

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HASLINGDEN HIGH SCHOOL  
&  
PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE**

Haslingden

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119767

Headteacher: Nigel Jepson

Lead inspector: David Morton

Dates of inspection: 1 – 5 December 2003

Inspection number: 259266

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of students: 11-18  
Gender of students: Mixed  
Number on roll: 1496

School address: Broadway  
Haslingden  
Rossendale  
Lancashire  
Postcode: BB4 4EY

Telephone number: 01706 215726  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Martin Harrison

Date of previous inspection: April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much larger than most other secondary schools and is over-subscribed. Students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is consistently average. Many students come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The proportion of students whose mother tongue is not English is very small. Just over 11 per cent of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds; most of these are almost equally of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. The percentage of students with special educational needs, 13 per cent, is below average, although that of students with statements, 3 per cent, is above average. Of those with statements, most are for learning or social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. There are not a significant number of students joining or leaving the school except at the usual times.

The sixth form is larger than the average, with 208 students on its roll. There is almost an equal number of male and female students. Almost 13 per cent of sixth-formers are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are nearly twice as many students in Year 12 as there are in Year 13. Retention rates are very good, with almost all students completing the courses they start in Year 12. Almost three-quarters of those students who complete two years of advanced study move on to higher education.

The school gained 'Investor in People' status in 1999.  
The school was granted status as a specialist College of Performing Arts in 2002.  
It has just applied for Artsmark Gold status and Healthy School status.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13154	David Morton	Lead inspector	Dance, drama
19374	Wendy Sheehan	Lay inspector	
20192	Terry McDermott	Team inspector	
17923	Michael Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics
19214	Geoffrey Price	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language
30512	Margaret Bailey	Team inspector	Science, post-16 physics
31096	John Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
11190	Winifred Burke	Team inspector	Art and design, design and technology
19915	Peggy Hooton	Team inspector	Geography, history
17404	Judith Tolley	Team inspector	French, German
27665	Alrene Lees	Team inspector	Music, post-16 performance studies
19452	Anthony Pearson	Team inspector	Physical education
21971	John Glennon	Team inspector	Religious education, special educational needs
12825	Niall Carr	Team inspector	Citizenship, post-16 business education, psychology
30978	Elizabeth White	Team inspector	Travel and tourism
10160	Roger Bagguley	Team inspector	post-16 biology

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Haslingden High School and Performing Arts College is a good and effective school with a number of outstanding features.** It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It successfully puts into practice its mission of 'Achievement for All' by making sure that all students have the opportunity to benefit from all that the school has to offer.
- Achievement is good as a result of teaching and learning that, overall, are good.
- Very good leadership by the headteacher and good leadership by key staff ensure that the school is a place where students want to learn, all are valued and all are encouraged to improve their standards of work day by day.
- There is insufficient support and evaluation to develop the quality of learning in about a quarter of lessons.
- Results in GCSE in 2003 examinations were uneven and have not been high enough in some subjects, especially French.
- Students' attitudes to their work, their relationships with each other and with adults in the school are very good.
- The performing arts enrich the curriculum and have a positive effect on teaching and learning in most subjects; in dance, drama and music, students produce work that is usually above average.

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection in 1998. Standards have improved at a steady rate. The proportion of teaching that is very good or excellent is higher. The qualities of leadership and management, commended in 1998, are enhanced further through a developing willingness to move the school forward, especially in extending its curriculum to meet more clearly the needs and aspirations of students. Key issues reported in 1998 have been tackled successfully. The school is a self-evaluating organisation that is committed to continuing improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	C	C	C	C
Performance in GCE AS and A-level examinations in Years 12 and 13	C	N/A	N/A	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**The achievement of students is good.** Results in 2003 were average overall and an improvement on previous years.

Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9, and results in 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 showed a marked improvement on those of 2002 and were above average in English, mathematics and science. Improvement is broadly in line with the national trend. Standards seen during the inspection in these subjects matched the test results. Standards in all other subjects at Year 9 are average in information and communication technology [ICT], history, religious education, design and technology, art and design, drama, physical education and citizenship and above average in all other subjects.

Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 and standards of work seen are below average overall and achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Improvement is broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. Most successful subjects in this examination were English literature, ICT, art and design, business studies and drama. Standards seen during the inspection were generally better than the examination results in most other subjects. Boys and girls of all attainment levels and students from minority ethnic groups achieve well in most subjects, although the attainment of boys is not usually as good as that of girls. Students from minority ethnic groups performed better than expected, with 40 per cent attaining five or more higher grades.

Results in the sixth form AS and A2 courses are below average overall but indicate good achievement from a low starting point as the school loses a proportion of higher attainers to the nearby grammar school.

**Students' personal development and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Students enjoy coming to school and have a very positive attitude to their learning. They enjoy good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. There are many incidences of the development of students' spiritual response to experience and reflection. Students mostly behave well, although too many are thoughtless in the casual way they throw litter on the floor instead of in the adequate bins provided. Attendance is good and students arrive to lessons on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education.** Learning is effective since the quality of teaching is good.

Teaching is good overall throughout the school. Learning matches teaching. Both have improved since the previous inspection. A particular feature is that almost a third of all teaching is very good or excellent. This is a result of some successful efforts by the school to improve teaching by paying more attention to how well students are learning. However, this is not the case in all teaching, for the emphasis on effective learning is not as strong in a quarter of teaching that, in consequence, is no better than satisfactory. This teaching is not given enough attention and supported rigorously enough by heads of subject and senior management. Students with special educational needs and those whose first language is other than English receive appropriate support although it is noticeable how, when learning support is not available, the achievement in lessons made by lower attainers is diminished.

The curriculum provided by the school is good. There is a range of choice as students move through the school; present and future planning seeks to provide each student aged 14 and above with the opportunity to select a learning package that will suit the individual's learning needs and aspirations. The arts have a positive effect on most subjects and their high profile in the school enriches students' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good** overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the continuing development of the school and he provides very good leadership through regular consultation and evaluation of how the school might improve. He is supported well by key members of staff who understand and present this clear purpose and sense of direction to all staff. Yet more should still be done. Management at all levels sometimes loses sight of the practical support and evaluation necessary if all learning and achievement in the school is to be as good as the best. The work of governors, overall, is satisfactory. Governors have been effectively active in working with the leadership group in evolving a vision of 'Achievement for All'. However, the school is in breach of its statutory duties by not providing a daily act of worship for all students and there are omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.

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

*Comments are based on those of students and parents who completed the questionnaires and the parents who attended the parents' meeting.* Throughout all years students show that they enjoy coming to school. They say they are usually taught well and get on well with teachers and their classmates. Most feel that behaviour in the school is good. Parents indicate that they are pleased with how well the school provides for their children and only a small minority have concerns, usually about what they perceive to be disruptive behaviour of a minority and the inconsistent setting of homework.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve GCSE and AS/A-level results so that they match more closely standards seen in the best lessons,
- provide more rigorous support and evaluation to develop the quality of learning in about a quarter of lessons,
- make sure there are sufficient accessible computers for sixth-formers to use for independent study

and, to meet statutory requirements ensure that:

- an act of collective worship is provided daily for all students,
- religious education is part of the sixth-form curriculum for all students,
- the governors' annual report to parents is completed as required.



The sixth form is larger than average with 208 male and female students, almost in equal numbers. The curriculum provides a range of traditional and vocational subjects.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**It is a good, and cost effective sixth form** which works hard to ensure that its students achieve well, within a balanced budget, and with a range of courses which meet their needs and aspirations.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The overall good quality of teaching and learning which leads to good achievement.
- The very good attitudes of the students to learning.
- The very good pastoral support and academic guidance the teachers give to students.
- Continuing good leadership with a clear vision of meeting students' needs and raising aspiration.
- Standards are well below average on entry in Year 12, and below average when students leave at the end of Year 13. This represents good achievement.
- ICT resources give inadequate support for independent learning for all students.
- Detailed information on the performance of students is not used consistently to raise standards.

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

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is <b>good</b> . Standards are above average as a result of good teaching that leads to good achievement.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is <b>good</b> . Standards are above average. Good teaching ensures that achievement is good.
Science	<b>Good</b> provision is made for physics and biology. Results in examinations are average in physics and well below in biology. Good teaching and learning combine with good attitudes to give good achievement in both subjects.
Information and communication technology	Provision for ICT is <b>good</b> . Standards are average. Consistently good teaching and the positive attitudes of the students lead to good achievement.
Humanities	There is <b>good</b> provision in history and psychology. Standards are average in both subjects. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good in history and good in psychology.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in the performing arts is <b>good</b> ; in art and design it is <b>satisfactory</b> . Good teaching ensures good learning and achievement in all these arts areas. Students' attitudes are very good; their work serves as models for students in the main school.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in travel and tourism is <b>good</b> . Standards are below average in examinations but students' starting point is very low. Good teaching and learning mean that achievement is good.
Business	Provision in business studies is <b>good</b> . Standards are average. Teaching and learning are good. Students' achievement is good.

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

## **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Students receive good advice, guidance and support. There is a well-structured recruitment and induction programme that generally places students on appropriate courses of study. Assessment processes are systematic and generate accurate information on performance that allows teachers to check students' academic progress and personal development. Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek information for themselves about their future options and their destinations after they leave the sixth form. Relationships between students and teachers are very good

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

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There is a clear sense of purpose within the sixth form, developed and sustained over time. This focuses upon meeting the needs of all students, and, whilst widening their horizons, provides them with the tools for their further personal development. The school has responded well to the need to broaden the range of the courses it offers. It is steadily increasing the number and range of well-founded vocational courses. The school knows how well its students are progressing through a process of comprehensive and accurate monitoring of their performance. Teachers carry out their roles and responsibilities well, with a distinct sense of teamwork. The effectiveness of working practices is reviewed regularly, and updated or modified if necessary.

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

The students hold very positive views about their overall experiences in the sixth form. They feel that teaching is consistently good and they readily acknowledge the extra support they receive from teachers. Many feel let down by the Connexions Service that currently does not provide required levels of support and advice. Due to the hard work of the sixth-form staff, most needs are still met, however. There is some disagreement amongst students about the range of additional activities in which they can participate, but inspectors find that many opportunities are provided, both by the school and the students.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

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

Overall, standards are average yet the achievement of students is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the performing arts are amongst the best in the school.
- Standards are above average by Years 9 and 11 in mathematics and geography.
- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are improving and were above average in 2003. This represents good achievement by this year group of students.
- GCSE results need to be better.
- Achievement in work seen is good in almost all subjects in Years 7 to 11.
- There is clear scope for improvement in achievement in French and citizenship in Years 7 to 11, religious education in Years 7 to 9 and physical education in Years 10 and 11.

#### Commentary

1. In work seen, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by Year 9; those in ICT and all other subjects are average, except geography and music where standards are above average. By Year 11 standards in mathematics remain above average whilst in English and science standards are average. However, by Year 11 standards in all subjects are above average except German, ICT, physical education and citizenship where standards are average, and French where they are below average. Boys do not attain as high standards as girls in most subjects.
2. Students with special educational needs achieve well overall. Achievement is good in all subjects except German and mathematics, where it is satisfactory, and French, where it is unsatisfactory. Whilst results in the 2002 GCSE examinations showed that students with special educational needs had achieved well, in 2003 there was a dip, and students' achievement was satisfactory.

#### Overall achievement of students

Achievement	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Very good	Music,	Geography, history, design and technology, dance, drama, music
Good	English, German, Mathematics, science, ICT, geography, history, design and technology, art and design, dance, drama, physical education	English, German, Mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, art and design,
Satisfactory	Religious education, citizenship	French, physical education, citizenship
Unsatisfactory	French	

3. On entry to the school, the attainment of students in English, mathematics and science was average. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average in English, mathematics and science and match the work seen in lessons this term. Assessment of ICT by teachers at the end of Year 9 found standards to be above average. Girls attained better results than boys in English, boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science. Students from minority ethnic groups performed in line with other students in mathematics and science but slightly below others in English. Improvement over five years is similar to that found nationally. Students identified as gifted and talented generally achieve at

rates similar to the mainstream of students; enrichment materials and experiences for these students are at an early stage of development. The Thursday lunchtime club is a key early opportunity for extended work, most of which currently has an ICT base. In the best lessons, these students are extended and challenged by teachers; good examples of this were seen in dance and drama.

4. Some students have difficulty retaining knowledge and lack regular practice in the skills required in subjects. This makes it difficult for them to apply themselves to new work. This is particularly acute where teaching is not as good as the best in the school. In French, in particular, this has a progressively detrimental effect as students move through Years 7 to 9, although standards and achievement improve somewhat in Years 10 and 11. Students soon lose confidence in a subject they find difficult anyway; they end up not engaging fully in the work of the class and their oral work suffers as a result. In most subjects, however, students learn steadily and usually remember what they learn. When teaching is good students achieve well and build effectively on earlier learning.
  
5. Results in GCSE examinations are improving at a rate similar to that found nationally. Results are generally around the national average and comparisons with schools with similar attainment in national tests two years earlier are also average. However, results compare very well with those of schools with students from a similar disadvantaged socio-economic background, measured by the percentage of students entitled to free school meals. Results achieved by higher attaining students were average overall, with only business studies, drama, English literature and ICT attaining results significantly better than the national average at the higher A\* to C grades. Whilst average overall, middle and lower-attaining students did relatively better than the higher attainers. The performance of students with special educational needs was good, with several achieving average results. Overall, girls performed better than boys in GCSE examinations and have done over six years, but in 2002 and 2003 there was a bigger positive margin between boys' performance and the performance of boys nationally, than that of girls. Students from minority ethnic groups performed well overall, 41 per cent of them attaining five or more A\* to C grades. All Chinese students performed very well in their heritage language GCSE examinations, and students taking Bengali and Urdu are likely to have achieved results close to the national average, once these are known.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	50.0 (53)	52.6 (50.0)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (95)	88.6 (91.0)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (99)	94.6 (96.0)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	34.6 (36.4)	40.5 (34.6)

*There were 264 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Comparative national figures for the GCSE examinations of 2003 are not available at the time of publication.*

### **GCSE % results at A\* - C in 2003 by subject:**

Subject	School result 2003	National average 2003 [if available]	Comment
Art and design	70	67	Improvement on 2002
Bengali	57		Consistent
Business studies	74	56	Above average again
Chinese	100		Outstanding
Dance	47		Improving
Design & technology	52	54	Slight dip
Drama	78	67	constant

Economics	38		Should be higher
English language	59	60	Much the same
English literature	76	65	Big improvement
French	34	49	Still not good enough
Geography	45	61	Big slippage
German	37	54	improvement
History	66	63	slippage
ICT	73	57	Small improvement
Mathematics	55	51	Still average
Music	70	68	average
Physical education	58	56	Big drop
Science – double award	55	53	Slight dip
Science – single award	25		improvement
Statistics	65	na	Big drop
Religious studies [short course]	43	61	Should be better
Travel & tourism	33		Should be better
Textiles	57		Around average
Urdu	50		consistent

6. Most subjects cater well for developing the literacy skills of students and these are of a sufficient standard to allow them to achieve well across the range of subjects. Writing is generally weaker than reading, speaking and listening, yet nonetheless good examples were seen in a number of subjects of extended pieces of writing by a range of students, not just higher attainers. Students use mathematical skills satisfactorily in several subjects and the school is well advanced in encouraging greater awareness of opportunities to develop students' skills in this area. In ICT, this sort of development has already taken place, and most students use and gain experience in using computers to support their learning.

### **Sixth form**

Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students enter the sixth form with well below average standards of attainment. By the end of Year 13, the standard achieved by students has improved to below average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are consistently above average in English literature.
- Students receive consistently good teaching from subject specialists, and they achieve well.
- The students have very good attitudes and a determination to succeed.

### **Commentary**

7. During the inspection, the standard of work in the 11 subjects inspected (of the total of 27 academic courses and three vocational courses), was average. In the courses focused on in the inspection, students achieve well in every one. In the work seen, students are on target to reach the standards set in GCE A-level examinations in the previous two years. There is a similar pattern to the work seen in Year 12.

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

	School results in 2003	School results in 2002	National results in 2002
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	88.1	89.7	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	20.1	23.6	39.4

Average point score per student	230	226.6	263.3
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8. Results overall in 2002 were below the average for all schools except for English Literature, of the focus subjects for the inspection, which was above average. In business studies and ICT results were average and in performing arts, mathematics, travel and tourism were below average. In 2003, results are likely to be above average in English literature, physics and travel and tourism, average in biology and ICT, below average in mathematics, history and performing arts, and well below average in art and design, business studies, and psychology. There was no appreciable difference in the performance of male or female students. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds performed as well as all other students. Examination results in 2002 and 2003 were broadly of the same standard. Taking prior attainment into account, achievement in both 2002 and 2003 was good. In most instances, results reflected the standards seen during lessons. However, in practical subjects such as the arts and design and technology, written demands in examinations sometimes account for grades being lower than those seen in practical lessons.

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

Students' personal development is **good**. Their attitudes to school and their approach to their work are very good. They are usually punctual to lessons and their behaviour is generally good. Provision for their spiritual development is much better than at the time of the previous inspection and, together with provision for moral, social and cultural development, is now good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships in the school are very good and provide a good climate for learning.
- Students take responsibility in a variety of ways; the school council is a significant contributor to the quality of the school
- There are many instances when students experience significant spiritual learning, notably in the arts, poetry within English and sometimes in assemblies and form periods.
- Attendance has improved slightly and helps students to achieve well.

### Commentary

9. Students enjoy coming to school and apply themselves well to all the opportunities provided by the school. Older students speak of how the school has improved. Arts students are thrilled with the new dance and drama studios. Students of all ages rise to the challenge of being active learners. Increased involvement in the performing arts has given them the confidence to transfer skills learned there to other subjects. They are also willing to experiment with newer approaches to learning. Yet, their commitment to doing their best, most of them, means that they also apply themselves well to more traditional yet valuable styles of learning. They are prepared to get their heads down and work hard, often independently.
10. Very good relationships are a strength of the school. Students soon feel they belong and a sense of community is apparent. Students respect and care for each other and mostly respect property and the fabric of the school. Yet, this positive picture is sullied by a minority of otherwise responsible students, who thoughtlessly throw down litter. The convenience of being able to buy food on site should, perhaps, be withdrawn until a lesson in social responsibility is learned. This would be a drastic step and shock most students who do behave responsibly, but there is a lesson to be learned.
11. This concern apart, Haslingden is seen to be a good place to come to each day. The school gives responsibility and helps students to mature and develop as well-rounded and likeable

young adults. The introduction of citizenship into the curriculum is beginning to have an impact on students' social awareness. More teachers in most subjects could seek to draw attention more to the strands of their subject which relate to young people growing up in communities and needing to respond to societal influences.

12. The school offers students a wide range of cultural experiences, especially in the arts and the considerable breadth of extra-curricular activities. Students can sometimes surprise. Their enthusiasm and willingness to listen with respect to each other reading their own poems at a 'poetry café' is a good example of the positive and mature attitudes most bring to school. Dance shines out as a beacon of good practice. Students rehearse at every opportunity when a public performance is pending. The art rooms and public areas of the school are rich in visual displays of a high quality. Assemblies that give students opportunities to reflect on wider issues underpin the value the school places on matters that transcend everyday experience. A Year 8 student talked about a hospice to his year group, encouraging them to support it – or – each year group was asked to reflect on the struggle of conscience for Judas after he realised his sin in betraying Christ. This reflection was sustained well by the background of the school's chamber orchestra playing from 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. These assemblies had a particular resonance by placing Easter's message close to that of birth at Christmas.
  
13. In most lessons the standard of behaviour is good. This was evident from the high proportion of lessons seen in the inspection – four out of five – where the quality of learning was good or better. This was not only the result of effective teaching, for the quality of the learning was enhanced by students' attitudes to it. When, rarely, behaviour is challenging, most teachers have the expertise to handle it. Trust is developed in students and high expectations of behaviour are the norm and, as a result, complex systems of behaviour management or rewards or sanctions are not necessary.
  
14. Behaviour is good in the school. Owing to the very good relationships between students and staff, racial harmony is secure. Respect is shown for different cultural customs and faiths. The proportion of excluded students is small – less than three per cent of the school population. These exclusions are not the result of racial tension.

***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	1325	49	2
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	82	3	1
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	73	1	0
Chinese	6	0	0

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

15. Attendance data shows an improvement in attendance in 2002/2003 on the previous year. The school has identified the need to ensure regular attendance particularly in Year 11 and as a result has introduced a first day contact system. However attendance and unauthorised

absences in Year 11 are still higher than other years. The educational welfare officer provides continuous diligent support and works very closely with all year tutors. Various reward schemes sponsored by a local supermarket help to promote good attendance. Punctuality in the morning is good but a few students dawdle between lessons and lesson time is sometimes wasted.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.3
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.35
National data	1.2

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Learning is effective since the quality of teaching is good. The school takes care to try to meet the needs and aspirations of all students including those with special educational needs, those deemed to be gifted and talented, boys and girls and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. The curriculum provision is good and serves all students well. Whilst resources and staffing are adequate overall, the accommodation is poor in the main, despite some new building that has recently opened. The sixth-form block is due to be replaced but at present sixth-formers are disadvantaged and aspects of poor sixth-form resources and fabric have a negative effect on standards. The quality of care is good and students receive very good support, advice and guidance.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is **good** throughout the school; as a result, learning is also good. There is some variation to this overall picture as there is some very good teaching in geography, design and technology, dance, drama, history and music; some teaching in modern foreign languages is no better than satisfactory and is sometimes unsatisfactory. Teaching is occasionally no better than satisfactory in ICT and history in Years 7 to 9 and in physical education in Years 10 and 11.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching means that students achieve well overall.
- Styles of teaching encourage a range of approaches to learning that are effective.
- Some teaching is rarely better than satisfactory and management does not do sufficient to help teachers to create opportunities for more effective learning.
- Good relationships between students and staff encourage effective teaching and learning, including that with students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

### **Commentary**

16. Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is in part due to the effort of management at senior and departmental level to monitor and support teaching and share good practice. By the same token however, in some cases opportunities to do this have been missed when a need should have been apparent.



17. Most of the teaching is energetic, enthusiastic and indicates teachers' love of their subject. They know and understand their subjects well and make lessons rich experiences for students. They are imaginative in their approach and seek to use a variety of teaching styles to meet different learning characteristics. This includes taking account of the learning needs of students, such as those who are gifted and talented or those with some form of learning difficulties. Some of the very best teaching, where a subject makes it especially appropriate, takes account of the ethnic background of students, for example in art and design, music and religious education. Approaches to teaching and learning that are found in good arts teaching is beginning to have an effect on teaching across other subjects. The school fulfils its commitment to do this as part of its specialist status as a performing arts college. The best teaching in the arts and in other subjects acknowledges that students learn effectively when stepping into the unknown or taking risks. They have a right to fail since effective learning sometimes occurs best as a result. Confident teachers also take risks. Often there will be a problem to be solved or a dilemma to be tackled. This was seen in a history lesson about with Year 11 about the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Students sought explanations in groups, forming convincing arguments to make a case. For example, is boom a good thing if it has a devastating impact on poor people? What about the role of the banks? The teacher thought about this learning imaginatively – calling it verbal boxing.
18. In a drama lesson about stereotyping with Year 9, the teacher focused on home life compared with being a soldier amongst young men in Germany at the time of the First World War. Students were required to think beyond what they thought they knew because of movies they had seen and what they really knew about notions of family, courage, loyalty, duty, fear and love. They then had to use a range of dramatic conventions to portray their feelings. This could happen in history, religious education, citizenship or art and design. In a design and technology lesson with Year 9, students had to design their own logo to meet different audiences. A learning support assistant worked sensitively with a student with physical disability, using technology to challenge choice. Hot-seating was used in an English lesson about 'Macbeth' with Year 9. Students played a range of characters to be questioned by their classmates; they worked with the teacher at a fast pace, changing roles. A support assistant took the role of Lady Macbeth at one point and her answers raised the level of questioning by the class. In this and similar imaginative teaching, the unexpected can arrest the attention of students.
19. The best teaching seen is characterised by its energy, the use of variety in presentation and good use of resources such as ICT and music. Needs of individual students are considered at the planning stage. Most of all, in the best lessons students knew what they were aiming to learn and that they would be tested on that learning at the end of the lesson. Teachers who placed less value on this process excused themselves by saying that they ran out of time; in fact this is the result of ineffective planning, although for some subjects the 50-minute lesson is taxing for teachers.
20. Less successful lessons lack these qualities. Expectations are not high enough or unrealistic, pace flags, students are asked to work on inappropriate tasks and teachers talk too much. Teachers do not value the final part of the lesson where learning is evaluated. Management knows what it expects of teachers but there is little evidence that less successful teachers are helped with the daily craft of teaching. There seems to be a lack of clarity in defining a lesson's learning objectives and how to apply them to the teaching of the lesson. It is not clear that the school has thought enough about the nature of teaching and the ways students learn—kinaesthetic, auditory, visual. Good teachers talk about assessment for learning but it still does not always have an effect on how they teach. There's a tendency for thinking and talking to be theoretical and not applied to improving practice.
21. Some teachers teach too much. They do not encourage students sufficiently to fend for themselves and learn and research independently. Teachers do not take enough cognisance of the skills within a class that can be applied to solving problems or tackling issues in a lesson

without outcomes being over-directed by the teacher. Students should be made to think for themselves more than is found in some lessons.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 189 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (3.7%)	52 (27.5%)	75 (39.6%)	50 (26.5%)	5 (2.7%)	0.(0.0)	0 (0.0)

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

22. The quality of teaching of students with special educational needs is good. The learning support faculty provides individual education plans with general targets. In most cases subject departments do not provide specific targets which would focus teaching and learning more sharply. Even so teachers are well aware of students' needs and provide work of suitable challenge in all subjects except French. An outstanding example is in design and technology where the department provides suitable workbooks for students with learning needs and makes special provision for students with physical needs. Students also receive effective support from teaching assistants. However, the number of teaching assistant hours is well below the average for schools of similar size. Consequently their absence holds back students' progress in a number of lessons, particularly in mathematics and science.
23. Students' progress towards the targets on their individual education plans is assessed twice a year. In addition, annual reviews are held of the progress of students with statements of special educational need. There is, however, no system for tracking the overall progress of students with special needs or of analysing data such as GCSE results to identify possible strengths and weaknesses in provision.

### **Assessment**

Provision for assessment, for Years 7 to 11 is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers assess students' work regularly and provide helpful written feedback on their work.
- Teachers use assessment information, gained through tests and examinations, to inform their planning and for target setting to meet the needs of individual students and groups.
- Higher attaining students understand what they have to do to reach the next level or to gain a better grade but lower attainers are not always aware of the small gaps in their learning or how to close them.

### **Commentary**

24. The school uses electronic systems very well to identify students' capability and potential as well as to predict results in public examinations. Teachers have easy access to both pastoral and academic information. Throughout the school key pieces of work are assessed regularly and students are given very constructive written comments on their performance. Both parents and students benefit from review days when teachers celebrate successes but also explain clearly what still needs to be done to gain good levels by Year 9 or higher grades by Year 11. Senior management monitor students' books regularly. As a result, work is marked consistently with helpful written comments being a strong feature.
25. Assessment in classrooms is still inconsistent. Currently the best practice has not been shared across the school. Given the high status that public examinations have, it is not surprising that teachers think narrowly about assessment as something that is done to learners and not something that, at classroom level, encourages learners to be active partners in the assessment process. During the inspection the best supportive assessment for learning in lessons was seen in dance, drama, in history, geography and religious education

with unsatisfactory practice identified in a Year 9 French lesson and a Year 8 mathematics lesson.

## **Sixth form**

Teaching in the sixth form is good and leads to effective learning. Students achieve well from a low starting point. Some Year 11 students move to the nearby grammar school for a traditional sixth-form education. Haslingden High School is building a sixth form that combines traditional specifications with vocational opportunities. The range of teaching found in the school successfully reflects this approach.

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

- Good teaching helps students to achieve well.
- Teaching is very good in history.
- Teachers know their subjects well.
- Learning is good in lessons, but there are a few examples of students struggling with courses that may be inappropriate for them.
- Attention is not always given sufficiently to the development of the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT.

### **Commentary**

26. In the subjects that were the focus of the inspection, the quality of teaching is very good in history. It is good in all other subjects.
27. Teachers know their subject well. Teachers have a good knowledge of the course requirements and students are guided through the requirements at both AS and A-levels. The best teaching encourages students to be active in lessons, especially through their contributions to discussions. Given the chance, students want to be involved in their own learning. Teachers plan well and lessons are well structured. Lessons have pace and challenge and the differing capabilities of students are met. Teaching is not so good when teachers are tied to examination requirements and tend to spoon-feed students. This is rare, but more responsibility should be given to students for their own learning. They should be encouraged more to learn from each other and some lessons are not structured to allow this to happen.

### **Assessment**

Provision for assessment in the sixth form is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers assess students' work very thoroughly and consistently.
- Teachers make good use of assessment data to inform their planning as well as to set targets to meet the needs of individual students and groups.
- The majority of students understand how well they are doing and how they can improve.

### **Commentary**

28. The school efficiently uses centralised electronic records to analyse data from tests and examinations. By this means they are able to predict grades and set targets for individuals and faculties. Data are used well in order to analyse whether students have achieved as expected or whether individuals or groups have under achieved. This information is useful for teachers, students, parents and school governors. Academic and pastoral records are accessible to tutors so that they can offer students advice based on sound evidence. Review days and

continuous assessment of key pieces of work ensure that students are kept well informed of their progress measured against examination objectives and what they can do in order to improve.

29. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and provide ideas on how to improve. Good discussions are held on a one-to-one basis as part of this assessment and improvement process. Marking and written feedback to students are monitored regularly and as a result assessment is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection report. Very good assessment practice is evident in travel and tourism and biology, good assessment is recorded in mathematics, history, ICT, English, performance studies, art and design and satisfactory practice in physics and business education.
30. Students are beginning to benefit from a major change in focus where assessment is transformed from something imposed upon them from above into something to which they are expected to contribute. In a Year 12 English lesson for example, students reported on how well they felt they had done. This was a case where assessment had a very positive effect on learning. In geography students understood value-added data in relation to their own performance. Those who were not happy with how well they had done were fired up to do better. Self-assessment is not an obvious feature in all classrooms. Currently there are missed opportunities for involving students in the assessment process and for teachers developing assessment procedures that are diagnostic of each individual's strengths and weaknesses.

## **The curriculum**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs and aspirations of students well.
- The opportunities provided by the school's Performing Arts College status are strengths of the school.
- All students have excellent access to all that the school has to offer.
- The provision of personal, social and health education is good.
- Extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside lessons is very good.
- Statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship are not met.

### **Commentary**

31. The curriculum is inclusive. The school strives to provide all students with the opportunity to experience all it has to offer. Students have a wide range of learning opportunities including work-related learning, courses in ICT, travel and tourism, business and health and social care. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 allows students to pursue their interests and aspirations. The school provides students with the opportunity to study two languages in Year 7 to 11 and two community languages in Year 10 and 11. The school regularly reviews and effectively evaluates its provision. It is committed to meeting the needs of its students and is looking to extend opportunities for students to take vocational courses in Years 10 and 11.
32. Overall, the quality of learning opportunities is very good in geography and good in all other subject areas with the exception of mathematics, religious education, citizenship and information technology where it is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the time allocated for music and the arts has increased and the school now meets statutory requirements for ICT. However the time allocation for Year 10 and 11 students in religious education following the full course to GCSE is insufficient.

33. There is a wide programme of extra-curricular activities which provides very good opportunities for students to enhance the school's good provision for students' personal development within and beyond the timetabled curriculum. The school makes every effort to ensure all students are able to benefit from the opportunities offered for example by sponsoring some students and by encouraging and supporting students to raise funds for gap year experiences in Africa, South America and India. Extra-curricular activities involve most students and staff in one form or another. There are very good opportunities for students to take part a wide range of activities which enhance the taught curriculum such as field trips in geography and science, educational visits in art and design and history and visits to the theatre by dance, drama and English departments. Students also have the opportunity to enhance their learning of modern languages through trips to France and Germany. The school also has good links with the local community and is an important centre for the performing arts within the region. In addition to this there is a wide range of sporting and musical activities available after school. All students are encouraged to be involved in the school's productions.
34. The interest in the arts curriculum that has developed in recent years, leading to the school's current status as a specialist college, has special resonances in a school that is somewhat isolated and in an area distanced from theatres, concert halls and galleries. Students respond well to the opportunities for live engagement with the arts. This often leads to performance in these subjects equalling or being better than that of others in the school. Already, the active approaches to learning found in the arts are having an impact on the way the curriculum in other subjects is presented to students. The humanities in particular have adopted many appropriate techniques to teaching and learning. Students are engaged on arts lessons and behaviour is almost always good. Work is challenging and students themselves develop high expectations. Relationships are such that quality can be pursued. The curriculum for the arts includes opportunities for students to work in school with practising professional artists. The school has made a range of very productive links with individual artists, theatre companies and music ensembles.
35. There is good provision for students with special educational needs. They have physical access to every part of the school. These students are fully included in all parts of school life. For example, on school visits hotels are selected to ensure they meet the needs of students with physical difficulties. Year 7 students are given extra 'catch-up' lessons in literacy and numeracy during registration periods. Tutors from older classes are used during these sessions. They are efficiently run in a pleasant atmosphere and are effective in improving performance.

### **Sixth form**

Sixth-form curricular provision is good, and there is an extensive range of courses offered for students to follow. There is some flexibility to meet demand. The very good retention rate, the good attendance rates of the students, the inclusiveness of access and the high rate of entry to either higher education or further education, confirm the effectiveness of the provision.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The wide range of courses is well matched to students' needs, both academic and increasingly, well founded vocational courses
- Students have many opportunities to extend their experiences through the school's range of extra-curricular enrichment activities.
- Many students consider that they do not receive enough Connexions Service advice.
- Statutory requirements are not fully met for the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all sixth-form students.

## **Commentary**

36. The quality and range of the learning opportunities are good in the sixth form. The curriculum that the school provides is well thought out, and flexible enough to ensure that the needs of all students are met. There are good opportunities for progression through an increasingly wide range of AS-level and intermediate vocational courses, on to A2 and advanced vocational courses. Those students, of any ability, who wish to mix academic and vocational study, are very well catered for. This sixth form is the only institution in the area where the mixing of academic and vocational pathways is possible. Opportunities for progression into higher education from the advanced courses on offer are also good, with many course combinations providing direct links into particular career paths. Around three-quarters of sixth formers enter higher education, and about a fifth move into further education.
37. Curricular experiences are broadened with all Year 12 students following an accredited course in critical thinking. Year 13 students currently follow a general studies course. The school has adopted a policy of developing and recognising key skills by integration within subjects and courses. The enrichment opportunities provided by the school are supplemented by strong support for students to develop their own ideas and initiatives. Fund-raising to support fellow students on a gap year, and other significant projects, such as a biannual field trip to New Zealand, is always encouraged, and the school often gives additional financial support.
38. Students have good opportunities for work shadowing or work tasting, and the school has strong links within the wider community to place students with a professional in a career of potential interest.

## ***Accommodation, resources and staffing***

39. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is good, because the school recruits sufficient subject specialists. Resources for learning are adequate but uneven, with some subjects such as performing arts, the sciences, and travel & tourism benefiting from refurbished dedicated rooms and updated equipment, whilst other subjects, such as psychology, are hindered by insufficient ICT equipment, and cramped general teaching spaces. Sixth-formers do not have ready access to computers; this has a negative effect on their need to research and work independently. The sixth-form block itself is a depressing place, being an adaptation of a former block dating back to the early 1970s to cope with raising the school-leaving age to 16. Though sixth-formers deny it, and their very good attitudes hide it, it is a clear barrier to learning, and to positive social interaction. The school is now in an agreed position to resolve this issue.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The quality of students' support, advice and guidance are **very good**. This provision is based on careful monitoring and evaluation.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good procedures for induction help students settle in well
- Very good guidance supports students' learning.
- Procedures for child protection and health and safety are good.
- Careers guidance has been restricted due to problems with Connexions staffing, accommodation and resources.

## **Commentary**

40. Very good procedures for induction ensure that students settle quickly into Year 7. The school spends considerable time visiting primary schools to help students prepare for the transition. Sixth form students are linked to different form groups and help younger students during the first few weeks, this gives students someone else to turn to should they feel concerned. The overwhelming majority of questionnaires returned by parents agree that the good procedures helped their child to settle in quickly. Close and good relationships of students with tutors, teachers and heads of year contribute to a very good quality of care.
41. Procedures for child protection and 'looked after children' are very good. Members of staff, including new staff to the school, are made fully aware of these procedures and are constantly alert to concerns or changes in students' attitudes. Procedures for health and safety are good during lessons and governors are actively involved in fulfilling their duties. However, Year 10 and 11 students are permitted to leave the site at lunchtime without any signing in or out procedure and this is a concern in the event of fire. Concerns over the quality of the toilets are an ongoing issue that the school is trying to tackle. The school's arrangements for ensuring students are aware of the dangers posed by the Internet are suitable and good procedures are in place to monitor students' usage.
42. Form tutors and heads of years provide very good pastoral and academic support for students through the monitoring systems that are in place. In discussions students are very clear of their targets in subjects and what they need to do to improve and exceed the targets set. They are confident that there is a member of staff they can confide in.
43. Through a recent student questionnaire, the school council and the school improvement forum, students are given good opportunities to help improve the school environment. Students are particularly pleased with the improvements to canteen services at lunchtime and the increased number of bins around the school.
44. The school's provision of guidance is good. However, the careers programme in recent years has been affected by inconsistencies in the delivery of the Connexions Service. In discussions some Year 11 students feel particularly disappointed with the provision over the past year. This has included staffing problems, the need to refurbish accommodation and the need to fully restock careers literature. As a consequence, in particular of the staffing concerns, the school is closely monitoring the Connexions provision. Careers advice starts in Year 8 and provides an appropriate planned development through personal social and health education lessons.

## **Sixth form**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good induction into the sixth form helps students to settle quickly.
- Good internal advice and guidance support students with their aspirations.
- Impartial external career advice has not met the school's expectations.
- Good use of targets helps students to understand what they need to do to achieve well.

## Commentary

45. In their questionnaires, several students felt that they did not have someone they could confide in, that enrichment was limited and advice on what to study was insufficient. However inspection findings through discussion with many sixth-formers, showed that teachers have good open relationships with students, that the advice prior to joining the sixth form is good and that there is an adequate variety of enrichment activities.
46. There is a high retention rate of students on courses, reflecting very good guidance and a strong commitment from students to achieve. The school ensures very good guidance for students in Year 11 about the options available for them in the sixth form. Taster days and open days help students to experience sixth-form life prior to joining. Four out of ten students felt they had not received sufficient careers advice on options following their time in the sixth form. This is mainly due to the Connexions staffing problems resulting in inconsistencies in the delivery of advice. Students are made well aware of the options open to them and visitors to school help support their choices. Students have high aspirations and many are keen to continue their education at institutes of higher education. In discussion students said that the sixth form provided good preparation for the next stage in their careers.
47. As in Years 7 to 11, good procedures to monitor students' achievement and to set targets help students to improve their work. Students reported that they find the sessions in which they meet staff to discuss work and progress helpful and informative. They also valued the individual time teachers spend to make them aware of what they need to do to improve.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the community is **good** and promotes effective relationships.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school
- Good relationships with the local community support learning.
- Annual reports to parents vary in quality between subjects.

## Commentary

48. Analysis of the 314 returns of parent questionnaires show that almost all parents agree that their child likes school, is expected to do their best and that they make good progress. Inspection findings support these views. Some parents feel that some students' behaviour is not good. The inspection found that the majority of students are well behaved in lessons and throughout the school day.
49. In letters to the inspection team prior to the inspection and in the analysis of the questionnaires some parents felt that homework was often insufficient or lacking challenge. Through discussion with students and analysis of students' work the majority of homework was found to be satisfactory although there were some inconsistencies between subjects.
50. Some parents felt they were not sufficiently informed about progress; however, the majority of parents have favourably received the review days introduced last year. These days provide a good opportunity for students, alongside parents, to reflect on whether they are making sufficient progress and to set targets to improve. There is also the added opportunity to attend a parents' evening to review their child's progress.



51. Parental involvement in the school is good. Many more parents attended the first review day compared to the number who previously attended parents' evenings. The majority of parents regularly sign and review students' academic progress through their child's personal planners. Most parents also ensure that their child attends regularly.
52. The quality of the documentation that the school provides for parents is satisfactory. Students' annual reports are satisfactory but are variable in quality between subjects. The best reports provide a clear understanding of what students know, understand and can do and what students need to do next to improve. Others only give grade indications with limited personal assessment. The termly newsletter provides a good celebration of the life of the school. The school prospectus provides a succinct overview of the school.
53. Parents whose first language may not be English are given very good support from the school's English as an additional language team. For example, members of staff are available at parents' meetings to translate when required.
54. The school works fully in accordance with the Code of Practice in ensuring that parents are involved in decisions regarding students with special educational needs and there are plans to improve liaison further. Parents of students with statements of special educational need are always invited to annual reviews and most attend. There is very good partnership with a local special school which works to the benefit of students in both schools.
55. The school has developed good links with the community, especially through subject links. They support the school's programme of work experience for students in Year 10. The Young Enterprise Club for Year 10 students is very popular and community representatives are very supportive of these students. Links with feeder schools are good and teachers spend considerable time promoting these links.
56. Induction into the sixth form is very good. There are good links with the local community and industry. For example, sixth-formers are currently organising a senior citizens' Christmas party which incorporates an expressive arts show. Hospitals and schools in the area readily provide advice and opportunities to help students understand various career choices. Connections with local universities and local colleges provide good advice to support students' career ambitions. Students particularly value the industry conference.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management of the school is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of key staff is good. The management of the school, overall, is good. The work of governors, overall, is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership by the headteacher has resulted in continual school improvement.
- Key managers are supportive of the headteacher's vision and mostly implement programmes conscientiously.
- Good management has resulted in good overall achievement, especially in Years 7 to 9 and the sixth form.
- Management's support and development of weaker learning is not rigorous enough.
- The management of provision for special educational needs is good.
- The leadership and management of the performing arts college are very good.
- Good racial harmony is evident in the school's daily life.

### **Commentary**

57. The very good leadership of the headteacher, and good support from the senior management team, departmental and pastoral managers are important factors in the school's continued success. The headteacher provides reflective, evaluative and purposeful guidance and the desire for 'Achievement for All' is fundamental to the procedures and initiatives he has introduced. A particular innovative feature has been the launch of the School Improvement Forum involving staff, people from the local community and students in ideas to ensure Haslingden is a constantly improving school. As a result it is a popular and over-subscribed school.
58. Governors have been effectively active in working with the leadership group in evolving this vision of 'Achievement for All'. The governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive of the headteacher and senior management team. Governors monitor and review the schools performance closely although some are insufficiently involved in observing the school in action. Governors are justifiably proud of the school receiving specialist performing arts college status. Governors do not meet all their statutory requirements: the daily act of collective worship is not consistently delivered in all classes, religious education is not provided for all sixth-formers; there are omissions in the governors' annual report to parents.
59. Haslingden Performing Arts College has been successful in its first year. It has pursued its chosen maxim guideline of *'Art for Art's sake...but art achieves a purpose which is not its own'*. One such purpose has been the growing application of imaginative, unexpected and unusual demands being made of students in all subjects by teachers who have come to acknowledge their right and that of their students' to fail sometimes in a creative endeavour. More risks are being taken in teaching and learning and in the best lessons, success results more usually than failure and the effectiveness of learning is raised. But managers expect a balance. More traditional approaches to learning have not been jettisoned. The ensuing broad approach to the craft of teaching and learning is a strength of the school. Examples can be found outside the performing arts of students receiving a mixed diet of learning experiences that are, nonetheless, meeting the specifications of the national curriculum and public examinations.
60. The ethos of the school has always been inclusive and has reflected intentions to make all that the school offers available to everyone. Since being granted specialist college status, this commitment has extended to the performing arts. There is a sense of artistic endeavour about the school. This is reflected in displays, in the sights and sounds that emerge from rooms and studios in which students are expressing themselves through artistic endeavour. Assemblies are reflective and spiritual and enhanced by the regular presence of live and recorded music. Performances are frequent whether by school groups such as the Dance Show being rehearsed at the time of the inspection or a community youth theatre production of 'Calamity Jane' that occurred during inspection week. Links with other schools have been established; one with a local special school is especially impressive since it is a two-way process, students from both schools gaining from shared experience in the arts. These strengths of the school are realised owing to the quality of leadership by the deputy head who is currently head of performing arts, but also by the commitment to all senior and middle managers to 'art that has a purpose which is not its own'.
61. The senior management team has introduced a structured approach to monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school. This results in overall good teaching. It has been a largely successful approach and has contributed to the overall good achievement of students throughout the school. However there are insufficient opportunities for the best teaching to inspire, influence and improve the occasions when less good teaching occurs. This has an effect on the quality of learning and the achievement that is possible in about a quarter of lessons. More attention is needed to improve the daily craft of learning that is implicit in the excellent grasp managers have of teaching theories. The starting point should be 'how well are these students learning' and not 'how good is this teaching'. There is a shared vision of ensuring all students achieve well; the practical application of this vision is the issue. For example, the management of the modern languages department is unsatisfactory and

management at all levels has not done enough to improve standards and learning in French. Similar concerns apply in a number of subjects where teaching and learning are no better than satisfactory.

62. In the main, however, senior and middle managers carry out their duties well. Managers are particularly motivated by the merging of pastoral and academic roles to provide more effective individual student guidance. These are key factors that make the school an effective self-evaluating and improving organisation. Managers effectively check how well school policies are implemented. The headteacher's clear sense of direction and purpose is grounded in the day-to-day application of the leadership group. The school has maintained good education for its students through turbulent times, building programmes and the stress of working sometimes in inadequate spaces. Students value this, which is a reason why they rarely complain about the building; they know that the staff of the school works hard to give them the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential.
63. Middle managers, in the main, are effective in the implementation of the school's priorities that are expressed in the school improvement plan. At its heart, management seeks the highest possible standards of work and social interaction. Good achievement by students is the clearest indicator of the success of this management. However, there is no complacency. The school and its subject departments know that GCSE results are not good enough and sometimes do not reflect good work in the classroom. These results would be clearly better if learning in some lessons was closer to that found in the best teaching. Procedures for monitoring and supporting teaching are in place on the school calendar. These make a positive difference. There is an additional need to prioritise areas where learning is not as effective as it should be.
64. Very good induction procedures are in place for new staff. Newly qualified teachers are given very good support and a well-planned professional development programme has been developed to support them.
65. The day-to-day management of provision for students with special educational needs is good. There is a good system to ensure that all teachers know the contents of students' individual education plans. Teaching assistants are deployed systematically to ensure they are placed where they are most needed. All the requirements on statements of special educational need are met. However, insufficient use is made of data to check students' progress. There is a specially appointed governor with responsibility for special needs and there is a sound special needs policy. However, the number of teaching assistant hours is well below average for the size of the school and this adversely affects students' achievement. Governors have responded very well to the Disability Discrimination Act [1995] and ensured that students with physical needs have full access to the building and all its facilities.

### **Sixth form**

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The assessment of students' achievement is systematic and used to set individual targets.
- The statutory requirement for religious education is not met.

### **Commentary**

66. There is a vision of, and sustained drive for, the highest possible standards and the best level of achievement by all students in the sixth form. This has been maintained through the turmoil of recent legislative changes, and the school has proceeded at its own even pace to build progression into both academic and vocational courses. Good leadership has ensured that management of the sixth form is also good, remaining smooth, considered and consistent,

without recourse to knee jerk reactions to the usual crises that can befall any organisation. New courses have been brought on stream smoothly and progressively to meet demand and performance issues have been tackled in a balanced and developmental way. Planning is effective, and is shared by the faculty members of staff who work in a very supportive way within the sixth form. The students feel secure and well supported, and have a sense of pride and identity.

### **Finance**

67. The school is less well funded than most schools. Finances are well used to meet students' needs, with a clear emphasis on supporting achievement. As a result, the school provides good value for money. Governors have a good understanding of the school's finances and monitor expenditure carefully. However, governors have yet to develop methods of evaluating the effectiveness of the way in which they allocate monies to the school. Money received to educate students in the sixth form is spent to that end and the sixth form does not draw upon money received in respect of younger students.
68. In recent years, financial planning has been hampered by the late notification of the school's budget and the provision of final annual accounts. The school does not receive sufficient information to facilitate longer term financial planning.
69. Finances are administered soundly with sufficient checks to ensure that money is spent on the intended purpose. The bursar and financial manager is new to the school but has identified concerns in the arrangements for handling cash and is taking steps to increase security. Proper financial records are maintained and matters arising from a recent auditors' report have been effectively resolved.
70. The school complies with the principles of best value well. Comparative quotations are regularly sought and comparisons made to identify possible savings. Extensive consultation was undertaken before the school embarked upon seeking specialist status.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,864,005
Total expenditure	4,513,640
Expenditure per student	3,011

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-68,834
Balance carried forward to the next	281,531

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well to gain above average results in Year 9 national tests and the GCSE English literature examination.
- Very good teaching in many lessons means that students often make very good progress.
- Good leadership and effectively shared management of departmental work help to raise the standards of teaching.
- Boys achieve higher comparative standards than they do on average nationally.
- The ICT provision does not offer students in all years a full programme of learning.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

#### Commentary

71. Students join the school with average standards in English. By Year 9 they work at above average levels, as seen in the national test results for 2003. This represents good achievement. At the heart of this good progress over time are the consistently good and sometimes very good teaching and students' own positive attitudes in lessons. The improvement of results over those for the previous year shows how standards have risen recently. Boys achieve particularly well to gain better results than girls against national figures for each sex. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is not the mother tongue are well catered for in English lessons so that they too achieve well.
72. This rate of improvement slows a little in Years 10 and 11 but GCSE results in English literature for 2003 show how well students continue to achieve. Work in books and folders and GCSE results for English are not quite of the same standard but still reflect good achievement overall as a result of steady improvement over the two years of the course.
73. Students in Years 7 to 9 are competent speakers as shown in their purposeful group discussions and lively exchanges as characters from novels and plays, answering questions from other students. By Year 11 students are often confident participators in whole class discussions, as seen in a very good lesson in which they talked perceptively about Gillian Clarke's poetry. Reading skills are above average. When reading aloud most students are fluent and often show good expression. In Years 7 and 8 students read extensively for their own enjoyment. Year 9 students read literature with clear understanding, as seen in the good work on George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' and the detailed writing about Macbeth's state of mind. Year 10 students show good understanding of texts such as Seamus Heaney's poems and Alan Bennett's monologues. The written work of students in all years is well presented and generally accurate although standards of spelling are variable. Autobiographical writing and

short stories are particularly engaging. In Year 11 the poems of many contributors to a 'poetry café' lesson were outstanding in their grasp of form and appreciation of language.

74. Teaching is lively and challenging. As a result students enjoy lessons and work hard. Teachers are very concerned to ensure that all students participate fully through frequent work in small groups, reading aloud and giving presentations. Additional materials for lower attaining students help to ensure that all make good progress in lessons. Teachers manage their classes skilfully with good humour arising from strong relationships with students. They use white-boards well to highlight objectives for learning and to emphasise important points so that all students make good progress. Marking is detailed giving students a clear picture of their progress and helping them to improve. ICT based work is infrequent.
75. Curriculum leadership and the management of the department are good. Departmental policies are clear and responsibilities clearly delegated so that there is a focus on improving teaching and learning. Teachers work together very well. The revision of lesson plans for students in Years 7 to 9 is ongoing but does not yet give teachers comprehensive support. Since the previous inspection improvement has been good, notably in standards of work for students in Years 7 to 9 and in the quality of teaching and learning.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

76. Standards of literacy are average. Students are effective speakers when working together in small groups. They read aloud in English, German, geography, history, religious education, citizenship, drama and occasionally in science. Reading levels are generally average so that students cope well with the demands for reading in all subjects. In science and geography students get help in reading for research, including use of the Internet. In history students learn to develop their skills in skimming and scanning when reading source materials. Few students use the learning resource centre for research although all those in Years 7 and 8 have a useful weekly English lesson there. Students write with average levels of accuracy. In most subjects the range of writing tasks is narrow but teachers often make good suggestions for structuring work and focus well on important vocabulary. Teachers in very few subjects, however, mark students' work for inaccuracies of spelling, punctuation and grammar; improvement is insufficiently encouraged. The school has made progress in its strategy for raising literacy levels through staff training. A co-ordinator organises literacy matters well across the curriculum through a steering committee. The work of this group is helping to raise students' standards of literacy throughout the school.

### Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in German are average and improving.
- Standards in French are well below average and declining.
- The quality of teaching and learning in German is good and enables students to achieve well.
- Teaching and learning in French are unsatisfactory and lead to significant underachievement.
- Assessment information is used effectively in German to meet students' needs.
- Assessment information is not used effectively in French to meet students' needs and too often students find activities too difficult or too easy.
- Opportunities for students to hear or to use the language in French are inadequate and result in students' lack of confidence in speaking and listening.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards of work seen during the inspection	French: well below average German: average	French: below average German: average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	French: unsatisfactory German: good	French: satisfactory German: good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	French: unsatisfactory German: good	French: satisfactory German: good
Quality of learning	French: unsatisfactory German: good	French: satisfactory German: good
Curriculum leadership	satisfactory unsatisfactory unsatisfactory	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

77. The proportion of candidates achieving A\*-C grades in GCSE examinations in 2003 is below average in both German and French. Standards have declined in French over the past four years. Girls achieve better than boys. Students do better in other subjects than they do in modern languages. In German students have a good understanding of grammar, write at length and are confident in speaking and listening. In French students have difficulty expressing their ideas, written and spoken responses are brief and the students' range of language is severely limited. Students achieve well in German but there is underachievement in French, especially in Years 7 to 9. This is because there is a significant difference between the quality of teaching and learning in the two languages.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. In German it is good, enabling students to achieve well, whereas it is unsatisfactory in French, leading to significant underachievement, particularly in Years 7 to 9. In German objectives are clear and shared with students but in French objectives are too often limited to a list of language to be covered. Presentations of new language and structures are usually clear so that students rapidly understand and use it themselves. In German they are given frequent opportunities to practise informally in pairs and small groups and this is effective in increasing their confidence and competence in speaking. In French opportunities to do this are too rare, students lack confidence and have difficulty recalling basic vocabulary and structures as a result. Students make the best progress when they are given the opportunity to use the language to give and gather information. In German tasks such as problem-solving activities challenge and engage students so that they discover patterns for themselves and apply them successfully to express their own ideas. In French too much emphasis is put on grammar for its own sake so that students find the process daunting and are inhibited in expressing their ideas in the language.
79. Activities are usually well sequenced so that students build effectively on what has gone before. In German, the pace is brisk, lower attaining students are well supported through notes on the board or help from the teacher. In French the needs of lower and higher attaining students in teaching groups are not considered sufficiently in lesson planning so that too often students do not make enough progress. In German expectations are high, German is used routinely to conduct activities in lessons, students benefit from excellent role models and the language is used very effectively, enabling students to respond successfully. As a result students are confident linguists and speaking and listening skills are very well developed. In French expectations are too low, activities are conducted in English, as a result students have difficulty responding in the language and their pronunciation is poor, being adversely affected by their dependence upon written prompts and notes. Opportunities are missed in both languages to develop listening skills by, for example, predicting what students are going to hear and reinforcing key words. Class discussions, for example after reading tasks, lack focus to demonstrate clearly how answers are arrived at and to reinforce key vocabulary.
80. Leadership in languages is satisfactory, the head of department has a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses and development planning is clearly focussed on raising standards.

Management of German is good, teachers work well as a team and achieve a good degree of consistency. Standards are improving steadily as a result, however, overall management of the faculty is unsatisfactory because that of French is unsatisfactory, and standards are declining; this is partly due to staffing difficulties but also unsatisfactory teaching and learning. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning has not been successful in achieving consistency across both languages.

81. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have declined in French, although they are improving in German. The quality of teaching and learning has declined in French. The department has taken effective action to link progress with national curriculum levels and examination criteria and students are aware of how to improve. Lessons in Bengali and Urdu were sampled and teaching was found to be satisfactory or better.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and the best teaching is very imaginative.
- ICT is well used to help students learn.
- Mathematics is being well developed across the curriculum.
- Good curriculum leadership is improving the faculty.
- In some classes, not all students work at the right level.
- Some teachers do not do enough to contribute to the wider aspects of education.
- Students cannot concentrate well in rooms with poor sound-proofing.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
• Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
• Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
• Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
• Quality of teaching	Good	Good
• Quality of learning	Good	Good
• Curriculum leadership	Good	
• Management of the subject		
• Improvement since the previous inspection		

### Commentary

82. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. By the end of Year 9 most students identify patterns in sequences and higher achievers use algebra to describe this. Only a small number carry out an investigation without detailed instructions from their teacher. Higher attaining students in Year 11 can solve quadratic equations and work with cumulative frequency tables. Students of average levels of achievement know how to use Pythagoras' theorem but have difficulties with trigonometry. Lower attaining students can calculate the area of a shape but are not skilled in using algebra. A considerable majority of students do not write about their work. This makes their notebooks of less use when revising and also means that teachers may not identify why a mistake has arisen.
83. Results from national tests and GCSE taken in 2003 record the same standards as seen during the inspection and record the good achievement. In recent years, GCSE results have



risen faster than the national rate and this is the main reason why there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

84. In the best lessons:
- ICT is well used, such as when Year 11 students explored the equation of a straight line graph. However, students not taking a course in ICT in Years 10 and 11 do not always have the skills expected and so do not gain as much as they should from these lessons.
  - Students enjoy thinking about their work. Year 11 students learnt very well because they had to try out their own ideas about a range of shapes.
  - Teaching is imaginative and captures students' interest.
  - Learning takes place at a rapid pace with no unnecessary repetition.
  - Teachers provide students with very helpful information on the progress they are making. Students appreciate this advice and act upon it well.
85. In some lessons students just follow a rule rather than understand their work. In other lessons, the teacher does not provide work that fully challenges all students in the group. This leads to some students 'coasting' whilst the work is too hard for others. This is one reason why students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. They achieve well when supported by teaching assistants but this help is not available enough. Students from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other students because they are fully involved in all lessons and show the same good attitudes to their work as the rest.
86. Whilst some teachers take opportunities to widen students' education, such as when citizenship was developed by using a simulation of the stock market to teach percentages, many opportunities are lost. Students do not develop their speaking and writing skills as much as they might. Equally, chances for students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions are not taken.
87. In Years 10 and 11, boys are more actively involved in lessons than girls. Whilst boys and girls answer teachers' questions equally, boys are far more willing to ask questions seeking to extend their work. Hence, boys gain better GCSE results. The good leadership and management of the faculty are fully aware of this and are seeking to improve the achievement of girls.
88. Learning is disturbed in many lessons because of the poor sound-proofing of classrooms.
89. Good links have been established with primary schools. All teachers of mathematics have watched the subject taught in primary schools. This smoothes the move into this school. Classes during the summer holidays and additional revision classes have been instigated and add significantly to achievement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

90. The school is planning effectively to develop the teaching of mathematics across all subjects. Good management of this programme has meant that all subjects are developing mathematics in Years 7 and 8. For the next three years, another year group will be brought into this programme. Teachers of each subject are ensuring that topics are taught consistently. For example, all teachers are aware of the way students are taught multiplication. This is very helpful as it ensures that confusion does not arise by a teacher inadvertently showing a student a different method of working to the one used in mathematics classes.
91. All subjects make a contribution to students' learning of mathematics which is at least satisfactory and this is better in subjects such as design and technology, science and geography. Inspectors did not become aware of any instance in which students' learning was held back because of inadequate mathematical skills.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the national tests at age 14 have improved significantly.
- Learning is good across all aspects of the subject and students' overall achievement is good.
- Teaching is good; lessons are clearly structured, with a variety of tasks that involve students in learning through taking part in practical activities.
- Good relationships and classroom management mean that students have a positive attitude to science and want to do well.
- Results in GCSE are not high enough.
- Teaching methods do not always adequately meet the learning needs of all students.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### Commentary

92. Standards in the national test at age 14 rose significantly in 2003 and students achieved well. Results at GCSE were in line with the national average but some students underachieved. Achievement seen during the inspection was good across the age range. The structured development of GCSE investigative skills has already raised standards. An Applied Science GCSE course has been introduced this year. The greater emphasis on course-work has increased motivation; consequently student achievement has improved.
93. Teaching and learning in science are good overall. Half the lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 were very good. Generally, stimulating teaching motivates students to work hard so that they learn well. Teachers use their subject expertise to good effect with clear explanations. They manage classes skilfully so that students behave well and are not distracted from learning. Teachers are encouraging and supportive, making good use of praise to motivate students, who respond well in volunteering answers to teachers' questions. This contributes significantly to their learning. The new national initiatives in Years 7 to 9 have begun to have a positive effect on learning. Lessons are well planned and organised. Students' concentration is maintained by a variety of activities and the pace of work is brisk. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson in which students were researching the life and work of Mendel. Students were challenged to draw a genetic diagram to illustrate his work and gained a good understanding of dominant and recessive alleles.
94. Learning objectives are often shared with students and this focuses their attention. However, these objectives are rarely reviewed at the end of the lesson. When this is done both students and teachers are able to assess the extent of the learning. Sometimes, teachers do not involve the students enough during the lessons; they provide them with the required knowledge and skills but their questioning does not allow students to contribute to the development of the lesson. In these lessons higher-attaining students are insufficiently challenged. In the first two

years in the school many classes are taught science by more than one teacher. This lack of continuity hinders effective learning.

95. Students have good investigative skills. By the end of Year 9, students can discuss the nature of independent and dependent variables. By the end of Year 11, higher-attaining students can describe and interpret patterns in their results and evaluate their reliability. Lower-attaining students have difficulty in using their scientific knowledge to explain patterns. The development of literacy skills is good, with an emphasis on the correct use of key scientific words. Students' skills in handling and analysing data, including graphs, are developed well. ICT is used effectively to enhance learning. Students with special educational needs receive good support when support assistants are in the lesson. When there are no support assistants present their progress is hindered. Students from minority ethnic groups make the same progress as other students.
96. The department has improved well since the previous inspection. Standards, teaching and learning, investigative skills and the use of ICT have all improved. Curriculum leadership and management of the subject are good. However, there is currently not enough sharing of good practice to provide consistency across the subject.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective curriculum leadership has raised standards.
- Good teaching ensures Year 10 and 11 students achieve well
- New courses in all years are contributing to the continued rise in standards.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Good
Curriculum leadership	Very Good	
Management of the subject	Very Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

### Commentary

97. Continued developments in the provision for ICT have improved standards. Teacher assessments in Year 9 are above average, but examination of the students' work suggests that these assessments are inflated. This, however, still represents good achievement in relation to their prior attainment. Although the standards are average the number obtaining the higher grades is well below average. The 2002 examination results in Year 11 were above average and this level was maintained in 2003, which is likely to indicate good achievement compared to similar schools. However, there are not many students who attain the higher grades.
98. The course in Years 7 to 9 is now more appropriate to the needs of students. Year 7 students gain skills in using ICT to present information in differing forms. They create slide presentations, which include text and pictures, but use little animation and no sound. Year 8 students extend their skills by importing weather data from the Internet. They use the data to create graphs, but without understanding how to interpret them effectively. Year 9 students

use spreadsheets to examine data about a number of mobile phone tariffs to identify the cheapest in certain circumstances. However there are limited opportunities to develop skills in using databases.

99. The vocational course in Years 10 and 11 provides a range of practical applications to develop students' understanding of the use of ICT in a business context. They identify different styles of presenting information in business letters, though are less confident in explaining the reasons for the differences. They develop practical skills in structuring databases and understand the need to include relationships, although only the higher attainers are able to demonstrate how to manage such relationships.
100. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. In Years 7 to 9 this enables students to gain basic skills but not always to apply them to specific applications. The large number of non-specialist teachers has hindered achievement and students are not offered opportunities to attain higher levels. In Years 10 and 11 sharper planning and higher expectations have led to good teaching and have contributed to the rise in standards. Positive lesson planning with realistic objectives extends students' understanding. Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious resulting in students displaying encouraging attitudes. They work with interest and are articulate in explaining what they do. Explanatory wall displays and homework develop learning well. Positive assessment ensures all students are well aware of targets and informative marking indicates how students could improve. Provision is fully inclusive so that minority ethnic students are well included in all activities and make similar progress to other students.
101. The head of department was appointed at a time when standards and achievement were well below average. He appraised the situation efficiently using performance data and initiated a number of strategies that have notably raised standards. The new courses have also promoted an increase in achievement. He gives a very good lead to a dedicated team of teachers, but recognises the need to raise expectations to enable higher attainers to achieve better grades. A hard working network manager properly maintains good computer resources. The recent developments have contributed to the improvements. Good improvement since the previous inspection has given more students the opportunity to experience ICT.

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

102. The school has improved the development of the use of ICT in other subjects and it is now good overall. The conscious decision to distribute computer resources has had a positive effect on students' learning. More subjects now use ICT to enhance teaching and learning and offer a wider range of activities. Good use of ICT extends understanding in mathematics and access to the Internet provides a vast resource in many subjects such as science, where students investigate Mendel and his experiments. The geography department has developed a number of resources to support the curriculum and good use is made of ICT for presentations. The department also collaborated with the arts and ICT in mounting a Christian Aid conference. The music department has a good range of keyboards that allow students to explore musical experiences but there are limited opportunities for computer-based sequencing and composition. There are still areas such as English where further development is needed.
103. Overall students at all levels are competent in the use of ICT.
104. The head of ICT has created an all-embracing strategy for mapping ICT experiences and regularly monitors departmental delivery through a support network of subject ICT managers. This structure has ensured that the school meets statutory requirements, but there are not yet sufficient computers to enable all departments to extend learning effectively through the employment of ICT.

## **HUMANITIES**

## Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is ambitious and uses data well to plot development.
- Assessment goes hand in hand with teaching and learning.
- The use of ICT and numeracy in Years 10-11 supports achievement.
- Work is not always matched to the different needs of students.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Very good	
Management of the subject	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

### Commentary

105. End of Year 9 school test results are above average as is students' work seen. This signifies very good achievement given below average skills on entry to the school. Students confidently use graphical skills, interpret maps and numerical information, obtain information from text, from visitors and a range of visual sources including photographs. They present results of surveys and independent studies in a variety of ways, exemplified in the Rossendale field investigation. Students understand how geography helps them to formulate opinions about sustainable development, dam construction, climate change and tourism. They can explain why some countries are rich and some are poor, yet are also aware of the dangers of prejudice and stereotyping.
106. Students from minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs make good progress aided by well-prepared learning support assistants, reading aloud and guidance for writing.
107. GCSE results in 2003 are below average although standards seen in Years 10-11 are currently above average. All students did better than expectation in the GCSE examination. Clarity of teaching by geographers strongly committed to their subject, assessment built into learning, contributed to very good achievement. One third of students' time is spent in ICT leading to impressive interpretation and evaluation of fieldwork, notably in the Ambleside study. Double Award Leisure and Tourism taught within geography offers an appropriate alternative for students who enjoy geography but are unlikely to meet the demands of GCSE. Consequently, overall numbers of students choosing geography are well below the national average. In response, changes in Year 9 (to topics such as crime and sport) and opportunities deriving from the schools performing arts status, such as the Christian Aid Conference, are beginning to redress the balance. In the 2002 GCSE examination, boys' attainment was very high and above average.
108. Teaching and learning are good overall and there is a significant proportion of consistently very good teaching where students take part in a number of different activities in the one lesson, intermittently discussing their findings as a whole class and identifying what they have learned. 'oui/non', 'true/false' cards are a simple, effective device for obtaining 100 per cent

engagement. All lessons have focusing starter activities, learning objectives referred to throughout the lesson and emphasis on key words. In a few lessons tasks do not meet the varied learning needs of students.

109. Very good curriculum leadership supports development, balancing efficiency with creativity and the needs of colleagues. The head of department has set her own professional development at a high level. Management decisions are based on rigorous data analysis and the monitoring of teaching. The immediate goal is to develop regular professional discussions among colleagues about teaching that engages students actively and closely matches *what* they learn to *how* they learn

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to high achievement in Years 10-11.
- An emphasis on skills of literacy results in well-structured extended writing.
- Assessment is good so that students know what they do well and how to improve.
- Satisfactory teaching should be better through more regular professional discussions that analyse how students learn best.
- Learning tasks are not always matched to the differing learning needs of students in Years 7 to 9.
- ICT is insufficiently used to develop numeracy and interpret challenges.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Very good
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Very good
Curriculum leadership	Satisfactory Good Satisfactory	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

110. Average standards in Year 9 represent good achievement given that on entry to the school, students' attainment is below average. Students with special educational needs achieve well because they receive effective support from learning support assistants as do those from minority ethnic groups who are confident participants in lessons.
111. GCSE results in 2003 are above average. Boys achieved well above average results at the highest grades. Girls of Asian heritage have performed consistently well over five years.
112. Work seen during the inspection indicates above average standards and very good achievement. High attaining students are skilful writers using succinct phrases and adjectives to signal a judgement. Course-work on evacuation from Dunkirk in the Second World War impressively illustrates this.
113. Assessment is very good. Students keep a progress record and can explain what they do well and how to improve. One teacher uses "You *can* do these" and "You *could* do these" stickers for key pieces of work.
114. In all years, students accurately describe and judge the causes and consequences of events through analysing a variety of sources. They recognise bias in language and compare sources for reliability. 'Are we going to look at German posters as well?' asked a Year 9 student in the lowest set studying recruitment for the First World War. He was perhaps making a link with work in drama on the same theme. Note-making skills, prioritising, spider-grams, help them to organise information for writing diaries or newspaper articles to represent alternative views. In some lessons written tasks are not imaginative enough to target all students' learning needs. ICT skills and fieldwork are not sufficiently extensive.
115. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are very good in Years 10 and 11 and sometimes excellent, whilst in Years 7-9 overall teaching is satisfactory because while there is much inspiring, outstanding teaching, there is no systematic mechanism for changing the culture of learning through developing and evaluating best practice. All teachers are keen historians and use resources enthusiastically but where lessons are just satisfactory there is too little active learning and writing tasks slow the pace. The liveliest teachers challenge students with short tasks that develop independent thinking and extended reasoning. For example, in Year 11 group work, one-to-one 'verbal-boxing' on the Wall Street Crash, resulted in exceptional commitment and impressive standards of learning through speaking. Teacher and students assessed learning as it the work developed.
116. Curriculum leadership overall is not better than satisfactory because the individual strengths of this strong specialist team are not synthesised for the benefit of all students. This is an unresolved issue from the previous inspection.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Not enough time is allocated for students following the full GCSE course.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well and reach above average standards.
- Students in all years learn well because they have good attitudes and are well taught.
- The department is well led and managed but full use is not made of assessment.
- Not enough specialist classrooms are allocated for religious education.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

### Commentary

117. In Years 7 to 9 students gain good knowledge and understanding of the major faiths of the world. In Years 7 and 8 teachers do not encourage them to apply what they learn to their own lives. In Year 9, however, they begin to make value judgements, for example in a study of the civil rights movement in the USA.
118. In recent years nearly all students have entered for the GCSE short course and results have been above average. In 2002 results were well above average with girls performing markedly better than boys. Results were much poorer in 2003, being badly affected by staffing and timetable problems. Students are now being prepared for the GCSE full course as well as the short course. However, timetable arrangements are still unsatisfactory in that all students receive the same time allocation regardless of which course they are following. Consequently there is not enough time allocated to those doing the full course while those on the short course are generously treated. Despite these circumstances, all students are gaining good understanding of ethical, social and moral issues as they affect different faiths but the shortage of time means that the full GCSE course is not taught in sufficient depth.
119. Teachers know the subject well. They plan lessons well, often capturing the immediate interest of students with an imaginative starter-activity. At the beginning of a Year 10 lesson on Christian attitudes to fertility treatment both boys and girls were startled to discover how many of them, statistically speaking, would have fertility difficulties. Although some lessons are too dependent on the text book, teachers deploy a variety of methods including the use of computers. A Year 7 lesson about Islam was successful because the teacher held students' interest by displaying and explaining the use of relevant artefacts. Students have good attitudes and these are fostered by mutual respect. Teachers know which students have special educational needs and give them suitable work. Consequently they make good progress. Students of different minority ethnic groups are fully included in lessons although on occasion a few students are allowed to dominate discussion.
120. The department is in the early stages of developing an assessment policy. Students know what level or GCSE grade they are working at and have target levels or grades. However, comments on exercise books, particularly in Years 7 to 9, do not show students what they have to do to reach their target and few references are made to targets during lessons. There is not yet enough awareness of how assessment can be used to raise standards.
121. Curriculum leadership and departmental management are good. New schemes of work are good. They are well detailed and linked to appropriate resources. Teaching and learning are both monitored according to the school's system. The department makes a very strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, accommodation is unsatisfactory as the department has only two classrooms for its three specialist staff. The good standards of teaching and learning current at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Time allocation, however, is still a serious problem.



## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are very good in food and resistant materials by Year 11.
- Teaching and learning are usually very good.
- Standards in product design are below average by Year 11.
- Too few opportunities exist for negotiating success criteria at the start of the lesson and little time is allowed for reflection on what has been achieved before students leave the classroom.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Curriculum leadership	Very good	
Management of the subject	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

#### Commentary

122. Standards are average in Year 9 and above average at GCSE for food and resistant materials but not for product design. Achievement for the majority of students is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. A few lower attainers do not complete the course each year and find theory difficult. Vocational courses, such as engineering, are being provided for students who achieve better with practical tasks.
123. By Year 9, most students can cook a range of dishes for different occasions and understand the principles of healthy eating. They can modify recipes and evaluate results. Well-planned workbooks help them to extend their knowledge and understanding and write for different purposes. Key technical words are displayed in workshops and kitchens and students are expected to use them and know their meaning. No sentence structures are displayed to extend students understanding of grammatical structure in their writing. In both a Year 7 and a Year 10 lesson the teacher read the text for the students rather than allowing them the opportunity of reading aloud. Use of computers is a strong feature of learning. In a Year 9 graphic product lesson one boy with mobility problems was very well supported by his teacher, learning assistant and peers and achieved well with his logo design. This was a very inclusive experience with the boy himself offering as much to his helpers as they gave to him. By Year 11 students research information effectively and word process efficiently as well as using software packages for computer aided design and manufacture. They learn to present their work well. New course books have ensured that students are as well supported in theory lessons as they are in practical tasks. Students use numeracy appropriately in all aspects of technology. Most students enjoy lessons and behave well. The exception was in a Year 11 lesson when students were late from physical education. A number of boys took a while to settle to the task and girls displayed low self-esteem regarding their skills in freehand drawing.
124. Teaching and learning are very good overall and especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan to cover the curriculum and encourage and engage students' interests very effectively. As a result of the very good resources and the support they receive most students apply their minds

to the tasks set and produce good work. Not enough attention is paid, however, to starter and finishing activities for Year 7-9 lessons. Too few opportunities were seen for group discussion or paired activities. The notable exception was in food lessons. Assessment used to judge how well students have completed set tasks is better than that designed to help them during lessons. Students know their levels or grades and the big steps they need to take in order to reach them.

125. Curriculum leadership and the day-to-day management of the faculty are very good. This is a very effective team of teachers supported by very efficient technical help. Health and safety procedures are very good. High quality displays celebrate students' achievement. Whilst the use of computers is good the teachers do not have access to interactive white boards and demonstrations at a single computer screen cannot be seen by all students.

126. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is a very strong faculty.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in fine art are above average by Year 11.
- Good achievement is seen in Year 9 and Year 11.
- Teaching is always good and sometimes excellent, particularly in Year 9.
- Standards in art textiles are below average by Year 11.
- There are few planned opportunities for discussion between students.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### Commentary

127. Standards are average in Year 9 and above average for fine art but not for art textiles by Year 11. Overall achievement is good in view of students' low starting points.

128. By Year 9 most students can draw from observation, experiment with a range of art materials including paint, pastels and printmaking and make encaustic tiles using clay. Most enjoy these experiences. Sketchbooks are well used for recording ideas, for researching and writing about artists' work and for observational drawing but not for recording key technical words. No work is dated. This is a missed opportunity for tracking progress by creating a personal timeline of skill development. From Year 7 students are given opportunities to study copies of famous artists' work and to use them as a basis for painting. In this way they not only gain knowledge and understanding of how paintings are constructed but also how colour can alter the mood of a painting. In the textiles course students learn about surface decoration such as batik and the

use of decorative stitches. Pattern is a strong feature with Year 10 students enjoying the challenge of interpreting stencil designs using needle-weaving techniques. By Year 11 the best painting and sculpture is abstract, large and expressive whilst the most effective textiles folders draw inspiration from nature, different cultures and the work of famous designers and are highly decorative. Computers are used for research and for taking digital images but not for design purposes.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students enjoy well-planned lessons, which introduce them to new materials and techniques. Demonstrations are used effectively to clearly communicate the qualities aimed for. Key pieces are marked thoroughly with helpful constructive written comments. Teachers expect Year 11 students to plan their use of time more efficiently as a result of the written feedback received. This is not always as effective as it could be. Students sometimes gossip but do not use opportunities to talk to extend their learning. Students with special educational needs usually achieve as well as everyone else but in a Year 10 textiles lesson the support for a girl for whom English was at an early stage of development was not adequate. With no learning support and no translations of words the teacher quite rightly expressed concern that whilst the student could follow the small steps in learning she had an incomplete understanding of the purpose behind the activity. Key technical words are not displayed on art-room walls. The lack of television and video facilities limits access to the world of art beyond the classroom.
130. Curriculum leadership is good. The head of department, in a comparatively short time in charge of the visual arts, has prioritised what needs to be done. Management tasks have included re-instating the balance between fine art and textiles for Year 7 to 9 students. The fifty-minute lesson is rather short for practical activities. The kiln does not have a safety guard. Since the previous inspection report, assessment procedures have improved, technical help is now in place but the use of ICT is still not satisfactory

## Dance

Provision in dance is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching is judged overall to be very good, leading to very good achievement in Year 11.
- Students work hard and are motivated to be successful.
- There is very good take-up of the many extra-curricular opportunities.
- Older students do not have enough opportunity, in lessons, to take responsibility for their own learning, for example in warm-up sessions.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	N/a	

## Commentary

131. Dance has a very effective presence in the life of the school. All students experience it and performances occur frequently, from pieces to illustrate themes in assemblies to full shows before outside audiences. Many students are members of the school's dance clubs; at every

spare moment the new and established dance studios seem to be in use. An increasing number of boys are becoming involved in these activities. The department is well led and managed and its impact on the cultural life of the school is impressive. Examination results were below average in 2003, but the overall effectiveness of this GCSE course is seen in the high quality of work produced by the current Year 12 AS level dance class.

132. Teaching is consistently good, allowing for it overall to be deemed very good. It is characterised by enthusiasm, energy, attention to physical and artistic detail and a thorough understanding of the subject's theory and practice. As a result students respond with equal enthusiasm and a desire to improve; they learn effectively and achieve well. By Year 11 their work in lessons is above average. Examination results suffer relatively, because of the demands of written work. Students are effective at appraising and evaluating their own work and that of others. This is always undertaken with respect for the efforts of others.
133. A Year 11 class responded well to the challenge of choreographed rock 'n' roll sequences to Bill Haley's 'Rock Around the Clock'. The teaching here was systematic and detailed and the teacher had high expectations of accuracy and shape. Teaching was at a fast pace and the sequencing quickly brought the dance of these accomplished students close to performance standard. The work of this class indicates how much is achieved over two years. For example, a Year 9 class new to dance needed to be taught elements of a dance vocabulary as they worked on ideas around 'Swan Song'. The class and teacher worked well together in developing ideas and sequences at a fast and demanding pace. By Year 11, these students will be taking more responsibility for the detail of their work, leaving the teacher to enhance and enrich, as seen in the rock n roll work of Year 11.
134. The frequent opportunity to become involved in a performance motivates students and the standards of their work are higher as a result. They enjoy the feeling of working as practising artists, often seeing the teacher as a director or choreographer. The immediacy of pending performance increases their evaluation of their own achievement during a lesson and over a series of lessons. Assessment of sequences of dance is integral moment by moment in lessons. Students as well as teacher are good at moving on from such appraising. A notable atmosphere underpins dance lessons – it is strongly a 'can do' activity for boys and girls. As a result they 'do do' to a level that often belies what might be expected.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Students are keen to do well; their attitudes are responsive to good relationships and effective teaching.
- Achievement by Year 11 is very good and the result of effective learning through demanding teaching.
- GCSE results are above average.
- Students' developing capability in the use of dramatic conventions as they move through Years 7 to 11 results in teachers of other subjects using some of these conventions to enhance learning in their subjects. Good examples of this were seen in history, for example.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Very good

Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

135. Teaching in this subject is energetic, enthusiastic and effective. Learning demands stretch students technically and emotionally. As a result standards are above average by Year 11. This is the result of very good teaching that occasionally is excellent.

### Example of outstanding practice

**A drama lesson with Year 9 that is an example of outstanding teaching, planning and use of dramatic conventions that led to a shift away from acceptance by students of well-worn stereotyping**

Students were confronted by the teacher as a First World War German army recruiting officer. They were brought to attention and harangued about their responsibility to sign up for the army. The teacher-in-role demanded patriotic support for the war effort.

Students were placed in six groups of three, with one group of higher attainers who were a lorry-load of soldiers already recruited to the German army. There were other groups, each with a personal situation to enact, imagined from a photograph of a soldier.

Groups shared their scenes [during this, the teacher noted down phrases from each improvisation]. Then the soldiers already recruited removed the photograph. The teacher fixed this to the wall. There was a scene from the central group of conscripts, arguing of their disillusionment as soldiers. The teacher asked each of the other groups to take up a 'frozen image' of key moments from each of their improvisations. He then read out the relevant key phrase, ripped down each photograph of a German soldier and tossed it aside. None of these soldiers returned from the war. The teacher froze and sustained a short silence.

In the final minutes of the lesson, the teacher asked what the drama had been about. Students realised the contrast between real family lives of soldiers and their lives as men of war. They had been German soldiers. Were they different to soldiers in the British army?

136. Teaching is well informed and meets the learning needs of different groups of students. On the one hand, Year 11 struggle with the demands of 'A View from the Bridge' by Arthur Miller, teasing out meaning from a complex narration about illegal immigrants; students make comparisons with today's asylum seekers. On the other, a Year 10 class came to terms with the differences between stylised and naturalistic dramatic representation and are energised by how much they can portray when getting away from the natural. They expressed the theme of nightmare in stylised tableaux, moving into exaggerated movement, to a word montage and finally nightmarish extreme sentences, the style of spoken action becoming grossly macabre, gothic and supernatural. Teaching to achieve these results requires dynamism, confidence, an appreciation of how far students can be stretched and a ready appreciation and assessment of their efforts. This teaching is successful since it has these qualities. It is secure, perceptive and demanding. The students know the highest effort is expected of them and know that they will get good support as they struggle to realise their ideas. As a result, students achieve well in lessons in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11.

137. Curriculum leadership of drama is good and has developed well since the previous inspection. Many of its conventions are becoming the tools of teachers of other subjects. The high standards expected in drama lessons help other teachers make the most of similar techniques, as students have expectations that their use will be enjoyable and artistically effective. In drama lessons the needs of all students are part of the planning. Regularly, students from a local special school take part in lessons. When this happens the learning support assistants with these students are well-briefed and party to lesson planning. All students work at pace, with support matching their needs. Teachers in other subjects learn from the drama department the skill of taking on a role to enhance learning or to help some students associate more easily with the subject matter of lessons.

## Music

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving well because of very good teaching and learning.
- Students' attitudes are very good

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good
Quality of learning	Very good	Very good
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

### Commentary

138. Students really enjoy their music lessons because teachers are enthusiastic and share this in lessons and in the many very worthwhile music groups, bands, choirs and the orchestra. Music is a popular subject in the school and students now choose to study the course at GCSE level in larger numbers.
139. As a result of very good teaching and attitudes, students reach above average standards by Year 9 and Year 11. Performance overall is above average and in most lessons students play together very successfully listening carefully. One or two have difficulty with this as in a Year 9 samba lesson. Once all the rhythms were played together they found it very difficult to maintain an even pulse in spite of the very strong rhythm being created by the drums. In Year 11 compositions are imaginatively and competently written. There is a wide range of instrumental skills amongst students: some students play instruments to a high standard whereas others are at an elementary level. In the 2003 GCSE examinations over two-thirds of the students achieved a grade between A\* and C and all students achieved a grade between A\* and G. Students have become more successful in the examination over the last three years particularly the boys, who now achieve more A\* to C grades.
140. Students achieve well because the teaching is very good. Teachers practice their subject and know it very well. They often demonstrate musically so that the students learn far more quickly than through mere explanation. They teach children to use correct musical terms which students use well in lessons. Teachers challenge the students at all levels with appropriately written music, allowing students of widely differing standards to play together successfully. Lower attaining students are well supported by the teacher in lessons so that they make good progress. Students with special educational needs do well and are successful in this practical subject when playing keyboards, percussion and samba instruments. Higher attainers and those talented in music are given opportunities to lead groups and initiate periods of call and response and improvisation in blues and samba. Students behave very well in class because this is expected of them and because there are clear indications where the lesson is going and what they have to achieve. Periods of review throughout and at the end of most lessons focus on the quality of what they do, which is particularly successful when students have the opportunity to listen to recordings of their own work. Students in Years 10 and 11 use

computers beneficially to compose music. Students also use computers for this in Years 7 to 9 but to less effect because there are too few computers to make this worthwhile.

141. Enthusiastic curriculum leadership ensures that music thrives in the school. It has been supportive throughout the submission for specialist performing arts college status and continues to contribute significantly to the creative ethos through performances for students and the community. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent examination results are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are generally good and students achieve well.
- The majority of students have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Many students take part in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which are provided.
- Teachers do not always assess how well students have learned at the end of lessons.
- The quality of students' notebooks as aids to revision for examinations is not monitored well enough.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of learning	Good	Satisfactory
Curriculum leadership	Very good Good Satisfactory	
Management of the subject		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

#### Commentary

142. Results in GCSE examinations in 2002 and 2003 were well above average and students achieved well in relation to their starting points at the beginning of the course. Numbers are too small to allow any meaningful comparison to be made between the performance of girls and boys.
143. The good achievement in Years 7 to 9 is due to good teaching and the very positive attitudes to learning displayed by the vast majority of students. Learning gets off to a good start in Year 7 where students' standards of work on arriving at the school, are inconsistent. Progress is rapid because teachers quickly establish good working habits, which means that little time is wasted and lessons move at a brisk pace. In gymnastics, for example, students quickly learn to watch demonstrations carefully and listen to the teachers' explanations so that they are well equipped to help each other to improve. Consequently, students make good progress through Years 7 to 9 and reach average standards. Their knowledge and understanding of health-related fitness is above average because they take part in a well-designed unit of work, which is very well taught. Standards in boys' rugby and girls' basketball, where the students have little previous experience, are below average but, nevertheless, they make good progress.

144. In Year 11, standards in compulsory physical education lessons are average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Lack of continuity in teaching boys has affected motivation so that, for example, participation rates are not as high as elsewhere in the school. However, standards in the optional full GCSE course in Year 11 are above average and students achieve well. This is also the case in the newly introduced short GCSE course, followed by all students in Year 10. These students are well motivated and well taught. Teaching observed during the inspection was good. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of students of different capabilities and make lessons interesting and demanding. The marking of students' theoretical work is generally good but some files of work belonging to lower attaining students are not well monitored. Consequently, they lack value as aids to revision for examinations. Students who have special educational needs or who belong to minority ethnic groups whose first language is not English make good progress in lessons because the work is adapted well for them.
145. Throughout the school, most lessons make good use of strategies resulting from government initiatives aimed at raising standards of literacy and teachers explain learning objectives. However whilst teachers routinely involve students in a recap of learning at the end of lessons, this tends to assess what students know about techniques and skills and not how well they have learned. In otherwise satisfactory games lessons, some learning activities are not sufficiently well matched to students' stages of development.
146. Many students also take part in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities provided by the school and this makes a good contribution to the overall standards achieved. Good links with local clubs and organisations, which provide expert coaching, enhance the standards attained by students in sport.
147. Standards, and teaching and learning, remain the same as those found at the previous inspection but examination results and the quality of the curriculum have improved. The recently appointed head of department has very good vision for subject improvement, which is being translated into effective action. However strategies have not been in place for long enough to have a significant effect on standards.
148. Dance is taught by subject specialist teachers to all students in Years 7 to 9 and is offered as an optional examination subject in Years 10 and 11 where students also have the opportunity to work with visiting professional dancers. This enhances the overall quality of provision for physical education. Good numbers of both girls and boys take part in extra-curricular dance activities including participation in school productions.



## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

### BUSINESS STUDIES

The provision of business studies at Key Stage 4 was sampled.

Provision of business studies is **good**. This new course was introduced in September. It incorporates a Young Enterprise Experience. It has recruited a large number of students. Its purpose is to raise the attainment of low and under-achieving students. It has improved attendance. Students in the main are working well and meeting all the deadlines set. Students are taking the opportunity of building personal and social competencies. High standards of teaching are provided. There is good pastoral support. Students' learning is good. High motivation, effort and the absorption of knowledge are indicators of the good progress being made.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is sound planning and good teaching of citizenship.
- Personal, social and health education and some subjects contribute to a citizenship focus.
- There is little defined assessment of citizenship education.
- The full national curriculum requirements for citizenship are not yet met.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning	Good	
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the subject	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	N/a	

### Commentary

149. The planning for citizenship is satisfactory. There is a co-ordinator and there is good oversight. Few teachers have had any training to teach citizenship. There is a policy for the teaching of citizenship which covers both the in-school and external provision that contributes to students' citizenship skills. The school council provides an opportunity for students' participation in a democratic process. A range of good citizenship experiences is provided, such as a Human Rights assembly, Holocaust Day and charity events.
150. Standards in citizenship are average and achievement is broadly good. Currently, the school is moving towards identifying agreed levels of attainment for the ends of Years 9 and 11. This will lead to more accurate assessment of students' achievement.
151. Citizenship has a close affinity with personal, social and health education. It is also cross-curricular. How students learn the required citizenship areas of study is not always clear. Aspects of citizenship are identifiable for example in English, history, drama, religious education and physical education. A few subject work-plans indicate how the teaching of

citizenship will be managed. The teaching of citizenship lacks some detail in a number of other subjects. For this reason, overall provision is unsatisfactory.

152. Learning in citizenship is good. Students develop the skills of enquiry, communication and responsibility. Knowledge of citizenship such as rights and privileges and what they mean for personal actions is satisfactory in a majority of subjects. It is however good in personal, social and health education. Teaching, overall, is good because the discussion of ideas and opinions on the role of the state, what is society and the citizen's place in both is ongoing. Students are learning to be confident in expressing their views. A Year 9 class focused on democracy and a Year 11 drama class discussed issues of illegal immigration while working on 'A View from the Bridge'; they made connections with current asylum issues. All provided good opportunities for students to argue and debate major issues concerning life's experiences. The higher attaining students back their viewpoints and provide reasons for their opinions. In many cases students are drawing upon the personal, social and health education programme for their learning. Extended writing, when it is undertaken, is mainly descriptive. Some group activity is good and maintains the interest of a majority of students.
153. Curriculum leadership is defined and clear as to responsibilities in trying to establish where experiences of citizenship occur in all subjects. The school is reviewing the co-ordination of citizenship training. A strategy for cohesion and progression to promote good citizens is being developed.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, [number of subjects and courses] 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 tables below show entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003

### Level 3 AS level courses

Subject	entered	% A-E		% A-B		Average point	
		School	National	School	National	School	National
Art	1	100		0		30	
Biology	4	100		0		30	
Business Studies	5	80		0		18	
Chemistry	1	100		0		30	
Dance	1	100		0		20	
D&T	4	75		25		28	
English	4	100		25		35	
French	1	100		0		30	
German	4	100		25		35	
Geography	3	100		33		37	
General Studies	35	97		14		31	
History	3	67		33		23	
ICT	4	100		50		38	
Maths	4	75		0		18	
Music	3	100		0		33	
Performing Arts	1	100		100		50	
PE	1	100		0		20	
Psychology	5	100		20		32	
RE	3	100		0		30	
Sociology	3	67		0		13	
Textiles	2	100		50		30	

### Level 3 A level courses

Subject	entered	% A-E		% A-B		Average point	
		School	National	School	National	School	National
Art	10	70		50		65.5	
Biology	20	95		30		74	
Business Studies	7	86		0		46	
Chemistry	14	100		7		60	
Dance	3	100		0		67	
D&T	6	67		0		33	
Economics	4	75		0		50	
English Combined	9	100		22		76	
English Literature	22	95		55		85	
German	1	100		0		40	
Geography	7	86		29		63	
General Studies	12	100		33		73	

<b>History</b>	18	100		11		71	
<b>ICT</b>	16	81		25		65	
<b>Maths</b>	7	100		14		77	
<b>Music</b>	2	100		0		60	
<b>Performing Arts</b>	8	100		38		78	
<b>PE</b>	5	100		20		72	
<b>Physics</b>	7	100		29		83	
<b>Psychology</b>	22	86		9		55	
<b>RS</b>	4	100		75		95	
<b>Sociology</b>	5	100		20		64	
<b>Textiles</b>	9	22		11		18	
<b>Travel &amp; Tourism</b>	10	90		30		62	
<b>Leisure &amp; Recreation</b>	4	100		0		55	

*At the time of going to press, national comparisons for AS and A-level courses were not possible as data were not at that time available.*

**Year 12 Intermediate GNVQ**

<b>GNVQ Intermediate Business</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% gaining qualification</b>	<b>% merit</b>	<b>% Distinction</b>
	23	87	0	0

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

#### English literature

Overall provision in English literature is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good gains on their attainment when they entered the sixth form.
- Results in GCE A-level examinations are above average and better than in most other subjects.
- Teaching is often very good so that students make very good progress in lessons.
- Students make less use than usual of ICT for research and preparation of their assignments.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning	Good	
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

#### Commentary

154. When students enter the sixth form their standards are below average. Overall they gain examination results that are above average. Results in the 2003 A-level GCE examination were average and the proportion of students gaining either A or B grades was higher than average. Work seen during the inspection was also above average. This shows that students make good gains in attainment and achieve well. Those from minority ethnic groups achieve equally well.
155. Students work hard. They produce detailed and well-organised notes and carefully planned essays. They show good understanding of texts as varied as those by Geoffrey Chaucer and Margaret Atwood. Students follow a clear line of argument in essays and support their assertions well from the text. Year 12 students are a little tentative in lessons about using technical terms but they quickly gain confidence and by Year 13 use a full range of appropriate vocabulary. Students show very good detailed knowledge of texts such as Shakespeare's 'Othello' so that lessons become lively and challenging debates on important themes and aspects of language. In a very good Year 13 lesson students considered critical readings of Chaucer and gave short presentations to the class in which they showed good language skills, wide reading and familiarity with several critical interpretations. Talking about the course, students are positive and praise the good organisation that helps them to prepare effectively for lessons. English literature is a popular choice for A-level study and very few students fail to complete either their Year 12 or Year 13 courses.
156. Teachers plan lessons very well according to clear programmes of study. They ensure that all students are fully involved in activities through group discussions and presentations. As a result students learn and achieve well; they are highly motivated. Teachers are confident in their subject and students enjoy lessons. They have good knowledge of students' progress and support them well, for example, by offering additional help. Marking is detailed and shows students how to improve.

157. Good curriculum leadership ensures that sixth-form studies are well organised. Teachers and students focus closely upon preparing well for examinations and this leads to better results than might be expected. Since the previous inspection standards of work have risen slightly showing good improvement.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

158. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are average. Students apply their literacy skills effectively throughout the curriculum. They write competently for a variety of tasks showing some awareness of purpose in their choice of language. Levels of accuracy in spelling and punctuation are variable. Lower-attaining students regularly misspell even specialist vocabulary, such as 'tragedy' in English literature essays. Most students have very good understanding of technical terms and use them well, as seen in performing arts lessons. In ICT Year 12 students' presentations to the class suffered as a result of limited speaking skills, which the class teacher did not highlight for improvement. In English literature and history, teachers mark language skills in students' work carefully, making suggestions for better accuracy and structuring. Overall, standards of literacy and language skills are similar those found in most sixth forms. However, sixth-form students do not work independently in the learning resource centre at anything like customary levels.

## MATHEMATICS

The focus of the inspection was mathematics but further mathematics was also sampled. In a further mathematics lesson, learning was very good because very good use was made of an Internet site to teach about polar coordinates, and work was expertly matched to students' needs. Standards in this lesson were high.

### Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of work from students in Year 13 is above average.
- Good teaching leads to good achievement.
- Students are carefully grouped so that their learning needs are well met.
- Students are too dependent upon their teachers.
- There is insufficient material in the library to support learning or to inform about mathematics after A level.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
• Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average	Above average
• Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
• Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	
• Quality of teaching	Good	
• Quality of learning		
• Curriculum leadership	Good	
• Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

## Commentary

159. The standards of students starting the course have fluctuated markedly in recent years. The current two years in the sixth form exemplify this and that is why the standard of their work differs. Good management has responded well to this by organising teaching groups so that students move through the course at a rate appropriate to their needs. A-level results in 2002 were below average but students gained better results in mathematics than they did in their other subjects. Results in 2003 were not as good as for 2002. There are insufficient numbers of students to compare the standards of male and female students. Students from minority ethnic groups make progress at least equal to others but again numbers are too small for meaningful comparison.
160. Students in Year 13 differentiate and integrate a range of functions and calculate the effects of friction on motion. They are competent in all aspects of their work but do not regularly include a full explanation of how they have derived their answers. This can result in their notes being less effective when revising for examinations.
161. Students achieve well because good teaching leads to good learning. They achieve equally well in all components of the course. Students have very good, mature attitudes towards their work, being very appreciative of the quality of their teaching. Students particularly appreciate the detailed and helpful comments they receive so that they are well aware of the progress they are making and what they need to do for further improvement. Teachers do not always take full advantage of these mature attitudes and could leave students to take greater charge of their own learning. For example, students do not develop note-taking skills, as they are not required to make their own notes, but copy those written by the teacher on the board. Students do not learn sufficiently through exploration of their own ideas, as they are too readily presented with facts by the teacher.
162. ICT is well used to help students learn. An effective use was seen when students used a graph program to check the accuracy of curves they had sketched at home. Confidence for the work to follow was boosted because students had a rapid assessment of their learning.
163. Students learn best when they are given the right amount of work to do. Occasionally, they practise one skill for too long before moving onto the next stage of learning. Good teaching shows students very clearly from where new facts have been derived. Good use is made of homework to help students reinforce learning from class, to extend their learning or to prepare for the next lesson.
164. Poor quality sound-proofing disturbs concentration in many lessons. Improvement has been maintained since the previous inspection but standards have not risen. The faculty is currently examining teaching methods so as to extend good practice and raise standards.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

165. The school has not yet sought to co-ordinate the development of mathematics across the curriculum of the sixth form. However, students have the basic mathematical skills required for their courses. Hence, they can apply statistical techniques in psychology and can perform the necessary calculations in physics. However, students frequently lack analytical skills. So, whilst they can perform statistical tests in biology, they do not readily interpret the data produced. ICT students do not develop comprehensive and systematic models to test their solutions.

## SCIENCE

The focus subjects were physics and biology.

### Physics

Provision in physics is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of physics are shown in clear explanations of physical concepts.
- Students' positive attitudes to work are in response to supportive teacher-student relationships.
- Results in examinations are not high enough.
- Students' achievement is not monitored closely enough to identify underachieving students at an early stage.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership		
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

#### Commentary

166. Students learn well because teaching is good. Teachers' very good knowledge of the subject allows them to explain new topics clearly to develop students' understanding. They present information in a lively, energetic way so that their enthusiasm is transmitted to students, increasing their interest and motivation. All lessons are carefully planned and structured. In a Year 12 lesson on radioactivity students used statistical analysis to determine the half-life. Structured guidance on graphical skills, breaking the procedure down into simpler steps, enabled students to achieve accurate results.
167. Students are given a great deal of help in revision skills and examination technique. In a Year 13 lesson on circular motion, some students lacked confidence in their own ability and had poor recall of previous knowledge. The students lacked their own self-motivation and needed to be pushed to think for themselves. The teacher's encouraging and supportive attitude developed students' confidence and built on students' previous knowledge so that they were able to make good progress. Homework is well used to reinforce learning giving students practice in applying what they have learnt in class to examination questions. Written work is thoroughly marked and good use is made of assessment data so that students are aware of the level at which they are working and know how to improve.
168. Not enough opportunities are provided for students to actively discuss and debate topics to increase their scientific curiosity and improve their learning. The teaching methods seen during the inspection involved whole-class teaching with insufficient opportunities for students to progress at different rates dependent on their learning needs. Where tasks are the same for students of all attainment levels, higher-attaining students are not sufficiently challenged and, in consequence, make less progress.



169. In 2003, A-level results were average and the pass rate was a 100 per cent. These results showed an improvement over those of 2002, although some students underachieved with results lower than those expected from their GCSE performance. In Year 12 there was a 71 per cent pass rate. Again some students underachieved. However, the achievement seen during the inspection was good in both year groups. This is due to good teaching and learning. Present students are achieving well in relation to their GCSE grades
170. The department is well led and managed. Extra-curricular activities, such as entry in the University of Central Lancashire 'Paperclips' Competition and Update courses at Salford University enrich the curriculum. The head of department has a clear understanding of the issues in the department and provides a strong role model. The two teachers work closely together sharing good practice. The standard of provision has improved since the previous inspection. Attention is given to developing those number skills that support work in physics.

## Biology

Provision in biology is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management are significant to students achieving well.
- Teachers' knowledge of biology and effective planning of lessons, including planning to meet the needs of individuals, enable students to learn well at a good pace.
- Students are very well motivated and work hard.
- Students are not challenged consistently by all teachers to design, make predictions and form hypotheses.
- Formal monitoring of teaching and learning is not used to share best practice.

### Key inspection judgements

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average	Below average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Very good	
Improvement since the last inspection	Good	

### Commentary

171. The 2002 A-level results were below average for female and well below for male students when compared with all maintained schools and both did worse than they did in their other subjects. There has been a downward trend in results over recent years. In 2003 results were improved with an increase in the number of students gaining higher A-B grades. These results represent good achievement and good value-added in the sixth form.
172. The standards of work seen reflect well the improved examination results. Male students are now achieving similar standards as females, higher attaining students continuing to achieve well above average standards and, as seen in a very good Year 13 lesson on the function of the kidney, middle attaining students achieving above the expected level, particularly in their oral work. This is because well-motivated and hard working students are responding well to being challenged by teachers they respect and with whom they share very good relationships. Minority ethnic students and students with special educational needs achieve well as a result of discreet, targeted support. Lower attaining students achieve the expected level. They are not

confident in discussion, or in written test situations, as in a Year 12 lesson when asked to write about diffusion and to apply Flick's Law. Most students have a good level of ICT skills that support their learning well but they do not bring good prior learning to new situations and it is clear in notes and coursework that many struggle with biology related mathematics.

173. Teachers set high standards that are significant to students learning and achieving well. They are well qualified and plan well for effective learning. They include in the planning good use of models and application to everyday life, good reference to examination board requirements and a good range of activities for students' personal development and practice of key skills. Learning objectives are shared with students but do not feature strongly when learning and achievement are being evaluated. Good questioning maintains a good pace of learning but does not consistently challenge students enough. Teachers set homework and support students' independent learning well. They have a very good knowledge of their students and use assessment data to set targets, but do not involve the students sufficiently in self-evaluation. There are elements of very good practice in all lessons but inconsistencies occur because monitoring and evaluation of teaching does not happen systematically.
174. Within the department there is clarity of vision and a shared commitment to raising standards. Specialist teachers are well deployed. Good use is made of assessment data to review and modify practice but not to monitor the success of inclusion strategies for some groups of students. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Very good and increasing use is made of ICT. The application of number skills supports learning in biology but not enough is done to develop communication skills. Students are very enthusiastic about the provision for biology, in particular work experience and the wide range of curricular enrichment activities that inform and motivate them well. Lessons taught in classrooms tend to be a long way from the laboratories, therefore difficult to resource to the level required of this practical subject.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership has raised standards.
- The subject has become very popular as result of improved resources and facilities.
- Students have a very constructive attitude to their learning.
- The introduction of vocational courses would make the curriculum more appropriate to some students.
- The very limited access to computers for independent research and study in the sixth form impedes achievement.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Very good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very Good	
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Very Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

### Commentary

175. The improvements in the provision for ICT in the sixth form have benefited the students. They enter the sixth form with well below average standards but the quality of teaching and learning contributes to the improvement in skills, understanding and knowledge of the use and influence of ICT. In 2002 examination results in Year 12 were above average and in Year 13 just above average. This level of attainment was maintained in 2003, which indicates good achievement. However, there are not many students who attain the higher grades.
176. Students work on a range of activities that suitably prepare them to achieve well. In Year 12 they create slide presentations using appropriate software. They understand that it is essential to create a good visual impression by using a consistent style for every slide and that too much text can conceal the message. However, they do not always apply these principles when creating their own slides. When examining the use of ICT in business they create tables illustrating a range of devices for collecting data, but do not compare their relative advantages and disadvantages. Year 13 students use skills to create databases for applications such as a car hire company. They identify the problems in some detail, but only the higher attainers provide detailed solutions. In constructing the database, they explain basic principles such as the need to include validation routines to check data input, though they do not always include relevant routines in data capture forms.
177. The quality of the teaching and learning ensures that students always have opportunities to improve. Teachers are committed to giving students every opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding. Their secure knowledge of the subject instils confidence and they employ imaginative methods to keep students interested. Year 12 students use slide presentations to instruct each other about the requirements of examination questions. In all practical activities, teachers provide helpful individual support that encourages students to work with enthusiasm. They have a very positive attitude and enjoy their work. They respond very well to realistic challenges and as a result produce workable databases, which sometimes lack complete precision. Good study and homework activities develop what students have learned in lessons. There are excellent examples of each piece of required course-work on the walls with suitable comments so students can individually assess their own performance. Provision is fully inclusive so that minority ethnic students are well included in all activities and make similar progress to other students.
178. The head of department came to the school following a decline in both standards and the management of the department. His effective evaluation of the situation and proper use of performance data has notably raised standards. He inspires a dedicated team of specialist teachers, but recognises it is necessary to raise expectations so that standards improve further and higher attainers achieve better grades. He intends to make the curriculum more relevant to the needs of all students by introducing vocational courses. Recent developments have served students well.

## HUMANITIES

The main focus subjects were history and psychology. Critical thinking, geography and sociology were sampled.

**Critical Thinking:** One lesson was sampled. In this lesson students identified bias in an argument through consideration of a well-chosen text. Several students readily drew upon learning from their other studies to help them in their work. Students willingly answered the teacher's skilful questions but were considerably less willing to readily comment on the conjectures of their classmates. Standards in this lesson were below average.

**Geography:** Geography was sampled through the observation of one lesson and analysis of results. Standards based on A2 Level results in 2003 are well below average although this was an improvement on 2002 especially at the highest grades. Results at A/S Level in 2003 are also well below average. This is in keeping with expectations. Work seen during the inspection indicates an

improving picture and in work seen standards are close to average. Achievement is therefore very good taking into account students' low attainment on entry to the sixth form. Teaching and learning are both good, because assessment is a key part of lessons. Curriculum leadership is good because the performance of students and of the department as a whole are well monitored.

**Sociology.** The provision for sociology is good. Results at A-level in 2001 and in 2002 were average. The provisional results in 2003 are average. Current standards are slightly above average. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, the achievement of students is good. Overall, female students do better than males. The teachers know their subject well. The necessary terms and concepts, theories and methods are taught with careful attention throughout with simplicity of style. The teachers have a close familiarity with every aspect of sociology at this level

## History

Overall provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging teaching develops collaboration between teachers and students.
- Assessment is integral to learning so students know the quality of their achievement.
- Students apply knowledge and understanding effectively to make independent judgements.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	
Quality of teaching		
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

## Commentary

179. Collaborative teaching and learning, improved monitoring of students' performance and decisive action after poor results in 2002 are pushing up standards. A2 results in 2003 are below average but there were students gaining A and B grades for the first time in three years and all others did better than predicted. This good achievement is reflected in work seen during the inspection where students who have not studied history since Year 9 and the few whose GCSE grade was below requirements are doing well. The cumulative impact of changes, replacing studies of the French Revolution with post-Second World War Britain, integrating the personal study and better guidance when students choose their titles, extra support for those at risk of underachieving and teaching students to judge their own work according to exam requirements, are all very evident in Year 13. By this time students are confident, responsible, articulate and know how to get the best out of teaching which obliges them to take an active part. Achievement therefore is very good and students are already doing better than predicted and in work seen standards are close to average. This rising trend in standards contributes to satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Students from minority ethnic groups achieve very well; they confidently express themselves orally and in writing.

180. In the majority of lessons teaching and learning are very good and not infrequently, outstanding. For example, students act out the energy crisis confronting the Heath government in 1973-4 or Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy. They apply knowledge and understanding to produce a sense of reality. Using PowerPoint interventions and his own skill at painting scenarios, the teacher intermittently increases the challenge of students as they role-play

'Cabinet Meetings'. The teacher outlines dilemmas and students devise convincing solutions that will not lose the fictionalised government votes. Subsequent one-to-one discussions in front of the class are impressive, demanding secure command of factual information, clear illustrations and watertight reasoning. Effective note-making underpins each activity. At appropriate stages students and teacher discuss the detail and quality of learning. Essays and writing based on source analysis are done well because students have a formula for constructing introductions, paragraphs, conclusions and know how to target the highest number of marks. This style of collaboration and challenge is highly stimulating to students, generating trust on both sides. Communication skills are enhanced in history.

181. There are not enough opportunities to increase the challenge and scope of resource interpretation, especially statistics, through the use of ICT although field work opportunities are much more ambitious, since the previous inspection and include visits to Washington DC and New York.
182. Curriculum leadership is good. Assessment operates hand-in-hand with learning and analysis of data leads to effective action. The cycle of devising, trying out and evaluating teaching strategies focused on history skills and how students learn best is not yet a feature of regular meetings.

## Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching by specialist teachers.
- Good schemes of work encourage good achievement.
- Students are interested in psychology and attend well.
- The quality of some written work is high, particularly that produced by female students.
- There is a good collection of assessed work to clarify standards for both the teacher and the students.
- Access to ICT is limited in the classroom.
- Insufficient independent reading is being undertaken.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection		

## Commentary

183. Students take psychology on the back of differing levels of GCSE performance. On balance standards on entry to the sixth form are below average. In work seen, standards currently are slightly above average. Female students, who are in the majority, achieve better than male students. All enter the sixth form with no previous experience of psychology. However, as a result of good teaching and students' enthusiasm and commitment, students' achievement is good by the end of Year 12 and Year 13.
184. In the 2003 A-level examination, provisional results gained are average. Psychology is becoming more firmly established in the sixth form. Students are quickly starting to think like scientists and use the technical and medical vocabulary they are required to use in their writing. As they become more successful in this endeavour they become more confident and increase their competence as learners. Students' written work varies greatly in quality. Spelling, grammar and the use of English demonstrate some weaknesses in learning skills.
185. Teaching and learning are good. Knowledge of the required areas of psychology is good. The teachers present complex medical research into human behaviour with clarity. Methods of teaching are imaginative and varied encouraging concentration and the confidence of students. The weakness is independence. Students, in the main, are content to be passive recipients of well-prepared handouts and notes. The teachers' assessments of achievement are thorough and accurate.
186. Curriculum leadership is good. High expectations are placed on students but they are not always fulfilled. This can be accounted for by the weak learning skills. The performance of psychology is monitored carefully. High standards are the target and the goal of the teachers. No judgement can be made on improvement since this subject was not reported in the previous inspection report.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology was sampled. A Year 12 and a Year 13 design and technology lesson were sampled during the inspection and in both cases the quality of teaching and learning was very good. In a Year 12 class very good achievement was evident in the designing and construction of flat-pack tables. In a Year 13 lesson students achieved well as they made jigs to help with the construction of metal frames for a bike stand and a chair. Standards in examinations have been below average in recent years but the current students, particularly in Year 12, are on track to achieve better results.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus subjects were art and design and performance studies.

**Dance** was sampled. Lessons were seen in Years 12 and 13. Teaching in both lessons was good. The standards attained by Year 12 students were above average and reflected their achievement and experience up to GCSE level. They achieved well in the lesson and worked with confidence, style and showed a concern for artistic excellence. Standards seen in Year 13 were average, but achievement was good; these students had not taken a GCSE course in dance.

## Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement, in course work, is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students' attitudes are often very good.
- Lower attainers underachieve in the A-level examination.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

### Commentary

187. Over the 2001-2003 period, GCE A-level results were below average. The overall standard of current work in Year 12 is also below average but in Year 13 is average. More females than male students take this subject.
188. Influenced by a GNVQ-type approach students are now working in a more structured way in Year 12 and are being given greater freedom of choice and independence in Year 13.
189. Good achievement is evident in Year 12 drawings of old machinery using paint, charcoal and pastels as well as in their leaf castings using clay and plaster of Paris. Students in Year 12, achieve well taking into account the fact that some had good grades at GCSE whilst others did not undertake the course. They all work industriously but progress is slow for those with little previous experience of examination course work. The enrichment visit to a Scottish gallery yielded some of the best work, with the students relishing the opportunity of studying outside the classroom. Some lower attaining students in the current Year 12 resist their teachers' attempts to extend their drawing skills. Year 12 sketchbooks are also more limited in the range of drawings and research undertaken than might normally be seen by this stage.
190. Most Year 13 sketchbooks are full of lively observational drawings, personal ideas and good research. Students work effectively outside of lesson time in their own dedicated art studio. Separation from the main art rooms encourages independence in learning but the lack of adult supervision occasionally leads to work being damaged. A few lower attaining students in Year 13 are too content to work within a narrow range of images and materials. Analysis of lower attainers' performance in 2003 indicates underachievement for these students.
191. Teaching is always good and often very good. Teachers are very experienced in working in two and three dimensions as well as in introducing students to the work of other artists. Students in both year groups make use of computers for research and digital cameras for capturing images but only one Year 13 male student has explored the power of pixels in his work on portraiture. Teachers encourage students to explore their emotions but sometimes are too ready to intervene before the students have had time to reflect on what they have heard for example, when listening to music. Students, in both year groups, have too few opportunities for discussing ideas among themselves or for making formal oral presentations apart from when evaluating work.

192. The subject leader is comparatively new and has brought good ideas, which are taking time to implement in an already established structure. Assessment procedures are more consistently applied than at the time of the previous inspection. Currently, there are no resources for showing art slides or videos; this limits theoretical and historical study of the subject.

## Performance Studies

Overall the quality of provision in performance studies is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are improving.
- Good teaching and learning leads to good achievement.
- Students have very good attitudes to the subject which considerably enhance their learning.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	
Quality of teaching	Good	
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	N/A	

## Commentary

193. Teachers and students have in common a great enthusiasm for their subject. Through this, teachers share their very good knowledge and skills, coaching and inspiring the students to achieve well. Teachers and students get on very well together and this as well as students' very good attitudes improves significantly the quality of their learning. They are lively, confident and quickly engaged, focusing well on the task, sometimes with fun and humour. They experiment well, working quickly and creatively. Group work is positive and productive and the teachers support such activities well. Discussion, questioning and demonstration are used well to enhance students' learning in these practical subjects, as it helps students to learn quickly. Teachers and students do not always encourage those in the group who sometimes find work demanding; as a result these students are not always full participants in the work of the lesson. Teachers help students to analyse their work at the conclusion of the lesson. Through this, students are led to examine the means by which they achieve and the purpose of what they are doing, from which they realise the practice and the theory which supports their work. Extensive and detailed written assessment is also very helpful. In most lessons teachers make considerable demands on students, encouraging them to do their best, but where these demands are not present practical work becomes sloppy. Work on the song 'America' from 'West Side Story' provided examples of what is best and what can be weak when students are engaged in practical work in the arts. When wrong notes and poor singing were not challenged by the teacher no improvement was made, but when demands were high and the teacher persevered to get a section right, improvement was quickly felt and students showed what lively and capable singers they are.

194. In lessons current students showed that drama and dance are strengths, with most students having a background in the subject already. Those in Year 13, in particular, showed an increasing level of skill and commitment in a dance lesson, despite the main interest of most of them being drama. Their good achievement is a result of their own commitment to striving for excellence and consistently good or very good teaching of dance. The same group of students



in drama, working on Restoration Comedy, showed particular aptitude for comedy as they worked through a series of snap improvisations intended to transfer present-day stereotyping of character to the stock characters of the Restoration. Only a few students have previously acquired musical skills, especially in Year 12. This means that composing music for a cross-arts project on 'triumph and disaster' they find particularly difficult. The same group, however, made effective links between dance sequences and motifs and the spoken word, creating effective word collages that eventually evolved into telling dialogue on the common theme.

195. Higher attaining students write articulate and detailed essays on drama and dance practitioners such as Antonin Artaud and Merce Cunningham. They write well and perceptively when analysing and evaluating their performances showing that they understand the links between the three arts subjects. Most students use and understand the common language and similar techniques appropriate to all art forms. Although most students are strong practically, lower attaining students academically find it more difficult to organise their ideas coherently and to get beyond the descriptive when writing evaluations. They are guided to remedy this by the teachers through well-focused strategies. As a result examination results have improved over a period of three years, the greatest improvement coinciding with the acquisition of specialist arts college status. In 2003 all students passed the A level examination. Students did better in this than in their other subjects. In the AS level examination in 2003 most students achieved a grade or even two grades better than expected.
196. The course is led with considerable drive and energy. The manager of the course has built a strong team of teachers which is to be expanded further because of the increased demand for the arts in the school, and to enable them to develop further courses. She has overseen the successful submission to become an arts college with determination and single-mindedness.

## BUSINESS

The main focus subjects were business studies and travel and tourism. Economics was sampled.

**Economics:** Examination standards have been average over the last three years. Students' achievement is good. Students have a good, general economic knowledge about macro matters of significance. Students are less certain about micro economics. Overall, there is little difference in female and male student performance. Teaching and learning are good. Overall, the provision of economics is good. The teacher has good economic knowledge. To raise standards higher students need to take every opportunity to read about economics in journals and through the electronic sources.

### Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in lessons.
- Teachers carefully plan lessons to aid learning.
- There is good management of business education.
- There is a good range of provision covering academic and vocational courses.
- There is insufficient background research of business and economic matters being independently undertaken by students.
- Students' learning skills are weak, particularly their writing ability.

### **Summary of key inspection judgements:**

Judgement	Year 12	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average

Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	
Quality of teaching		
Quality of learning		
Curriculum leadership	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Very good	

## Commentary

197. Results in GNVQ examinations have been average over the last three years. The technology of business is understood and used by students. The written work lacks style and the use of English moves from correct to incorrect usage. This is particularly true of spelling. It does, however, cover the requirements of the examining board in that it is the language of business. Students understand the rise and fall of the economic cycle and they can amass an amount of information which is generally well organised. As female students out-perform their male counterparts so they present their work in a more organised fashion. This is one reason why they do so much better. Their skill of filing and retrieving information is second to none. The higher attaining students show confidence in their analysis and interpretation of statistical data on company performance. The low attaining students show some weaknesses in both evaluation and the presentation of data. Standards of current work are average overall for males and above average for females.
198. In the current work seen at A-level, standards achieved are average. Students enter the sixth form with modest GCSE results thus their achievement is above average and their progress is good. This is due to good teaching. Examination results in 2001 to 2003 were average. Female students do better than male students. From a relatively low academic base on entry to the sixth form, students' standards are average. Their achievement is hindered by weak learning skills such as writing and reading. The higher attaining students, both male and female, are working above national norms. Female students do better than male students because they are both conscientious and enthusiastic.
199. Teaching and learning are good in A-level courses. Teachers have a good rapport with students. Teachers know their subject well and this underpins learning, lending clarity to the economic argument held in class. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of business and economic case studies to permit students to extend their knowledge. Teachers provide logical explanations which help lower attaining students to grasp business principles. ICT is insufficiently used to gather and interpret data.
200. Students respond well in lessons and demonstrate mature attitudes when questioned about business practice or government economic policies. The higher attaining students show a greater clarity in their thinking as they do in their writing. This is because they read more widely in journals and newspapers to glean facts. Too many students, however, are passive recipients of handouts and prepared notes.
201. Curriculum leadership is good. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. There is effective development in the chasing of students to complete work and the evaluation of student performance is now rigorous. There is a very clear vision for the development of the subject and the target reviews have meaning.

## Travel and tourism

Provision in travel and tourism is **good**.

- The procedures for assessment are very good. They are used effectively to tell students how to improve and to plan lessons.

- Students acquire good factual knowledge but, when answering questions and building their portfolios, they do not apply this knowledge well enough. This leads to less examination success.
- Students' learning is well supported by well-planned visits to cultural and leisure attractions.

**Summary of key inspection judgements:**

Judgement	Year 13
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average
Achievement of students and whether it is as good as it should be	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good
Quality of learning	
Curriculum leadership	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	N/A

**Commentary**

202. The standards attained by students when they start the course are significantly below average. By the end of Year 13 standards are below average overall but have been improving year on year since the subject was introduced three years ago.
203. Student's achievement is good overall. They make noticeably good progress from Year 12 to the end of Year 13. As a result almost all students, male and female, improve on their Year 12 grades.
204. Students' portfolios of work are comprehensive and indicative of their very positive attitude to their subject both in the classroom and when completing tasks outside school. Carefully researched case studies clearly describe the attractions of tourist destinations and the nature of private and public companies. However, in written work students do not make enough use of data to give precise examples of the impact of tourism, for example to prove the popularity of particular destinations, and they do not demonstrate the links between private and public institutions in promoting tourism. These examples are indicative of the difficulties students face when seeking to apply their factual knowledge, which is often quite considerable. It is this aspect of their work that lowers the overall standard. Students use ICT very effectively for personal research and to complete their portfolios. They present their work carefully and generally accurately but the spelling of key words is not always secure.
205. In classrooms, enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers capture students' interest and maintain very good working relationships. Teachers ensure that appropriate resources are available for individual research and challenging questioning of individual students helps them to acquire new knowledge and to develop their thinking. Nevertheless, students not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate and apply their knowledge in order to improve examination results. Although students' independent work is regularly marked, class notes are checked infrequently and as a consequence errors in spelling key words are not always corrected. However, teachers make very good use of the Key Piece Review Sheet to inform students of the standard of their work and to set targets for improvement, explaining in detail how these targets can be reached. Students respond well to the advice given in order to improve their portfolios.
206. The head of department has a clear vision for future development which reflects his own enthusiasm for the subject and his determination to ensure that students fulfil their potential. There is an effective working relationship between the members of the teaching team and ongoing professional development is ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge is up-to-date and relevant. There is a very strong commitment to improve standards and the capacity to do so. This subject was not reported in the previous inspection so a judgement about improvement since then is not possible.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

This curriculum area was not inspected.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

This curriculum area was not inspected

**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	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	6	6
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	3
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	3	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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

