grounding in ICT processes that they need. Students in Year 9 and above are still behind their counterparts nationally in terms of ICT skills.
4. Standards in history **are above average**, both by the end of Year 9 and, for those who chose to study it further, by the end of Year 11. In music, standards are **above average** by the end of Year 9. Standards of the current Year 11 music specialists are average. In most other subjects, students reach standards close to average at the end of Year 9 and again at the end of Year 11.

While girls generally do better than boys, the difference is not as marked as in some schools, and in art and design the gap is much narrower than usual.

## *Achievement*

5. In view of their generally below average standards when they start in Year 7, students do better than expected in their first three years and achieve well. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall, as, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, students maintain **satisfactory progress**, but do not make such striking gains as in the earlier years. However, achievement is good in all years in history and drama, and in design and technology it is very good. In spite of satisfactory teaching in ICT, and the wide use of computers in other subjects, students are still under-achieving up to the end of Year 11 because they have not had the benefit of direct tuition in previous years.
6. Students on the register of special educational needs make **good progress**, especially during Years 7 to 9. They achieve results that exceed expectation based upon assessment of their abilities when they enter the school. Visually impaired students also achieve well because they are very well supported and teachers are alert to their needs.
7. Students from ethnic minorities do as well as, or better than, the rest in class and in examinations.

## **Sixth form**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a significant upward trend in results in 2002 compared with 2001.
- Problems in staffing in psychology and health and social care are affecting potential results.
- There was considerable improvement in A level results in 2003 in English literature, French, chemistry, general studies and physics.
- Most students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and ability.
- Standards are below average in art and design, psychology and ICT.
- Standards in ICT are low on entry to the sixth form.

### **Commentary**

8. Standards at A level/AVCE levels in 2002, the last year for which there are national comparative figures, were overall in line with the national average. This compares with above average standards at the time of the last inspection. There is considerable variation in standards between subjects. At A level results were well above the national average in biology, history and sociology. They were above average in mathematics and some social sciences and average in general studies and other sciences. In chemistry, geography and ICT results were below average. Standards were well below the national average in art and design, English literature, physics and design and technology. At AS-level in 2002 standards overall were in line with the national average. At Intermediate level GNVQ the proportion of students achieving qualifications was above the national average. Standards in 2002 showed an upward trend compared to 2001 when they were overall below the national average.
9. In 2003, results improved considerably in English literature, French, chemistry, general studies and physics. They remained above average in mathematics and sociology. They remained average in AVCE science and health and social care, below average in ICT, music and physical education and well below in art and design. Standards fell in psychology mainly as a result of staffing problems.
10. From observations during the inspection current standards are average overall. Not all subjects were inspected. The variation between subjects is still a cause for concern for the school. Students are achieving standards well above average in general studies. They are above average in mathematics and performing arts. Average standards were observed in

English literature, French, chemistry, music technology, physical education, health and social care, and science. Standards are still below the national average in art and design, ICT and psychology. These judgements indicate a slight rise in standards overall in the period between 2002 and the time of the inspection. The progress of the majority of students is good.

### Achievement

- Students generally make good progress and assessment information indicates that almost all students achieve well compared to their prior attainment and ability. Standards in ICT are low on entry to the sixth form. No significant variation was observed in the performance of male or female students.

### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.1 (33.7)	33.3 (33)
Mathematics	33.6 (34.3)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	33.4 (32.1)	33.3 (33.1)

*There were 304 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	41.6 (44)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92.5 (93.2)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (97)	96 ( 96 )
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.9 (35.1)	39.8 (39)

*There were 389 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	94	95
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	32	39
Average point score per pupil	233	263.3

*There were 145 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Students have good attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. Relationships are very positive and harmonious. Attendance rates are satisfactory and in line with schools nationally. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, because the school places a high regard for the importance of developing students' self-confidence and raising their aspirations.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Relationships are very positive and harmonious. Behaviour is good and students are mature and responsible.
- Attendance is satisfactory and timekeeping is good.
- Exclusions from school because of poor behaviour are very low.

## Commentary

12. Students enjoy school and are interested in their lessons. Relationships are very positive and friendly. Behaviour is good and the school rarely excludes students because of poor behaviour. Students from different ethnic backgrounds get on well with each other. They enjoy school and want to do well. The high numbers attending voluntary activities such as community work, drama and musical productions demonstrate these positive attitudes.
13. Parents want their children to do well. Parental support for regular attendance helps to ensure rates are maintained at the national average. The school has recently negotiated improved support from the Education Welfare Service to help with those students who have significant attendance problems.
14. In conversation with inspectors about how the school deals with bullying, students were universally complimentary about procedures and felt bullying or racially motivated incidents were handled well and were not a problem. Inspectors certainly support these positive views.
15. Relationships are strong and supportive, based upon students who like their teachers and teachers who have a genuine interest in their students. There is a positive friendly atmosphere in school, and a high degree of racial harmony, with mixed race friendships viewed as the norm. There is also a good deal of respect and sensitive help for those students who are visually impaired.
16. One reason why students are such well-rounded, mature individuals is because of the wide range of opportunities they are provided with. It is also because of the determination of staff, in helping students believe in themselves and inspiring them to set their sights high. Teachers and learning support assistants are quick to praise progress and achievement so that students gain in self-confidence and develop positive attitudes
17. This is seen in the very strong social and cultural opportunities the school provides. An impressive range of enrichment activities includes many trips abroad, including New York and Iceland, and all Year 7 students having the chance to see a French play, *Courgette Volante*, and there is an active citizenship project for Year 8. The famous music and dance extravaganza Rock Challenge has become part of a Hanson tradition. The school came fourth nationally, in 2003. Students enjoy these events; participation in the Rock Challenge is high and many hours are willingly given up for practice.
18. The 'Thought for the day' is patchy in its effectiveness. In some classes it gives students an opportunity to think about wider issues than those of everyday life and contributes to their spiritual growth, but in others it is too rushed to deal adequately with themes such as 'why God permits suffering.'

## Sixth form

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students show very positive attitudes to their work and play a key role in the life of the school.
- Private study lessons are well used.
- Students are positive role models for younger students.

### Commentary

19. Sixth formers have very good attitudes to their work. This is shown by the fact that they comply with the agreement they sign when they enter the sixth form, to ensure they attend regularly. In fact, their attendance is very high. Private study periods are used well for independent work. Students' behaviour is very good and they are positive role models for younger students. They play a key role in school life. Their involvement has increased recently, because of their willingness to be more involved, expressed through the work of their own council. As a result, they now act as guides, car park attendants and department helpers at open evenings. They are linked with tutor groups and help younger students with various pastoral issues. Very sensible opinions were expressed in the sixth form council meeting held during the inspection. Here, they very maturely debated the nature of religious festivals from different faiths celebrated in the school and how they should be used as an opportunity for everyone to understand what they mean and why they are held.

### Students' views of the sixth form

20. Students are highly satisfied with the provision in the sixth form. They are particularly appreciative of the very good support they receive from subject teachers, their tutors and the sixth form management team. They consider that they are treated as young adults and staff listen and frequently act on their views. They value the good teaching they receive and enjoy being involved in the life of the school. They appreciate the very good range of extra-curricular activities and the excellent opportunities provided to find out about further and higher education.

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.4
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.4
National data	1.2

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

### Exclusions

## Ethnic background of students

## Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1614	58	1
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	7		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	23	1	
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	20	1	
Mixed – any other mixed background	15		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	127	3	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	88		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	1	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	17	3	
Black or Black British – African	2		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2		
Chinese	3		
Any other ethnic group	1		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **good**. Good teaching and learning, within an ethos that encourages learning, enable students to make good progress overall in most subjects.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, in all years, and enable students to learn well in lessons. Around two thirds of lessons seen were good or better, and in 96 per cent of lessons teaching was at least satisfactory. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of students and manage them well.
- Teachers use the Key Stage 3 Strategy well to plan their lessons.
- Marking in some subjects does not give students a clear enough idea of how to improve.
- Associate staff who support students who need additional help in class work very effectively with teachers.
- In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good the teacher often directs the students too much.

### Commentary

21. The strong ethos for learning is to a large extent the result of the high expectations teachers have of students, and of their ability to get students to have high expectations of themselves. This is a considerable achievement in a school that appointed an additional 40 teachers in 2000. Of these, 25 came from middle schools and had to get used to teaching older students. In addition, the existing teachers had to learn to teach younger students. Teachers reinforce the school's ethic of fairness and equality and ensure that students of different gender or ethnic background feel fairly treated.
22. The effective use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is enabling students, particularly those in Years 7 to 9, to learn rapidly and achieve well. The strategy is based on lessons that begin with lively starting activities and end with a review of what has been learned. In some subjects this final



session is too short to be useful, and consists only of a quick resumé of the lesson. Where it is done well, for example in a science lesson that finished with a series of quick-fire questions that made students think hard about what they had just learned, it seals learning effectively and prepares students for the next lesson.

23. In the third of lessons where teaching and learning were satisfactory, the lessons would have been good if teachers had not missed opportunities to involve students more. For example, teachers sometimes read passages aloud rather than inviting students to read, or the teacher talks for too long.
24. In Years 10 and 11 the Key Stage 3 Strategy has less impact. Although teaching and learning, lesson by lesson, are good in nearly two thirds of lessons, assessment is not used sufficiently to help teachers focus on ways to consolidate what students learn. Students in courses that demand a style of learning where the teacher has to stand back and let the student take more responsibility cope well with this and consolidate their learning. This was particularly evident in applied science and design and technology.
25. Marking is generally satisfactory, but is variable in some subjects. For example, in science, although assessment through well-graded tests is effective in telling teachers how well students are doing, day-to-day marking is often skimpy and so teachers lose the chance to pick up mistakes or misconceptions early enough or show students just what they need to do to improve.
26. Assessment in general is improving, and is satisfactory. In most subjects teachers know how well their students are doing, but the school has only recently begun to test all students on entry, and neither teachers nor students are using assessment as a sharp enough tool to help improve results, particularly in GCSE.
27. Withdrawal of students with special educational needs from lessons for help with basic literacy and numeracy is kept to a necessary minimum. Students learn well when they use computers and especially when they work on a one-to-one basis with learning support assistants who have good understanding of their needs. They gain in understanding and also in self-confidence.

## **Sixth form**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall and students achieve well.
- Long-term absence of teachers in psychology and health and social care is having a negative impact on students' progress.
- There are inconsistencies in the depth and quality of marking and in the use of assessment information.
- Teachers are always available to assist students with their work in and outside lessons.

### **Commentary**

28. In most lessons in subjects inspected students learn well. Teaching is well planned; it is accurate and this leads to a high level of interest from students. Activities and expectations are well matched to students' needs. Students are given many opportunities to develop independent learning skills through research. The improvement in computing facilities has helped. One of the main strengths of teaching and learning in most subjects is the specialist knowledge of teachers, which when combined with very positive attitudes from students, leads to good achievement.
29. Teaching and learning are particularly good in physical education and history and in general studies in Year 13. In general studies, students develop critical thinking skills and this

contributes to their personal development. Very good use of laptop computers was seen in physical education lessons to present information to students and learning is reinforced by the use of learning 'logs' to record and track their learning. Because of staffing problems in psychology, resulting from long-term illness, teaching lacks specialist depth of knowledge to enable students to gain the highest grades. Sometimes students are expected to write copious notes at the expense of understanding. Similar staffing problems affect health and social care and despite the vigorous attempts by the school to address the problem, some lessons are delivered from printed notes, reflecting the teacher's insecure knowledge of the subject. The students are, however, industrious and are keen to learn and most are able to work independently.

30. In most lessons the pace set is rigorous, to ensure good progress. In a small number of lessons in art and design, however, students work at a pace which is comfortable rather than urgent. In music technology the pace of lessons is too leisurely.
31. Homework assignments are used effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school. Homework also provides good opportunities for the development of independent learning skills. Sixth form teaching caters well for individual students' needs and students appreciate the way teachers are always helpful and readily available outside set lesson times to assist with any work problems.
32. Marking is mainly satisfactory and students are given appropriate feedback to help them improve their learning. There are inconsistencies, however, in the depth and quality of marking between subjects. In mathematics there are few written comments on students' completed work to show them how work might be improved. In chemistry, some units are well marked, but too much, especially work concerning calculations, goes unmarked. Work is seldom marked in AVCE health and social care and this situation is unacceptable.
33. Overall assessment is satisfactory, and keeps students informed about how they are doing. However, the information is not always used to follow students' progress and show teachers how to adapt their teaching to raise standards further. In ICT assessment information is used well to provide students with guidance for improvement. Good analysis of examination results effectively feeds back into teaching in French. Portfolios of work are carefully assessed in AVCE science but assessment information is not used to track progress. There is not enough active involvement by students in music technology in evaluating their work, and examination results are not analysed in this subject.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 202 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (1%)	42 (21%)	94 (46%)	57 (28%)	6 (3%)	1 (0.5%)	0

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

### **The curriculum**

Despite many strengths, the school does not fully meet statutory requirements and therefore the range and provision of subjects in the curriculum are judged **unsatisfactory**.

The opportunity for enrichment is **very good**.

The quality of accommodation and resources is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is not enough time in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to cover the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 gives students a wide choice of subjects.
- Provision for teaching and assessing ICT skills is inadequate.

- The school day is not well structured to meet the needs of the current timetable.
  - There is very good support for learning outside the classroom.
34. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 technically meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but arrangements for ICT are unsatisfactory for Years 8 and 9. A successful taught course for Year 7 started this year and these students are benefiting from the regular tuition and are acquiring the necessary skills. Students in the current Years 8 and 9 have not had this advantage. Drama is taught within English and the arrangement is not giving students a distinctive drama course since not all the English teachers are comfortable with the subject and it is not taught in a drama studio.
  35. In Years 10 and 11 there is a wide range of subjects, with a choice of several languages, and vocational subjects such as applied science and business education. Citizenship is well integrated into the curriculum at all levels and is taken seriously and enjoyed by students. Although religious education meets the broad subject requirement there is insufficient time set aside in Years 10 and 11 to comply with statutory requirements, a breach noted also in the previous inspection.
  36. The impact of technology college status is notable mainly in mathematics, science and technology, and design and technology, where resources are very good and contribute to good learning. The school has taken on board the need to use ICT extensively to help students make progress in all subjects, and this is effective. Paradoxically, it has omitted to ensure good progress in ICT itself. While students become familiar with the essentials of word processing or making presentations for other subjects, they do not specifically learn how to add the most effective borders to a document or the liveliest animations to a presentation. In addition, it is impossible to be sure all students cover all the ICT curriculum or to know what levels they are working at.
  37. Provision for students with special education needs is appropriate in Years 10 and 11 as they have one fewer option to allow them to be part of the 'success group' and receive general curriculum support in, for example, coursework and homework. There is very good support and provision for visually impaired students so that they have equal access to the whole curriculum. Individual education plans provide teachers with helpful information about the difficulties of individual students. However, the targets set for students are often imprecise and time limits for their achievement are not always included. Some teachers are unaware of these targets and of how they are expected to help students to achieve them
  38. There is very good support for learning outside the classroom, particularly for gifted and talented students. There are thriving mathematics and science clubs and students can have additional tuition to support examination revision. The homework club is well used and there is an extra-curricular GCSE music session.
  39. A very good range of activities is offered in sport, outdoor activities, music, drama and art. There are many other enriching experiences such as trips abroad, and visits to theatres and galleries. Art clubs and lessons in real-life drawing are open to all and field trips are run by the biology and geography departments.
  40. Accommodation and resources are overall good although there are some inadequacies in the areas used for drama, and music practice rooms are not adequately insulated for sound. Indoor accommodation for physical education in inclement weather is inadequate for the large numbers, and changing facilities are cramped. There is significant disruption in a modern foreign languages area which is used as a thoroughfare.
  41. The current single lessons are too short for practical subjects, and the double lessons are too long for mathematics and languages.

## Sixth form

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good curriculum to meet the needs of its students.
- The school does not fully meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
- There is good provision of interesting enhancement activities.
- Provision and co-ordination of communications and numeracy key skills courses are a weakness which does affect the standards of some students.

## Commentary

42. The sixth form offers a broad and balanced range of courses to meet the needs, aptitudes and aspirations of students. The curriculum is well linked to that of the main school to enable students to follow a logical progression into their sixth form subjects. They are taught key skills, although the provision and co-ordination for numeracy and communication are currently weak. There are 24 AS/A level courses, five advanced vocational certificate subjects, four at intermediate GNVQ level, and a BTEC performing arts course. The curriculum meets statutory requirements except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship where, as in the main school, provision is patchy.
43. All students follow individual learning programmes that are regularly monitored by tutors. There is good provision for those students with special educational needs and the sixth form has its own dedicated learning assistant. The curriculum is evaluated regularly and the impact of current provision on standards and students' needs is assessed. Provision for students to re-take GCSE mathematics is unsatisfactory.
44. There is a very good range of enhancement activities for students. Activities are interesting and relevant and are appreciated by students. They are well supported by students. The school organises a range of cultural events and visits to extend students' experiences and good provision is made for extra-curricular sport. Links with further and higher education institutions are excellent, providing students with thorough guidance and preparation for post-16 education.
45. There are staffing difficulties in psychology and health and social care. In both subjects, rigorous and largely effective attempts have been made to cover the teaching and management of these subjects to ensure that students do not suffer unduly.
46. Accommodation in subjects and in the sixth form centre is good. The sixth form area is well organised and although the large number of students puts pressure on study space, it is well organised and is not having a detrimental effect on standards.
47. Resources are good and meet the needs of students allowing them to achieve well. Since the last inspection improvements have been made in both accommodation and access to computers for students.

## Care, guidance and support

### Overall evaluation

Arrangements for the care and welfare of students are **very good**. There are good systems for supporting students with advice and guidance about their work. Arrangements for consulting students and responding to their views are **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a caring environment, with very good support for the needs of the individual.
- There is good monitoring of students' progress, through personal interviews and monitoring by heads of year and senior staff.

### **Commentary**

48. Students learn in a supportive environment, characterised by very good relationships between teachers and students. There is careful monitoring of students' progress and personal development. This is because staff know their students well, take an interest in them and discuss their progress regularly during timetabled 'progress interviews'. These are effectively complemented with individual sessions from heads of year and other senior staff. The problems of students with behavioural difficulties are generally well understood by teachers though some are not aware of the targets set for these students in their individual education plans.
49. Pastoral support is complemented by the very good work of the learning mentor team which is highly regarded by students, teachers and parents. Mentors are very skilled at helping students work through and overcome problems, often from outside school, which are preventing them from learning. Through a combination of individual counselling and support sessions, group work, residential trips, and lunchtime and after-school activities, they are helping students to achieve significantly higher grades than originally predicated. They are providing good support for those students considered the most vulnerable.
50. Health and safety is attended to carefully. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and dealt with according to local guidelines. The school realises more staff need the official 'named person' training, so the responsibility can be shared. This is certainly appropriate given the large size of the school.
51. The school has always considered students' views, although reporting and responding to them are informal. The sixth form student committee is working well and a good example for the main school to follow.

### **Sixth form**

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

- Students appreciate the good quality advice they receive in subjects and from the sixth form tutor team.
- Induction into the sixth form is very good.
- The involvement of students in the life of the school is very good.
- Preparation for post-16 education and employment is good. Excellent links have been established with further and higher education institutions.

### **Commentary**

52. Support and guidance in subjects is good. Students appreciate the quality of advice provided by most subjects both in and out of lessons. There are very good induction arrangements for students entering the sixth form. Students are provided with good advice and guidance by the sixth form management team and by tutors. Students' personal and educational development is a priority for staff. Regular individual reviews are held with students to make them aware of progress as well as dealing with any problems which arise. Preparation for post-16 studies and employment is good, particularly the excellent links which have been established with a number of universities and colleges.

53. Procedures for seeking students' views are very effective. A full self-evaluation of the sixth form involving students was carried out last academic year. Students are able to influence the development of the school, particularly through the work of the sixth form council and a number of working links with the main school. These include the organisation of special events for junior students, and a learning and support link with Year 11 students; seniors (prefects) and the head boy and girl run the lunchtime duty system.

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

### **Overall evaluation**

Links with parents and with the community are **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very pleased with the school and hold it in high regard. It is well respected in the area and a very popular choice.
- The school's outward, innovative approach in working with a range of wider educational partners and organisations, to raise the aspirations and expectations of staff and students in the city, is excellent.
- There is very good work with primary schools, helping them to develop different aspects of the curriculum, and raising standards.
- Encouragement for parents and the community to become involved in lifelong learning is satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

54. Parents are very happy with the school; it is highly regarded in the local community and city and relationships between home and school are positive and friendly. The school enjoys the confidence of the community and all those it serves.
55. There is particularly good practice from the English department in harnessing home support and equipping parents so they can help their child. Parents of a group of boys in danger of under-achieving in Years 7, 8, and 9 receive regular progress reports home from English lessons. Parents were invited to discussions and workshops about the English curriculum, and three-quarters of parents attended. These meetings involved them being shown samples of writing, so they had a clearer understanding of National Curriculum levels, and how they could help their sons improve. This involvement of parents was successful in helping this group achieve more highly.
56. The school's outward looking, innovative approach, to raise the aspirations and expectations of staff and students, not just at Hanson but in the whole city, is excellent. This is driven by the vision and commitment of the headteacher. Community in the Hanson sense includes a range of schools, colleges, universities and national bodies. This report gives but a flavour of some of the outstanding practice.
57. Work in its early stages, through a federation of schools, is opening up huge possibilities for further enhancing sixth form provision. There has been significant funding from a successful National College for School Leadership bid, through the Networked Learning project. This is enabling Hanson and several other schools to work together on new developments in citizenship and in teaching and learning styles.
58. The school's support for curriculum development in primary schools is another area of outstanding practice. Most of this is through its work as a technology college. Over the last year, almost 2000 primary pupils have been involved.
59. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils from a local primary school visited as part of their usual Friday programme, working in the resistant materials department, taught by a Hanson teacher.

The 'crisp packet challenge' initially involves Hanson science teachers teaching in the primaries. They have created this project as an effective way of bridging the changes from primary to secondary science.

60. In fact, there are very strong and innovative partnerships with most departments and nearby primary schools. These involve a number of different strands including sharing ICT expertise and providing technical support, extra-curricular clubs and study sessions, a buddy scheme<sup>2</sup>, sports events, drama performances, summer schools, art projects with an artist, and Hanson teachers teaching in the primary schools.
61. Specific methods to monitor the effect on students' attainment are not fully in place. Anecdotally, the difference the school is making is considerable, both in raising students' attainment and in improving staff expertise and understanding.
62. Work with the school's City Learning Centre, as a means of reaching out to parents and the local community to encourage lifelong learning, is more limited. This is an area appropriately earmarked for development. Hanson provides free use of its premises for adult education, via a local further education college. Sporting links with the local community are very strong, because of the determination and commitment of staff who firmly believe in the importance of true partnership. This results in many extra sporting opportunities for Hanson students.

## **Sixth form**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are kept well informed and are encouraged to be active in their children's education.
- Good links have been established with the community and excellent relationships have been developed with post-16 institutions.

### **Commentary**

63. Good communication keeps parents well informed about the school and sixth form parents are encouraged to attend induction interviews in addition to the regular reporting evenings. A very high percentage of parents attend. Parents are very pleased with provision in the sixth form. The sixth form management team regularly makes effective efforts to raise both student and parental aspirations. The school is outward looking and has good links with the community. Excellent links have been established with further and higher education institutions. Many visits contribute positively to students' learning. Particularly good links have been established with Bradford University to provide workshops and library facilities for Hanson students.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Overall evaluation**

Leadership by the headteacher, senior managers and other staff with responsibilities is **good**. Management is good. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent clarity of vision and high aspirations of the headteacher have enhanced the school's standing locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Leaders are very good role models for staff and students. They are highly principled, and generous spirited in pursuance of their duties.

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<sup>2</sup> A scheme where older students partner younger ones to offer them support and friendship.

- Very good professional development and support for all staff are vehicles for realising the school's vision and ensuring good recruitment and retention of staff.
- Governors do not scrutinise the detailed statutory requirements of the curriculum carefully enough.

## Commentary

64. The headteacher is a very good leader: accessible, optimistic, with stamina to match. He has his finger on the pulse of every educational development and is respected for his local contribution to and support for headteacher colleagues and Education Bradford. He is director of the North Bradford Federation. It is not surprising that the school's bids to government, including that for Active Citizenship funding, tend to become exemplars.
65. This has brought substantial benefits and innovative partnerships to the school, which are enriching the learning experience for all students and broadening the professional skills of teachers. He is well liked as well as respected by his colleagues who praise his negotiation skills and his love of seeing teachers at all stages in their career blossoming through the challenges and trust he places in them.
66. Strong leadership ensures that the school is highly successful in enabling all students, regardless of race or gender, to do as well as they can. Students from all backgrounds get on well together, and commented to inspectors that racism in any form is not tolerated.
67. Strategic planning is coherent, and implemented through effective teams where enthusiastic role models share the school's vision about raising aspirations. Students' welfare is at the heart of all decisions and ensures that the school is fully inclusive. Students with special educational needs are able to follow the National Curriculum because the school has developed strategies and resources to make this possible. Outstanding among these are the size and quality of the team of trained learning support assistants and the ways in which they are managed.
68. The school meets the aims of its technology college status in most respects, and is particularly effective in its links with primary schools. Within the curriculum, there is widespread use of basic ICT. However, the school has been slow to ensure that all students are given sufficient grounding in higher ICT skills, and there are few opportunities to take the subject as a course leading to a recognised qualification.
69. Financial planning is effective and supports the school's development. The re-constructed Leadership Group, key appointments, Leadership Incentive Grant, imaginative deployment of funds from government and other initiatives, collaboration with other educational institutions and networks, leaders' attachment to individual faculties as critical friends, specific training in the North Bradford cluster for ten middle managers, combine to give impetus to school improvement and self-evaluation.
70. The acting co-ordinator of provision for students with special educational needs has established good links with subject departments so that information is kept up to date. She provides good management of the large team of learning support assistants. There is a lack of monitoring of the effectiveness of the contributions of subject departments and a need for further clarification of teachers' responsibilities for students with special educational needs to meet the expectations of the Code of Practice.
71. The school has a full governing body with some very active members who are deeply committed to the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and are proud of its enhanced status in the wider community and they themselves contributed to this when the chair and vice-chair stepped into governance of a local primary school in a crisis. They hold the headteacher to account over strategic planning and the big decisions but, as at the time of the previous inspection, they do not scrutinise detail relating to curriculum matters sufficiently



closely. For example, they have not ensured the good provision for ICT that is expected of a technology college.

## Sixth form

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good leadership and good management by the sixth form management team.
  - Relationships are very positive and this helps students to progress and achieve well.
  - There is regular evaluation of performance and procedures, which involves staff and students.
  - Statutory requirements are not fully met for collective worship and the provision for the development of numeracy and communication skills is a weakness.
72. Leadership is very good and management good. The leadership provided by the head of sixth and his management team is reflective, self-critical and innovative. The management team is highly committed and there is a very clear vision for future development and a drive for improvement. Evaluation of performance is well embedded. A full evaluation was carried out last academic year, including a student survey. Relationships between staff and students are very positive and are characterised by mutual respect. Strategic planning fully reflects the school's goals and objectives. The management team is committed to running an equitable and inclusive sixth form in which each individual matters. The sixth form is organised well. Staff are clear about their roles and there is effective delegation of responsibilities. Target setting and the monitoring of achievement are well established for individual students. Management is supportive with a strong focus on raising standards. The only weaknesses are in ensuring that collective worship meets statutory requirements and in the adequate provision of key skills in numeracy, particularly for science students, as well as in language and literacy. Leadership in individual subjects in the sixth form is never less than satisfactory and in general studies, physical education and performing arts it is very good.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	6,352,807
Total expenditure	6,527,877
Expenditure per student	3361

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	399,638
Balance carried forward to the next year	224,568

# **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 **satisfactory**.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Students have positive attitudes to work.
- Students have good relationships with teachers and each other.
- Standards in national tests and examinations are not high enough.
- Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 need a sharper focus upon improving reading and writing.
- Responsibilities for drama require clarification.

#### **Commentary**

73. Results of national tests for students aged 14 were below average in 2003 having been above the national average and well above the average of similar schools in 2002. This was due in part to a change of course and partly to a shortage of specialist staff. The department has now put these right.
74. GCSE results are improving but remain below average in English and English literature for the proportion of students gaining A\*-C. The school enters an above average proportion of students for both examinations and the proportion gaining grades A-G is well above average.
75. At the age of 14, students' standards are average. This indicates good achievement from the time they entered the school when standards were below average. Students listen carefully to teachers and each other. They read aloud accurately. Students read with good understanding of at least the main sense and many are quick to recognise significant detail and implication. Below this level, some read with good understanding but lack confidence in their skills and need reassurance from teachers. Those with delayed development of reading make good progress in basic skills when withdrawn for specialist help and when they have extra help in lessons. Higher attaining students write effectively for a variety of purposes, are ambitious in their use of words and confidently use a variety of constructions. The work of many is flawed by the frequency of errors of spelling and elementary grammar. Differences in learning before arrival at the school are evident in the levels of skill and understanding of students of generally similar abilities and persist into Year 9. The department recognises the need for more structured development of reading and writing skills. Students in Years 7 to 9 have too little experience of drama to be able to develop satisfactory skills. Most teaching takes place in classrooms not suited to drama and there is no clear progression between work done in these years and in later years.
76. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are average. New methods of placing students in teaching groups and more stable staffing are raising achievement lower down the school, but those in Years 10 and 11 have not had this advantage and therefore their achievement at present is satisfactory in spite of good teaching. Students work well together in pairs, small groups or as members of full classes. Those for whom English is not their home language have no difficulty and achieve at least as well as those who speak only English. Because students are confident in their relationships with each other, they are willing to offer opinions without fear of criticism. This increases the quality of their learning. Most students are able to

organise longer pieces of writing and understand the need to justify opinions with examples. They are encouraged by teachers' positive comments on their work and accept advice on how they might improve further. The balance between the numbers of boys and girls in teaching groups is more even than is often found and this contributes to the above average attainment of boys.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is never less than satisfactory. Most lessons begin with clear explanations of tasks and links are established with earlier learning so that students understand the relevance of lessons. The pace is brisk with clear time limits identified. These help students to sustain their concentration and to work efficiently. Occasionally, when the pace slows, concentration weakens and learning is reduced. This is more noticeable in the long double lessons. Teachers have high expectations of effort, behaviour and attainment, which encourage good learning.
78. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that all students, including those of very high ability and those with learning difficulties, are appropriately challenged. They ask challenging questions to assess understanding and to develop it further.
79. The leadership and management of the department are good. Problems of staffing over the last year which have affected standards in Years 7 to 9 have been overcome. There is sensible sharing of responsibilities. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

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

80. Standards of literacy are satisfactory. Most students have appropriate skills to show how much they know and how well they understand. The school's policy for improving literacy is in draft form and should be developed and implemented. Currently, there is too much variation in the quality of what is done for it to be fully effective. Some successful work is being done, for example in history and some lessons in English and modern foreign languages. Not all subject teachers are careful to ensure that students understand and use the technical terms and general language relevant to the topic being studied. There are too few opportunities in some subjects for discussion or for students to contribute more than short answers to questions asked by teachers. There is too little guidance of students on how to collect and organise material for longer pieces of writing.
81. The library is very well managed. It now forms part of the learning resource centre. The number of books is better than at the time of the previous report but is below average. Despite much thought and effort the number of books borrowed is disappointingly small.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Overall provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good overall and leads to good learning, in spite of the shortness of lessons.
- Provision for three languages is a strength of the curriculum.
- Marking of work is not sufficiently helpful to students.
- Students with special educational needs, particularly those with visual impairment, are well supported.
- Teachers use ICT very well to support learning.

#### **Commentary**

82. By the end of Year 9 in 2003 the standards attained by students in modern foreign languages were below average. This may be the result of reporting combined results of three languages for the first time. Girls perform better than boys. Standards of work seen during the inspection were average.
83. GCSE results in French in 2002 were below average. Girls performed better than boys. In 2003 there was a slight improvement. In German, results were also below national averages, and again girls performed better than boys. There was a significant improvement in results in 2003, although the number of students taking the examination was low in both years. Boys performed better than girls. The same was true of Spanish. There has been a decline in Spanish results between 2001 and 2003, but again the numbers taking the subject are low and students mostly attain in line with expectations.
84. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Most students achieve at least in line with expectations given their prior attainment. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students because of the very good support they receive from teaching assistants. This is especially true of visually impaired students, who are particularly well supported and well integrated as a result.
85. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. The better lessons are challenging and taught at a good pace. Material is pitched at appropriate levels for groups. Teachers vary tasks, using groups and pairs. They use ICT very well to support learning. The short lesson length makes it difficult for teachers to use a wide variety of teaching styles. The range of techniques used with lower attaining students in particular is insufficiently developed. Marking is regular, but it is not linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grade criteria, and there are not enough comments which show students how to improve their work. For this reason, the good teaching and learning, lesson by lesson, are not consolidated into good achievement. Good relationships foster good learning. Students work with concentration and application and make intellectual effort. As a result of work on grammar, speaking and listening, students' overall literacy skills are improved.
86. The leadership by the head of department is good, and management is satisfactory. The work of the staff is supported by comprehensive documentation, and schemes of work are detailed and appropriately pitched and sequenced. Staff are aware of the latest developments such as the new modern foreign languages strategy and framework. There are good systems in place for monitoring, and a comprehensive method of self-evaluation.
87. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching, but the issue of feedback to students through marking remains to be addressed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved and are now average.
- The good quality of relationships between teachers and students results in a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in lessons.
- Improving and developing schemes of work provide a good balance between consolidating prior learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- Assessment procedures are not well used to track the progress of individual students.
- Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are not ensuring consistency of provision.

### **Commentary**

88. In 2003, boys' and girls' test results at the end of Year 9 were similar, although the number of girls that achieved the higher levels was slightly greater than the number of boys. Similar, but slightly lower, results were obtained in 2002 and the trend is in line with national trends. The 2002 GCSE results were below the national average in terms of the proportion attaining grades A\*-C but broadly in line with those attaining grades A\*-G. In relation to students' prior attainment the results were in line with those achieved by students in similar schools. Results at grades A\*-C improved slightly in 2003, and there was little difference in the performance of boys and girls.
89. Current standards of work in Year 9 are average. Given the below average starting points of students when they joined the school in Year 7, this represents a good level of achievement. The work of Year 11 students is higher than indicated by previous GCSE results and is now average. This is because improved and developing schemes of work that take account of national initiatives are having a progressively positive impact on students' work as they move through the school. Students in Years 10 and 11 are sustaining the gains they made up to Year 9 and are achieving satisfactorily. Students with special educational needs make similar progress as their peers. All students study similar topics at levels that are suitably matched to individual needs. Most of the highest attaining students are appropriately challenged with work that enables them to reach the standards required to attain the highest National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. The quality and quantity are generally at least satisfactory, but standards vary in a minority of groups. There is no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, though some is better than this and there is a little unsatisfactory and poor teaching in Years 7 to 9. Most teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour and good student management skills. Their preparation and planning are thorough, and reflect subject expertise and the positive impact of recent national strategies. Generally, there is an appropriate balance between consolidating prior learning and developing new knowledge and skills. The least effective part of lessons is in the final stages when discussions are often rushed. Consequently the potential for students and teachers to jointly assess learning and progress is not fully realised. The marking of students' work is generally thorough and indicates to students what they need to do to improve. However, there is a lack of consistency in grading students' work so that it is difficult to use assessment effectively to monitor individual student progress and speedily identify instances of under-achievement. Homework is used well to support progress. Relationships are good and most students sustain interest and concentration levels that result in satisfactory levels of learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or worse, explanations are not clear enough so that most students are muddled and cannot do the work set.
91. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is a keen sense of team and a shared commitment to raise standards. Monitoring of the department is largely informal and, although much is achieved, the absence of rigour results in inconsistencies in provision and application of procedures. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory and includes improvements in schemes of work and public examination results.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

92. All teachers have taken part in a training programme that has contributed to compiling a whole-school policy for the promotion of mathematical skills across the curriculum. Although not all department actively promotes the use of mathematical skills there are no instances of weaknesses in mathematics impeding progress in other areas. In science and design and technology there is good use of mathematical skills. Overall, standards of mathematical competence are average.

### **SCIENCE**

The overall provision for science is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good.
- The new curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good, gives students broader choice and aims to address the under-achievement of boys.
- Learning outcomes for lessons are not consistently identified or assessed to inform planning.
- Routine marking of students' work does not consistently provide clear information about its quality or how to improve.

## Commentary

93. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were average. Since the last inspection the results have shown a steady improvement. Standards in the work seen are also average, Students enter the school with below average standards in science, but achieve well in Years 7 to 9, responding to the teachers' high expectations and the good variety of topics and activities presented to them. They particularly enjoy planning and carrying out simple scientific investigations Lower attaining students are given good support, tasks are suitably modified and they achieve well.
94. In the GCSE examinations in 2002 results were below average and girls performed rather better than boys. Unconfirmed results for the 2003 examinations show a marked improvement; the improved teaching strategy in Years 7 to 9 is beginning to have an impact on the performance of students when they reach Years 10 and 11. A few students entered for the single award in 2002 and their results were well below average, but much improved in 2003. In the work seen the standards overall are average. Students generally have sound knowledge and understanding of the work covered and higher attaining students are able to apply their knowledge to new situations. The learning of lower attaining students over time is less secure but they are supported well. Students generally achieve satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11.
95. The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers generally have good command of their subject, plan lessons well and have high expectations of students. However, clear learning outcomes for lessons are not consistently identified or assessed at the end of lessons to inform future planning. Students generally respond well to their lessons, participate well in discussions and work well together in group activities, and these attitudes contribute significantly to their learning. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of all students. Homework exercises are regularly set and marked, although the marking does not always give clear indication of the quality of the work or how it can be improved, or enable the good short-term learning in lessons to be consolidated into good overall achievement.
96. The new head of department gives good leadership, has clear vision and has identified strategies for improving standards, but particularly the achievement of boys. The department is well managed, with several teachers been delegated areas of responsibility, ensuring the effective delivery and monitoring of the curriculum. The recently introduced applied science course in Years 10 and 11 offers students a valuable alternative to GCSE level. The use of ICT skills has developed well since the last inspection and is well integrated into the teaching programmes in all years.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision of ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum provision for ICT in Years 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory.

- There is insufficient time for ICT courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment of students' ICT National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

97. Standards are as expected for their age in Year 7, where the school has just introduced separate ICT lessons. Students can log on to the network and understand how to save their work in folders in their network area. Students make good use of word processing to complete short tasks and using desktop publishing can create posters, making use of a variety of images, some downloaded from the Internet. Students have some understanding of spreadsheets and cell location, and can enter data; some higher attaining students are learning to use a database to store information, and understand what is meant by a field.
98. In Years 8 and 9 there are no separate ICT lessons; students use the skills they have learned in Year 7 in other subjects. This is mainly using word processing software and desktop publishing to produce reports and posters. However, the quality of this work is well below the standard expected for students of this age. There is limited use of slide show presentations, spreadsheets, web pages and databases.
99. In Years 10 and 11 students continue to use word processing and desktop publishing in taught ICT lessons, leading towards a Level 1 ICT qualification. Standards are well below expected levels, mainly as a result of the lack of tuition in Years 8 and 9. Even some higher attaining students working on a slide show presentation have little knowledge of the software.
100. Students make good progress in Year 7 ICT lessons, and satisfactory progress in Year 10 and 11 ICT lessons. However, the lack of direct tuition of ICT in Years 8 and 9 means that little if any progress is made in these years, and students under-achieve. In Years 10 and 11 students lack skills, understanding and knowledge on entry to the Level 1 course. The short unit of work, 12 lessons per year, is insufficient for students to achieve their full potential, and does not prepare them for higher level courses.
101. Teaching is good in Year 7 ICT lessons. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to give clear explanations, which help students learn how to use word processing and desktop publishing software. Teachers have high expectations of students in Years 10 and 11 being able to work independently and complete tasks set. In Year 7 students understand the levels at which they are working, as a result of well-prepared worksheets. However, there is no assessment of students' ICT capabilities in other subjects, and students are unaware of the level of their work and what they need to do to improve it.
102. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the department. In a short time changes have been brought about, and there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. An ICT course for all students in Years 10 and 11 has been introduced, all students in Year 7 are taught specific ICT skills in a separate weekly lesson, and there are now very good links with primary schools. However, there is no clear identification of how other departments can measure their contribution to the development of students' ICT skills and there is still much to be done.

## ICT across the curriculum

103. There is good provision of resources and accommodation in other subject areas for the use of ICT. The majority of subjects have their own, or access to, computers and have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. Design and technology teachers provide the basic, short, but effective ICT course in Year 7, and then give students further opportunities to use ICT in different ways such as 'computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing'. There is very good use of the interactive whiteboard in modern foreign languages, and students make extensive use of word processing to produce written work in French, German and Spanish. There is good use of ICT in science where students use data logging equipment, and in history

where students learn how to make a slide show presentation. Students make extensive use of word processing to create written materials in many subjects, although the quality of this, particularly in Year 9, is not as good as that seen nationally. In art and music, students make good use of subject specific software and ICT equipment to develop their work.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Overall provision in geography is **good**.

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

- Good teaching and learning with some very good practice result in good achievement.
- Good progress is being made in improving the structure of lesson planning.
- Fieldwork and practical opportunities are limited in Years 7 to 9, although they are very good higher up the school.
- While marking is regularly carried out there are some inconsistencies in the quality of diagnostic advice provided to students.

#### **Commentary**

104. Standards are average in the current Year 9. This represents good achievement as students enter the school in Year 7 with below average geographical knowledge and skills. As a result of good teaching most students quickly gain mapping skills and widen their knowledge and understanding of ecosystems and development issues. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers when they are supported. There is no significant variation in achievement between boys and girls. Weak literacy skills and difficulties retaining and recalling information restrict some students' progress.
105. In Year 11, within the option system, standards observed in lessons and in books are below the national average. Students, however, achieve well in relation to end of Year 9 assessments. Many, particularly the upper set, are able to carry out effective analysis of data and information gathered on a fieldwork trip.
106. Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good practice. Lessons are well planned and most have very clear objectives and teachers quickly engage students with an effective starter activity. In the main part of lessons appropriate and varied tasks are used to develop students' skills and understanding. While some teachers use time at the end of lessons to test and consolidate learning, this is not consistently practised. Overall learning is good and students move on satisfactorily in their understanding.
107. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Since the last inspection action planning has improved and portfolios of exemplar work have been developed. Good progress is being made in reviewing the scheme of work in Years 7 to 9. There are good opportunities for field study in the upper school but these activities are too limited in Years 7 to 9. Opportunities to share very good practice within the department are not sufficiently developed.

### **History**

Overall quality of provision in history is **very good**.

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

- Standards are above average and students' achievement is good.
- Very good leadership and management support a strong team of teachers.



- Many aspects of teaching are consistently very good and students respond with enthusiasm and commitment.
  - Students in Years 7 to 9 are not sufficiently familiar with the key skills of history to be able to discuss progress and set targets.
  - Accumulating good practice about learning, as opposed to teaching, needs to be more systematically implemented.
108. Standards in Year 9 are above average and on a rising trend, indicating good achievement. Students employ efficient techniques for accessing history sources; good note-making accelerates their handling of information; and writing and oral presentations exploring different points of view demonstrate their understanding of bias and the importance of historical context. All this helps to develop literacy skills. ICT spreadsheets, desktop publishing, databases, Internet and *PowerPoint* enrich students' understanding of mediaeval life, the Felling Mining Disaster and the Holocaust.
109. Classroom assistants are well prepared so that students with special educational needs keep up with the class and some become confident enough to join in discussions. This represents good achievement. High attaining students are prolific, enthusiastic writers, using thorough research to give their work their own stamp.
110. Students know their National Curriculum levels but they are not able to explain their targets in terms of key history skills, although some teachers refer to them in their marking.
111. Standards in Year 11, based on GCSE results in 2002, are average although achievement is good since most students performed better than expectations, some dramatically so because of individually targeted support and very good teaching which make revision clear and manageable. They judge their own essays according to GCSE mark schemes and know what skills to work on to achieve their predicted grade. Monitoring students' progress is thorough in all years, based on detailed records of students' prior attainment and national data. Above average GCSE results in 2003, a drop in the number of students gaining D grades, and boys and girls equally achieving high levels, are the result of finely-tuned analysis and focused teaching.
112. The quality of teaching overall is good, although many aspects are consistently very good. It is no surprise that history is a popular subject where boys do well. The best lessons move fast, incorporate several short tasks with deadlines, and expect every student to share information or have a viewpoint. Pair and group activities give students confidence and accelerate learning, which is consequently very good. Teachers' knowledge and love for their subject stimulate questions and cement together students' own findings.
113. Leadership and management are very good, continuing, through a range of monitoring strategies, to develop a department used to success. The head of history is respected by colleagues for her vision and professionalism. Sharing ideas about teaching plus lesson observations centred on a theme have led to a bank of ideas for 'starters'.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is insufficient time to comply fully with statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11.
- Good rapport between teachers and students creates a positive learning environment.
- Independent learning is not promoted when lessons are dominated by the teacher.

## Commentary

114. Examination results at GCSE level were well below average in 2002. Although there was a significant improvement in 2003, results are still below the national average for 2002.
115. By the end of Year 9 students' knowledge and understanding are average. They have a satisfactory grasp of the significance of symbolism but cannot always explain its meaning in particular rituals. They can outline the main differences (although not the similarities) between the religions they study and understand the connection between belief and behaviour. Written work is often confined to short sentences with little evaluative comment. Students with special education needs achieve as well as the others because extra time and support are given in lessons, particularly by support teachers and assistants, as well as by learning mentors. Achievement at this stage is satisfactory.
116. Standards in the Year 11 GCSE group are average but the overall standard of work of the majority of students who do not take GCSE in Years 10 and 11 is below average. Students in the examination group have a satisfactory grasp of the main beliefs of the religions studied and are able to compare and discuss their importance in shaping the conduct and moral stance of their followers. The provision for general religious education in Years 10 and 11 is, however, unsatisfactory because there is not sufficient time allocated to provide more than a superficial and incomplete treatment of the agreed syllabus. As a result standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
117. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a good rapport between teachers and students, which encourages effort and co-operation in learning. Teachers structure lessons well but there is a sameness in the range of activities which does not fully engage the students. Lessons observed were dominated by the teacher and the text, leaving little time for the students to make their contribution in group discussion or to develop independent learning skills. Marking is not always securely linked to the students' learning needs but they are aware of their progress and their levels of attainment through regular assessment. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, expectations are low, there is little challenge and as a result students under-achieve.
118. The department is led satisfactorily. Schemes of work are in place and teachers feel supported in the department through shared practice. There are concerns about the profile and future of the subject particularly at GCSE level given the time allotted. The development plan lacks vision and there is no indication of strategies or timescale for improvement. The department makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the students and provides the whole school with material and topics for assemblies and tutor sessions.
119. Since the last inspection provision for religious education in Years 7 to 9 is now satisfactory, but still fails to meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

### Commentary

120. The focus of the inspection was design and technology in all materials areas in Year 7 to 9, and graphic products in Years 10 and 11. Lessons were sampled in food studies and resistant materials in Years 10 and 11.

121. The quality of teaching in resistant materials and food studies is very good and, in consequence, students achieve highly. Students benefit from the use of good technology resources which provide them with up-to-date knowledge of design and technology in the wider sense. Students are provided with interesting and motivating work which offers challenge and choice. They respond very well to working creatively to develop products unique to themselves. Teachers encourage students to take pride in their work and to complete tasks in depth. They present and finish their practical work to a good standard and have a good knowledge of the materials and processes they use. Very effective teaching of the design process is consistent across materials areas and students are successfully taught drawing and presentation skills so that their coursework folders are of a high order. The materials areas of resistant materials and food studies are well managed and are very well integrated into the department.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Key Stage 3 and are very high for graphic products by Year 11.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning and achieve very well.

### **Commentary**

122. Standards in design and technology are above average by the end of Year 9. Students have acquired particularly effective skills to present and communicate their ideas. From the time they enter the school in Year 7, students successfully use the design process to develop their ideas. They have good construction skills, take great care with details and finish work to a high standard. Although students evaluate their work, higher level work does not usually take enough account of original research or information sources as part of the process. All students achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school and their assessed capabilities.

123. In Years 10 and 11, students following the course in graphic products continue to achieve highly and reach well above average standards, both in lessons and in GCSE. Students have a very good awareness of consumer needs and wants. They design high quality products which appeal to the particular consumer market they are targeting. They have very good drawing and presentation skills, often reflecting techniques they know are used in industry.

124. Very highly effective teaching of graphic products was seen in two Year 11 lessons resulting in very high levels of achievement by students. Successful teaching of drawing and presentation skills has led to students being able to produce work of a significantly higher standard than their own expectations or that indicated by their assessed capabilities. Students' work has been rigorously monitored and high levels of individual support have been given to encourage students to aim for even higher standards. Very high levels of mutual respect and excellent relationships have been established between teachers and students, which have resulted in students feeling confident to take on very challenging work.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in all years and courses. It is often very good and is very rarely unsatisfactory. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and often inspire students by their own enthusiasm. They teach students to draw and present work graphically to a high standard so that students are able to communicate their ideas effectively in all areas. Very occasionally, poor behaviour of a few students restricts learning in lessons.

126. Leadership and management of the team are very good. Staff work together to share good practice and there is mutual respect between staff. Management of the department is highly efficient. It benefits from effective support from technicians. Systems for assessing students' work are currently under review and need to take more account of the overall experience that students have in all materials areas. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

127. Art was inspected in all years. Music was inspected in Years 7 to 9; there are no music lessons within the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Drama was inspected in Years 10 and 11; drama is taught within English in Years 7 to 9.

### Art

Overall, provision in art and design is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good; students achieve well as a result.
- Colour work is careful, considered and of a high standard.
- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teachers do not give students in Years 7 to 9 enough guidance about how to improve their work.
- Work in sketchbooks is careful, but students do not use them enough to experiment with materials.

### Commentary

128. Standards of work seen are average, at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good because students start with below average standards. Similarly, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, because many students choosing the course start in Year 10 with standards that are below average overall.
129. In all years, colour is consistently used well. Students make good progress in observation work, and they learn to look closely at the world, and accurately draw what they see. However, while they often use sketchbooks for drawing, they do not use them enough to experiment with materials. In addition, while students know how to use ICT for research, its use is not widespread enough to support and extend their work fully.
130. Teaching and learning are good: in the best lessons there is a good match of work to the interest and attainment levels of students. Tasks are pitched at just the right level, so that students show high levels of interest right from the start of the lesson, and are keen to get down to work. Teachers often give good demonstrations, so that students can see exactly what they need to do to succeed. These factors produce good achievement over time, because students make good gains in their skills, for example, in drawing, painting or printmaking.
131. Students in Years 7 to 9 can almost always confidently state their National Curriculum level in art and design. However, they cannot say clearly what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. They say that they should try harder or concentrate more, but are not sure what they are aiming at, or what the work should look like for it to be better. As a result, they are not sure what they need to do to improve.
132. The subject is well led and managed. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen in Year 9, the quality of teaching and learning has improved in Years 7 to 9, and results at GCSE have improved. A period of staffing problems, including illness, has been resolved, and staffing is stable, with a recently appointed subject leader now in place. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject, and of the examination requirements at GCSE, has enabled results to continue to improve in spite of the recent staffing difficulties.

### Drama

The provision for drama in Years 10 and 11 is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are improving significantly year on year.
- Standards seen in the classroom are above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Drama is a very popular subject and students opt for the subject in increasingly good numbers.
- Teachers do not yet analyse results sufficiently to enable them to focus more strongly on raising standards through even better teaching and learning.

## Commentary

133. Students gained well below average standards in the GCSE examination in 2002. Students did worse in drama than they did in all their other subjects. There were too few boys doing the examination to make comparisons with girls reliable. In 2003, however, they did much better and were close to average standards. In the current Year 11, standards seen during the inspection are above average and students in Year 10 are potentially even better than this. Standards in drama, therefore, have improved substantially over the last three years. As students' experience of drama prior to Year 10 is very mixed, achievement over time is at least good.
134. Students work hard in lessons and learn very well in drama at this level because the teaching is very good. Teachers know their subject well and understand well how students learn. Well-chosen groupings for their work in Year 11, although not popular with the students at the outset, have proved to be effective and successful. Warm-ups are excellent. In Year 11, constantly changing improvisations showed how creative and imaginative students are in this work.
135. Drama gives many students self-confidence. They take the subject very seriously. Questions at the beginning of lessons reveal the extent of the students' knowledge about drama techniques. Teachers set very demanding tasks and use challenging subjects on which students devise their drama. They have established a culture of hard work in which students are constantly reflecting on the quality of what they do. They are positive about this, commenting on the strengths of much of the work and looking for areas that can be improved. Students enjoy drama and are choosing to study the subject for GCSE in increasingly good numbers across the ability range. As so much of the course is practical, students with special educational needs are very successful. Drama provides opportunities for all students to take part. During the inspection the school was involved with the 'Arena of Life' project and the Northern School Shakespeare Festival.
136. The head of department is dynamic and leads the department energetically. There is a clear intention that the subject should continue to improve. It is also well organised. Students' work is assessed regularly and the criteria for marking used by the examination board are also used for all their assignments. Students know this well. The teachers can show that results have improved over the last three years.
137. The arrangements for drama in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory. Students in Year 7 do not have drama lessons. Students in Years 8 and 9 are taught drama as part of English. Not all teachers have experience or expertise in teaching drama and provision is therefore patchy. The scheme for the lessons for Year 8 is very recent and not yet progressive to Year 9. The quality of provision for all students at this age is therefore very inconsistent.

## Music

The provision for music in Years 7 to 9 is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well and enjoy music.
- There are good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers do not compare the school's results against national ones, and information gained from assessment is not used for raising standards.
- Sound leaks from room to room and becomes very intrusive.

## Commentary

138. Students have a very mixed experience of music in primary schools, but by Year 9 they reach above average standards. This means that students achieve very well.
139. They achieve well because teaching and learning are good overall. Examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen during the inspection. In these lessons students are totally involved with what they are doing, and with the teacher's careful guidance they work very hard through the lesson. Students are given the opportunity to lead their groups, organise rehearsals and conduct performances. The end of the lesson is used very well to reflect on the quality of the work done and decide what needs to be worked at particularly next lesson. Students work well with each other, and in the best lessons relationships are excellent. Classroom percussion instruments and video resources are used well and help make learning interesting and enjoyable. Students are also learning to use computers for their music in Years 8 and 9.
140. Some students in the early years find it quite difficult to organise their group work sufficiently to make the progress in the lesson of which they are capable. There are also students whose behaviour can be challenging but they are managed well by the teachers. Students with special educational needs are known well by the teachers. The teachers look after them well in lessons, making sure they know how to proceed. These students cope well with the practical work set for all the class. Students understand how their work is marked and most students can say what National Curriculum level they are achieving. Teachers as yet are not consistently confident enough in ascribing levels accurately to a particular piece of work and so far have not compared the standards achieved by classes taught by different teachers.
141. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained and improvement is satisfactory. There is a new and very dynamic head of department who has made a very good start in the post. She is leading the department well and is raising the profile of the subject as a highly practical and enjoyable experience for the students. There is a new programme of projects for students to study in class, instrumental lessons are available and there is a wide range of lively groups, choirs and bands to join out of lessons. The department is not well sound-proofed and noise leaks from one room to another, causing disturbance and at the worst times considerable stress for those that work in the area. Currently, Year 11 is taught after school as a music club. This is already scheduled to be included in the curriculum from next year onwards.

## Physical education

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from Years 7 to 9 learn and achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress are good.
- Provision for extra-curricular sport is excellent.
- Curriculum reorganisation has done a great deal to improve the participation of students who do not enjoy games.

## Commentary

142. Standards in physical education in Year 9 are average overall, with students beginning to increase their range of experiences. In Year 11 standards are above average as students consolidate their learning and begin to specialise to a greater degree. This constitutes very good achievement overall. In Years 7 and 8 students are beginning to demonstrate precision, control and fluency when performing movement sequences in gymnastics. This particular area of the curriculum is very well taught and the quality of students' work is impressive.
143. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good and students are exposed to high quality professional expertise. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of stimulating activities. They are enthusiastic and have very high expectations of students' work and behaviour. Their own enthusiasm for the subject is a strong motivator, resulting in students responding positively. Students' attitudes to learning are good and their efforts to be appropriately dressed and smart are creditable. Students with special educational needs as well as those who are gifted and talented achieve well because they are well supported and are challenged by appropriate material. Time taken at the end of lessons to assess what has been done is used very effectively. It gives teachers a clear indication of what students have learnt and understood. Procedures for the overall assessment and monitoring of students' progress are consistently applied and clearly influence what needs to be taught.
144. The department is led and managed well. Clear vision and direction are provided and there is a strong commitment to improvement. This has led to good improvement since the last inspection. An excellent range of extra-curricular sporting activities confirms this department's commitment to raising standards and is a clear indication of the extra time they are willing to give for the benefit of students, ably assisted by other staff within school. Teams and individuals gain area, county and national representation and the school gives due recognition to their achievements. The department has made significant curriculum changes, which have successfully encouraged greater participation of students, particularly girls, who do not like the competitive element of games. The department's links with primary schools are very good.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

### Business education

Overall the quality of provision of business education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good leadership and management.
- Teaching is good.
- Students have good attitudes.
- Students are under-achieving because of limited ICT skills.
- There is no dedicated business education room with computers.

Key judgements	Year 11
Standards of work seen	Below average
Achievement over time	Unsatisfactory
Results in national tests and GCSE	Average
Quality of teaching	Good
Quality of learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Commentary

145. Students are developing a sound knowledge of business practices and procedures. However, the standards of their work produced with word processing and desktop publishing are below the levels expected in both Years 10 and 11. Students understand the layout of a formal business letter, but use inappropriate font sizes and styles for such letters. Their use of desktop publishing highlights their lack of knowledge as some students are unable to use even the most basic technique of adding borders. Students have created website homepages, but these have poor visual impact. Students have satisfactory understanding of hyperlinks between web pages, but do not always make them active on their websites.
146. Although students make good progress in individual lessons, and GCSE results are average, their limited skills in the use of word processing and publishing mean they have to spend too much time in lessons learning these skills, and therefore under-achieve overall. They do not have a solid base of ICT skills because they have received little tuition in these since Year 7. This means that teachers have to spend time in lessons to try to bring students near the level of ICT skills expected for their age, and as a consequence students are not achieving as well as they should in their examination work.
147. Teaching is good, with planned and prepared lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations, which help students learn. Students are positive about the subject, work rates are good, and students are productive and on task in lessons. There are good relationships between teachers and students. Students with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants, who help students make the same progress as other students in the class.
148. There is good leadership and management of the department. Schemes of work are well prepared and students' work displayed around the school raises the profile of the department. However, there is no dedicated business education room with computers, although the department does have access to a computer room. The newly introduced business and communications course is popular, and provides students with an ICT-based course. The head of department has a clear understanding of the issues raised by students' limited experience of ICT earlier in the school, and is working towards raising their standards in the subject. The previous report has insufficient information about business studies in the main school to make a judgement about improvement.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education is taught within the citizenship programme.

### Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-planned curriculum provides a range of challenging active citizenship and ASDAN<sup>3</sup> projects.
- There is no monitoring of lessons.
- There is no up-to-date audit to identify the contribution of other subjects to citizenship.

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<sup>3</sup> Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network



## Commentary

149. The course, provided for all students, is in its second year and incorporates personal, social and health education, ASDAN and the Active Citizens national pilot, now in its third year. Students in Years 10 and 11 are studying for GCSE and use their work experience in their coursework. Students in years 7 to 9 can work towards the ASDAN Bronze Challenge Award. There is a team of 21 teachers.
150. Students' work by Year 9 and Year 11 reaches expected levels. In Years 7 to 9 teachers use National Curriculum criteria effectively in their marking and students keep a record of developing skills. In all years, students are becoming well-informed citizens through learning about issues to do with crime, health, the environment, growing old, racism, carrying out surveys, research and community projects. Higher attaining students cope well with a range of viewpoints and in Years 10 and 11 they can critically analyse resources. Students with special educational needs and other low attaining students are hindered by literacy problems and find, for example, interpretation of surveys difficult. However, judging by the views they express, they understand and are well motivated by the relevance of their work to real life.
151. Teaching and learning are both good overall because of stimulating resources, including visitors, opportunities for students' research and community projects. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers are less skilled at handling resources and managing whole-class discussion so that all students take part.
152. Practical projects designed, carried out and evaluated by students themselves are rich in opportunities for taking responsibility, anticipating problems and seeing others' viewpoints. This aspect has forged links with local councillors, the police, primary school pupils and a school in Belarus. Much of the work is done at lunchtimes, and has provided a very important role for teaching assistants.
153. Good leadership has successfully established a strong status for the subject through well-resourced schemes of work and standardised assessment. Management is satisfactory. Teaching is not monitored in order to find out where teachers need more support or to be sure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

**Level 3 GCE AS-level courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Chemistry	9	77.8	84.8	11.1	36.9	23.3	35.2
English literature	6	66.7	86.2	16.7	37.9	18.3	38.9
French	5	80.	85.4	0.0	35.2	22.0	34.9
General studies	57	78.9	78.6	5.3	25.7	24.6	30.0
Information technology	8	75.0	78.2	0.0	20.6	16.3	28.5
Mathematics	14	50.0	74.2	14.3	34.3	19.3	31.3

**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	10	90	96.1	20	48.7	60	85.1
Biology	27	100	91.6	51.9	36.3	85.2	74.1
Chemistry	18	100	94	38.9	45.9	73.3	81.1
English literature	30	96.7	98.5	33.3	43.7	72.7	84.3
General studies	70	100	90.1	22.9	29.1	70.9	69.3
Geography	10	100	97.1	30	40.5	74	80.9
History	19	100	97.1	68.4	41	93.7	81.2
Information technology	11	90.9	89.1	0.0	22.4	60	64.1
Mathematics	9	100	93.3	55.6	52.2	91.1	84.7
Physics	20	100	92.8	20	42.8	64	78.6
Business AVCE	24	70.8	87.1	8.3	16.5	45.8	60.1
Health and social care AVCE	8	75	90.1	37.5	16.3	65	62.5
Science	18	100	90.1	0.0	9.3	57.8	58.4

**Level 2 vocational qualifications**

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Art	12	98		60		20	
GNVQ ICT	23	90		25		0	
GNVQ Health and social care	8	75		40		0	
GNVQ Science	12	98		30		0	

**ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

AS/A level English literature and French were the main focus of the inspection. Media studies and English language were sampled.

## Media studies

One lesson of media studies was seen in which teaching and learning were very good. This is a popular subject particularly in Year 12 and students achieve well. Standards are broadly average. All candidates entered for the A level examination were successful in 2001 and 2002.

## English language

English language is a relatively new course for the department and is proving very popular. In the lesson seen teaching and learning were good and students responded well to challenging tasks. All students were successful at AS-level in 2002. Standards are broadly average.

## English literature

The quality of provision in English literature is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall teaching is good and students achieve well in lessons.
- Examination results in 2003 were the best for some years.
- Leadership and management of the subject have improved and are having a positive impact on the quality of provision.

## Commentary

154. Standards in English literature up to 2002 have been below or well below the national average. In 2002, girls in particular did not achieve the grades expected of them. Fewer students attained the highest grades than nationally. In 2003, however, A-level results were much improved. All but one of a large group of 48 students passed and more than 40 per cent gained grades A or B. The performance of girls improved – 50 per cent achieved the highest grades. Over half the group improved on their targets by at least one grade.
155. Overall achievement is good. Standards in both the present Year 12 and 13 groups are average. Most students, particularly boys, express their ideas confidently but girls are more reticent and less keen to join in discussion. A small group of Year 12 girls, however, presented notes on *The Handmaid's Tale* fluently and competently. Students learn to look closely at text and increasingly they support their ideas using quotation. They compare and make connections with other works they have read and draw on their experience to comment on character and theme. Writing is reasonably accurate and fluent.
156. Teaching and learning are good overall but there is a little unsatisfactory teaching. In the best lessons teachers' good knowledge of the subject enables them to present it in a lively way so interest is stimulated and maintained. As a result students make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Introduction to the historical and social context of the texts is good. Lessons are carefully structured and planned although long lessons require a wider repertoire of activities to sustain interest and pace really well. Expectations are high and challenging questions are posed, for example on the use of archaic language in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Relationships are good. Students work independently and in pairs and groups. Work is accurately assessed, and carefully and thoroughly marked so that students have a good idea of the level at which they are working. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the pace is slow and the lesson so dominated by the teacher that students have little opportunity to express their ideas. Content is expressed in terms which students have difficulty in understanding.
157. Leadership and management are good. The head of department understands the issues for the department and has improved the co-ordination of the subject, course planning and record keeping as part of the drive to improve standards. Monitoring of teaching does not focus firmly enough on improving teaching. Good use is made of assessment information to support

students' progress but teachers are not yet confident in the use of 'value-added' information that shows how well students have achieved in relation to their attainment when they started the course.

158. At the last inspection standards were broadly average but fell to below and well below average. This year results have improved. Recent improvements in leadership and management of the department suggest that it is well placed to continue the improvement in standards, and improvement overall since the previous inspection is good.

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

159. Standards of literacy are average in the sixth form. A key skills communications course is provided in Year 12 to improve skills, particularly for those students who have shown weak language and literacy skills at GCSE. Not all students have obtained a grade C grade. Some students' essay writing skills are weak in Year 12. In general studies and geography, techniques are being effectively taught to raise standards.

### **French**

Overall provision in French is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good overall; teachers have high expectations and this helps promote good learning.
- Opportunities for work experience are effective in building students' confidence and competence.
- Some students lack confidence in expressing opinions orally.

#### **Commentary**

160. The numbers of students entered for A-level has traditionally been low. Students normally achieve a graded result, but the numbers attaining higher grades is below national averages. However, in 2003 a larger group of students with a wider range of ability than usual followed the course, results improved significantly and only one student failed to gain a graded result. Standards of work seen in Year 13 were average. Students acquire topic-specific vocabulary at a reasonable rate. They can cope with extended and complex reading texts on topics such as contrast between the developed world and the Third World. Errors in written work arise from attempts to use more complex structures. There was some evidence of extended complex writing in drafts of coursework about Haiti. In oral work, however, male students lack confidence in expressing opinions unless fully prompted by teachers.
161. Students in Year 12 are achieving much as expected, given that they are only a short way into the course. They are beginning to move on successfully from their GCSE work, developing their ability to offer a variety of opinions. They have good comprehension skills, and show greater levels of confidence in discussions. Although their pronunciation may sometimes be approximate, this does not impede communication.
162. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They use French almost exclusively in lessons. This establishes high expectations, improves listening skills and encourages students to give of their best. Teachers prepare a good range of challenging activities, and make good use of a wide range of resources. Lessons proceed at a good pace. However, in spite of good teaching and learning, students' achievement is only satisfactory because the course demands a wide knowledge of French language and culture, beyond the language itself, that most students do not have.
163. Students are mature and show a high level of interest in the subject. In conversation with some students they showed very positive attitudes and a willingness to avail themselves of the

various opportunities provided by the department. They show the ability to draw on a range of pertinent information and write at length. They learn well, work productively and make intellectual effort.

164. The good teaching and good learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. The department benefits from clear procedures set out in the handbook. There is good analysis of examination results which is feeding back into teaching and learning. Teachers use ICT well to support learning. A significant feature of the provision is the opportunity offered to students to undertake work experience in France. This has a beneficial effect on students' competence and confidence in speaking the language.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall the quality of provision for mathematics is **good**.

Post-16 courses offered to students include A-level mathematics, A-level further mathematics, key skills numeracy and GCSE re-sit.

The key skills numeracy course is not linked to other subjects, particularly science. When inspected, few students attended.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and they lead to good achievement at A-level.
- There are strong and effective relationships between teachers and students.
- Students have positive attitudes about A-level courses.
- The provision for students to retake GCSE mathematics is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

165. Standards on entry to the sixth form are broadly average. A-level mathematics is taught to two groups in Year 12 and one group in Year 13. There are also very small classes offering further mathematics in both Year 12 and Year 13. The results in A-level mathematics in 2002 were above the national average showing that achievement in the subject is good. The results in 2003 were in line with those of 2002 and these show a marked improvement of the results over the previous few years when the results were significantly below average. This means that improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
166. More boys than girls have studied A-level mathematics in the recent past although the numbers are equal in the current Year 12. There is no difference in performance between boys and girls. The students who opt to take further mathematics to both AS and A level also make good progress, although the very small numbers make statistical comparisons unreliable.
167. Overall, both teaching and learning are good. The teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and most of it was good. Analysis of work covered shows that teachers have high expectations of students and this has led to good gains in knowledge, especially in algebra, so that overall standards are above average in both AS and A level lessons. Students show a confident approach to solving equations of different types and to the application of algebraic processes to other areas of the course. Students' attitudes to the subject are positive and this helps the development of good relationships between teachers and students. Students strongly appreciate the fact that teachers are helpful and readily available outside of lesson time. The marking of regular structured homework is thorough. However, although errors are scrupulously corrected, there is a lack of written comments to show students how their work might be improved. Marked homework is the only form of formal assessment undertaken during Year 12. This makes it very difficult to set accurate targets to guide and motivate students.

168. The A-level courses are well organised and teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject. There is a pleasing flexibility about the courses offered. For example, Year 13 students are able to sit in with Year 12 students to study a particular module of work that allows them to improve their grades. Monitoring of teaching does take place although the main method for the spread of best practice is via frequent discussions and a strategy of shared production of resources and of marking. Overall the leadership and management of the department are satisfactory.
169. The provision for re-sitting GCSE mathematics is unsatisfactory with no formally timetabled lessons. Students who wish to improve their grades attend lunchtime and after-school sessions. The department teaches key skills numeracy to some students. There is little co-ordination with the numeracy required in other subject areas and the interest of students is low, with some lessons very poorly attended.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

170. Provision is unsatisfactory. There is a key skills numeracy course running in Year 12, but there is too little co-ordination between the mathematics department and other subjects. Weak mathematical knowledge skills of some students at the end of Year 11 are having a negative effect on learning, particularly in science subjects. In a Year 12 physics lesson, weak mathematical understanding reduced potential achievement. There is unsatisfactory provision for students to re-sit GCSE mathematics.

### **SCIENCE**

171. The focus was on A-level chemistry and vocational science. Biology and physics at A-level were also sampled.
172. In 2002 results in A-level biology were very high in comparison to national results and significantly better than in other A-level subjects in the school. All students attained a pass grade, over half of them at the higher grades. Only one part-lesson was seen; students were learning about the passage of fluids in and out of plant cells by setting up a well-planned practical exercise.
173. In physics, teaching is good and A level students in Year 13 are working at above average standards and achieving well. AS students in Year 12 are severely hampered by their inability to do elementary algebra. As a consequence, standards are below average and students are under-achieving.

### **Vocational science**

Overall provision for the subject is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The course is very well led by an experienced subject specialist.
- Teaching is good; lessons are well planned with many different activities to help students learn.
- Students achieve well given their starting points from GCSE.
- The use of students' information to track progress and identify under-achievement could be more effectively used.
- Sometimes, there are insufficient opportunities in lessons for students to consolidate their learning.

### **Commentary**

174. Results in AVCE have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with national standards. Up to 2001 the entry numbers for the subject were small and attainment was below that expected nationally. In 2002 there was an increase in numbers completing the course and all attained a pass grade, though none at the higher grades A and B. These results were in line with national standards and were significantly better than in other vocational subjects in the school. All eight candidates in 2003 also attained a pass grade. An Intermediate course (GNVQ) was introduced three years ago for some Year 12 students. Both pass and merit grades have been awarded in the last two years. Standards seen in lessons are average.
175. Standards differ for entry to each of these courses. Students start Intermediate GNVQ with below average grades in GCSE double science and the majority stay in the sixth form for three years, moving onto AVCE Advanced level after one year. Retention rates are good. Students with average grades in GCSE double science start directly on the two-year AVCE course. All students achieve well given their starting points from GCSE and this is reinforced by the good achievement seen in lessons.
176. Teaching is good; in three out of four lessons teaching is good or very good. Lessons are well planned; time is used well with alternative or additional activities to keep students involved particularly during lengthy practical sessions. Students learn well when given opportunities to work independently and present their research into the science of x-rays or the safety features of cars. Practical sessions on types of dyes or techniques used in forensic science mean students develop a good understanding of everyday applications of science. Learning is not so good when students do not have opportunities to think about what they are learning. Long teacher input without probing questions or reinforcing exercises means students do not learn so well.
177. The attitude students have to their work is very good. They demonstrate a mature approach and develop very good research and collaborative working skills. Portfolios of work are kept and most students hand these in regularly for scrutiny. Teachers assess portfolios thoroughly, giving students the opportunity to review and improve them before final submission for assessment. Records are well kept but at present individual student information is not used to track progress and identify under-achievement.
178. An experienced subject specialist, heading a team all of whom teach within their science specialism, leads the subject very well. Many are new to teaching the courses and at present there is little opportunity for them to observe the head of subject teach and gain more confidence in the course requirements.

## Chemistry

Overall the provision for chemistry is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning leads to students achieving well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- The marking of calculations is weak.
- Targets to motivate and inform students are not produced in the department.
- Challenges to students to actively question, discuss and develop their own learning are limited.

### Commentary

179. The standards at the AS-level examination in 2002 were at the national average and the achievement of these students was good compared to their GCSE grades. There was a sharp rise in standards in 2003 with good achievement from GCSE. Whilst more able girls do well in general, boys attain better. Almost all students who set out on the Year 12 course completed it. The numbers opting for sixth form chemistry at both AS and A level are rising. The present

Year 12 students are rapidly improving upon their GCSE skills and demonstrated competent use of equipment, such as burettes and pipettes in titration to find molarity. While all students understood the principle some were hampered both by not knowing what a molar solution as well as by having difficulty balancing equations. They are reaching average standards.

180. Standards in A level were below the national average in 2002, but achievement was satisfactory. In 2003 standards declined slightly and the achievement of the students was below what might have been expected from their GCSE grades. All students who set out on the Year 13 course in 2003 completed it. In 2002, girls and boys did equally well. However, in recent years boys' performance has been rising and girls' falling: in 2003 boys outperformed girls. In the present Year13 standards are average and these students' achievement is good. They can titrate accurately to produce pH curves and use these graphs to predict, but explaining their shape is proving more difficult.
181. Teaching is good and leads to good learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge; lessons are well planned and resourced with clear explanations and good demonstrations. Good attention is given to developing the key skills of ICT and numeracy, where they apply to chemistry. Good use is made of questions to check understanding but students are insufficiently involved in discussion and development of topics. Most students are keen to learn, but some are less keen to think. Where work is corrected this is done thoroughly, but too much, especially work concerning calculations, goes unmarked. The learning of some students is impeded by poor GCSE knowledge.
182. The department is satisfactorily led and managed by an enthusiastic teacher. The curriculum is good and enhanced by a programme of visits and a link with Leeds University; at present there are no industrial links. Assessment is satisfactory, but an area for improvement. Although some work is well marked and graded, other work not being marked and the absence of individual student targets for chemistry adversely affect learning. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

183. The focus of the inspection was A-level ICT. Lessons were sampled for an advanced vocational course and for key skills in ICT.
184. In the advanced vocational lesson in Year 13, the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher has established very good working relationships with students and provided challenging tasks. This resulted in students approaching work in a mature manner and working hard in the lesson. Students are making very good progress with learning about information systems. Assessments indicate average standards and very good achievement in a course which is new to them.
185. In a key skills lesson in Year 12, students were working on tasks to support their learning in science. Their overall standard of attainment in ICT is well below average and their skills and knowledge for basic applications are insecure. Students are making good progress, for example learning to insert tables into documents. They are improving their skills and knowledge for desktop publishing and recently combined text and graphics to present work they had learned in science on the physical properties of metals. The teacher has good knowledge of the course and supports students effectively.

Provision for A-level ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strength and weaknesses**

- Standards are very low on entry to Year 12 because students have an inadequate experience of ICT during Years 8 to 11.
- There has been good improvement to provision and standards in recent months.



- Very good attitudes to learning by students and good teaching result in good achievement.
- Students' progress is helped by their access to good quality resources.

## Commentary

186. Standards have been consistently below average at A-level in the last three years because students have not been adequately prepared in earlier years. Although there has been good improvement in recent months, students' attainment is still below average in Years 12 and 13. Students are closing the gap between what they know and what they should know by now, but have not yet reached their potential. They have very limited knowledge of databases because most have only recently been introduced to them. Students are, however, confident about using computers and are quick to learn because they are interested and determined to do well in their course. They have basic skills for desktop publishing and word processing. Their knowledge of spreadsheets is insecure.
187. Students are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to the sixth form. This is because students in Year 12 are following a course which is well matched to their needs and enables them to improve their basic skills alongside learning new work required by the examination syllabus. More effective teaching methods have been introduced and these are helping to raise standards in Year 13. All students were assessed at the start of this year and work is being introduced to help them to catch up with work missed in previous years and to make good progress with new learning for the A-level course.
188. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good, up-to-date knowledge of their subject and provide students with suitably challenging work to increase their skills and knowledge. There are good relationships and mutual respect between teachers and students that lead to effective learning. Because students work hard and are keen to learn, they make good progress in lessons. Teachers assess students' work frequently and provide good guidance for improvement, either orally or in the form of written comments.
189. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new head of department has made a good start with improving provision in the sixth form and has a clear idea of priorities for development, including the establishment of a flexible curriculum to suit students' needs and interests. Intervention strategies introduced early in the spring term are helping students to attain grades closer to their potential. Staff are now working together to share their expertise and good practice to raise attainment. Improvement has been made to accommodation and access to computers. Information gained from assessing students' work has resulted in a change to the examination course followed in Year 12 so that students' needs are matched more closely. The school is making better provision for students in the sixth form than was the case at the time of the last inspection.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

190. Students' standards are generally low on entry to the sixth form. This is the consequence of inadequate provision in the main school. In Years 8 to 11 students have too few opportunities to develop understanding and skills.

## HUMANITIES

191. Psychology was inspected in full and geography and history were sampled. In the two geography lessons observed, teaching and learning were good. In Year 13 standards are above average. In history teaching and learning are very good.

## Psychology

Provision for psychology is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Committed, knowledgeable teaching results in sound learning.
- Good rapport between teachers and students encourages learning and achievement.
- Uncertainty and lack of leadership hinder subject development.
- Long-term absence of a specialist teacher means students do not know how to improve their work to achieve high grades.

## Commentary

192. Results at AS-level and A-level in 2002 were average for similar schools. A-level results in 2003 were well below average for 2002. Observations of lessons and students' work indicate the present Year 13 are improving but are still below average. Year 12 students have made a sound start to the course and have not yet been assessed. Students in Year 13 are able to write fluently and coherently and their psychological investigations indicate a good grasp of methodology and understanding of terminology. One or two higher attaining students are able to write with good comprehension and depth because they have read around the topic but most students' presentations and coursework are not wide ranging enough to gain the higher grades. All students nevertheless make satisfactory progress and achievement is therefore satisfactory.
193. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound but lacks specialist depth to enable them to help students achieve the highest grades. Teachers are committed, with high expectations of the students, and challenge them to make good intellectual effort. Students learn well because they are interested in the subject and want to respond to their teachers and do their best. They work purposefully in lessons but are not always given the opportunity to evaluate their progress and that of others or present their findings and research to help others. Where teaching is weak there is poor use of time in copious note-taking and opportunities are missed to use helpful examples to support understanding. This subject enriches students' self-knowledge and personal development.
194. Because of long-term absence, leadership of the department has been lacking but the management of the subject is satisfactory thanks to the efforts and commitment to improvement of the teachers involved. All have at least some specialist knowledge. Staff development and support, particularly of the newly and recently qualified teachers, are not fully in place. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are regular and extra support is given for coursework.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

195. Art and design, music technology and performing arts were the focus subjects. The GNVQ Intermediate art and design course was sampled. On this course, results in recent years have shown a high proportion of students gaining merit awards. Current standards are broadly average. Two lessons were seen. In both lessons materials and processes were used actively and vigorously, and students showed high levels of interest, laying down fluid washes in bright inks, and creating bold compositions. These factors produced good learning.

### Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at A-level have been well below average in recent years.
- There are very good enrichment activities, including gallery visits and life drawing classes.
- Students on the GNVQ Intermediate course consistently do well.

- Students in Year 13 lack confidence in bolder, broader work.
- The pace is rather slow in some lessons.

### Commentary

196. Although results at A-level have been well below average in recent years, in current work in the school standards have improved, and are now below average. In previous years there have been considerable problems in staffing, including illness. This situation has now been resolved, and a new head of department appointed. Staffing is now consistent and stable, and standards are beginning to rise. The standard of work seen in Year 13 is below average but shows satisfactory achievement, because students joined the course with GCSE results that were below average.
197. Courses are well organised, the curriculum has been improved, and enrichment activities are now a real strength. These include regular gallery visits and life drawing classes. These classes capture students' interest, and challenge them to produce their best. As a result, life work is vigorous and exciting, with chalk and charcoal used well to express the form and weight of the human body. Students also work well in plaster and wire to produce lively sculptures, which are informed by the work of Giacommetti. However, when painting on a larger scale, work lacks confidence in broader passages, and students' brushwork is not always bold enough.
198. On the GNVQ course, methods and materials are used actively and vigorously, and students do better than expected considering their GCSE grades. The course also regularly accepts students who have not studied art in the previous two years at school.
199. Numbers taking the subject on the AS-level course have recently increased, and students' attitudes and interest levels are very good. This is also helping to raise standards.
200. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, relationships between staff and students are very positive, and there are very good individual tutorials. In these tutorials, teachers listen to students with interest, and challenge them to widen their research and investigate ideas more deeply. This has a strong effect on students, who become more focused and animated, and make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. For example, this was seen when students were investigating the effects of war on the work of artists. However, in a small number of lessons, students work at a pace that is comfortable, rather than urgent. This limits their learning to a satisfactory level. In addition, there is no designated space for students to work independently when they are not in lessons, and this restricts the scale of the work that they can undertake. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

### Music technology

The overall provision for music technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons tend to lack pace and urgency and students should be more involved in evaluation of their work.
- The technology equipment used by the sixth form students is good.

### Commentary

201. Standards of work seen in lessons are average for this subject in both Year 12 and 13. In the 2003 AS-level examinations, both students achieved a grade lower than expected. This is a new course for the school and no information is yet available to compare results or to note any trends.

202. In the lessons observed teaching and learning were satisfactory. Teachers are good at their subject and although both are relatively inexperienced at teaching at this level, they are able to help students both musically and technologically. As a result students are acquiring the knowledge and skill in the use of technology and in the musical requirements of the course. Although some used technology for their compositions at GCSE, this is very much a new subject for all of them in Year 12. There were examples of particular aspects of the subject being taught well, such as a potted harmony course before students progressed to their arranging. This was clear and straightforward and was particularly useful for guitarists who had little theoretical background. However, there were others in the class who were quite passive and whose understanding was not checked. Teachers helped students evaluate their work on sequencing tasks. Students are pleased that teachers regularly and quickly provide good written feedback on pieces of work. There is a tendency for the teachers to do too much of the evaluation in the lesson and to take too long. In the lessons observed the pace was leisurely. While both students in Year 13 say that they are regularly set targets to achieve each week, greater demands could be made on them to achieve more quickly with greater urgency. Teachers should encourage students to be more actively involved in evaluating their work and to take more responsibility for their learning.
203. Students are enjoying the course. They feel they have been well advised at the start and this continues as the course proceeds. The new head of department is leading the course well, but it is too early to judge the impact her management of the sixth form art and design course will have on standards. She has aspirations for music at this level and plans eventually to introduce other courses. Examination results and standards are not analysed to enable teachers to plan for improving students' learning. The range of equipment for this course is good. A recording studio is to be set up in an appropriate room in the department.

### **Performing arts**

The quality of provision for performing arts is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students are achieving high standards.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students' attitudes are excellent.
- Some areas of accommodation are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

204. This is a BTEC national certificate course. Standards seen in lessons in this new course are above average. Students have achieved well overall since they started the course, particularly as this involves accepting a totally different style of learning.
205. Teachers know their subject very well and know and understand how students learn. Students work very well in lessons. Warm-up exercises are very effective and help prepare the students for the work ahead. The lessons are lively and enjoyable and students work together effectively. They are capable of organising their work for themselves and have the skills and knowledge, particularly in Year 13, to work unsupported. Teachers have confidence that this can happen successfully, but do not always release the responsibility to their students. There is a strong well-established culture that students evaluate the quality of their work throughout the lesson and in their personal working log. These are worthwhile documents now that students are becoming more critical and less descriptive. Students' work is assessed regularly at the end of each project and they are fully involved. Projects for learning are challenging and stimulating and practical work is supported in all assignments by rigorous paperwork. The documentation used is very thorough, giving students clear guidelines about what has to be

done and how they will be assessed. Students therefore know what they have to do to achieve a grade and how to aim higher and make good progress.

206. The course is very well led by the head of department overseen by the head of department who also teaches on the course. Day-to-day organisation is very good. There have been few opportunities so far to analyse the information that assessment is providing but this needs to become an essential part of the way teachers improve standards through even more focused teaching and learning. The drama studio provides a good space in which to work but there is no suitable and dedicated second space when the studio is being used. At present a social area with a corridor running through it is a totally inappropriate space in which to work seriously at this level without disturbing, and being disturbed by, those in classrooms nearby.

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

### **Physical education**

Overall provision in physical education is **good**.

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

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students.
- Students have very good attitudes.
- There is unsatisfactory preparation of students for entry to advanced courses.

#### **Commentary**

207. Results in 2002 at both AS and A level were well below the national average. Standards in some units of both the AS and A level courses are below expected levels. This is particularly linked to students' understanding of anatomy and physiology and aspects of fitness. In Year 13, students are unsure about muscular action in breaststroke arm action, as a result of not having a clear understanding of muscle anatomy. However, they understand the issues of media influences on elite sport, and particularly the impact this has on elite women's participation. In Year 12, students have made a good start in the preparation of a major project of a personal exercise plan.
208. Although all students have a satisfactory understanding of how different aspects of fitness affect different sporting activities, they lack depth of knowledge in this. The few students who have taken a GCSE course in the subject start the course with some advantage over other students. Students taking the Community Leaders Sports Award understand how to organise an activity session for a group of younger students. Overall, the standards seen were average, and achievement, given the students' below average starting point, is good.
209. Students make good progress in lessons, and considering their limited experience of the theory of physical education are achieving well to reach a satisfactory standard in their work.
210. Teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and give very clear explanations, which lead to the significant learning which takes place in lessons. Very good use is made of laptop computers and projectors to present information to students, which helps them understand key facts. A range of teaching styles also maintains students' interest and this contributes to their learning. Students' learning is reinforced in lessons with the use of 'learning logs', which helps them track what they have learned and how this knowledge will be applied in the future.
211. The subject is very well led and managed. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection, with new opportunities for students to take accredited courses, recreational activities and extra-curricular activities. A-level is now well established, with increasing student

numbers and rising standards. Students value the course, and many intend to use this qualification for entry into higher education to study sports science and train for teaching physical education. There are high standards in extra-curricular activities, particularly in football, badminton and netball with teams winning competitions in Bradford as well as against other Yorkshire schools.

## **BUSINESS**

212. One lesson was sampled. Very good teaching enabled students to make very good progress in their understanding of the marketing function in business. Results in the 2002 AVCE examination were well below the national average.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

### **AVCE Health and social care**

Overall, the provision for health and social care is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A well-planned scheme of work enables the students to achieve satisfactorily despite current staffing difficulties.
- At present there is no permanent team to deliver the course at sixth form level.
- Teachers and students are enthusiastic about the course.
- There is not enough frequent marking, with grading and suggestions on how to improve.

### **Commentary**

213. In the 2002 AVCE examination standards were at the national average, and in 2003 standards remained the same. Observations of lessons and the students' work show that the present Year 13 is maintaining this level. Year 12 students have made a sound start to the course, although their performance is uneven between different modules. Compared to their GCSE grades the achievement of the present Year 12 is satisfactory and that of Year 13 is good. The achievement of the students who took AVCE in 2003 was satisfactory.

214. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic and deliver the well-planned curriculum effectively. They set clear lesson objectives and achieve them. Good use is made of questions to check and reinforce learning, but there is insufficient use of student discussion and input to formulate ideas. Some lessons are delivered from printed notes, emphasising insecure knowledge by the class teacher. Work is seldom marked, so students find difficulty in assessing and improving their performance. The students are industrious; they want to learn and most are good at working independently. They take accurate and full notes; they ask few questions of their own, but respond readily to those that they are asked.

215. The staffing is at present unsatisfactory due to the long-term absence of the head of department. However, the school has addressed this problem as vigorously as it can. The coordinator of vocational courses has taken control and although she does not teach the subject, she is being effective; this management, together with the well-planned scheme of work and enthusiasm of the teachers, is maintaining standards. This is shown by some very well done assignments, such as the developmental studies on two young children and work showing a good appreciation of the care value base. These reflect the effectiveness of the structures set out for the students and their enthusiasm in completing them. Nevertheless, infrequent marking and assessment are having an unfavourable effect on students' achievement. Numbers opting for the course are rising; almost all who set out on the course finish it. When the department resolves its present difficulties it should go ahead strongly.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

### AS/A level General studies

Provision in general studies is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching with a significant amount of very good teaching leads to positive learning.
- The course provides very effective input into students' personal development, as well as the development of critical thinking.
- Students appreciate the many opportunities to discuss a range of issues and share opinions.
- Teaching teams change frequently from year to year, which restricts continuity of teaching methodology.
- Timetable arrangements limit the potential for arranging large group discussions and using visiting speakers.

#### Commentary

216. Results at AS-level in 2002 were below the national average for higher A/B grades but the percentage gaining a pass grade was higher than that achieved nationally. In Year 13, standards in 2002 were close to the national average. At A level, results improved significantly in 2003. All students gained a grade and the proportion achieving an A/B grade was well above the national average for 2002. There were no significant differences in the very good achievement between male and female students.
217. In Year 12, students are beginning to develop skills of critical thinking with regard to a wide range of social, cultural, moral, scientific and environmental issues. They are prepared to consider the opinions of others as well as formulating and expressing their own opinions. They appreciate that on many of the major issues covered there is a range of valid but differing views. In lessons on the nature of being British they exchanged opinions and arrived at valid but varied conclusions. There was a good debate and discussion of the issues. Most understand the formative influences upon individual development. Background general knowledge of some students is, however, weak. Achievement in relation to performance at GCSE overall is good. In Year 13, current standards are above average and achievement is very good. Students have a very good understanding of the social, ethical and environmental implications of scientific and technological development.
218. Teaching and learning are good overall with a high proportion of very good practice in Year 13. Teaching is accurate and lessons are very well planned. Students are challenged to develop independent thinking and research skills. Lessons are interesting and students on the whole are very well motivated, particularly in Year 13. Teachers have high expectations and students respond appropriately. Marking is thorough and helpful.
219. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. A comprehensive set of resources has been built up and is regularly updated. The department is making a significant input into students' personal development and the growth of higher order literacy skills, such as essay writing. Teaching teams tend to change each year with the exception of the head of department and this prevents the department from building up a consistent pattern of teaching and learning styles. Timetable arrangements do not allow large group debate or the use of specialist visiting speakers.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	3	3
<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>3</b>
Attendance	2	4
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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