

INSPECTION REPORT

HARRY CARLTON COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

East Leake

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122868

Headteacher: Mr G. Legg

Lead inspector: Mr D. Cox

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th November 2003

Inspection number: 259272

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

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Terms used in this report

*Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for all ages at school.*

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1137
School address:	Harry Carlton Comprehensive School Lantern Lane East Leake Loughborough Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	LE12 6QN
Telephone number:	01509 852424
Fax number:	01509 856434
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Professor Marion Shaw
Date of previous inspection:	26 th -30 th January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Harry Carlton Comprehensive School is about the same size as other secondary schools and educates students between the ages of 11 and 18. It is set in a rural village nine miles south of the city of Nottingham. The popularity of the school has resulted in it being over-subscribed for a number of years running. The school takes children from over 20 primary schools situated in Nottinghamshire, the City of Nottingham and the counties of Derbyshire and Leicestershire. There are 1137 students on roll, of whom 206 are in the sixth form. The sixth form is about the same size as most other sixth forms.

The school occupies a brand new building, opened in September 2003 as part of a private financial initiative (PFI). Students are from predominantly White-British backgrounds. The percentage of students whose mother tongue is not English is much lower than in most other schools and there are two students who are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is below average; the percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is well below average. Most students are on the register for dyslexia or moderate learning difficulties. The socio-economic circumstances of the students are above average. Overall, attainment on entry to the school is above average although students in the current Year 10 joined the school in Year 7 with slightly above average standards of attainment.

A new headteacher took up post in September 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10297	D. Cox	Lead inspector	
13395	J. Illingworth	Lay inspector	
33139	M. Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics
19596	B. Treacy	Team inspector	English. English as an additional language
4145	C. Harrison	Team inspector	Science. Chemistry
11933	D. Driscoll	Team inspector	Design and technology. Physics
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design
22411	A. Axon	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography
20287	D. Harris	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31705	J. Mason	Team inspector	Music
12985	S. Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education
30427	F. Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	Religious education
11720	P. Winch	Team inspector	Special educational needs. Drama
22590	R. Castle	Team inspector	Citizenship
2597	C. Jackson	Team inspector	Business. Sociology
15832	J. Vanstone	Team inspector	History
32371	H. Fairclough	Team inspector	English, post-16

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

3 Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good standard of education and provides good value for money. Teaching, leadership and students' achievement are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of the consistently good teaching they receive.
- Students' attitudes are good; there is a good work ethic and they are keen to learn.
- Students achieve very well in the sixth form in mathematics, physical education, drama and physics.
- Good leadership has steered the school successfully through a period of significant change.
- Students' achievement in business studies and religious education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum for students aged 14 to 19 does not allow for progression.
- The whole-school strategy for improving students' writing skills is unsatisfactory.

Progress has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations have improved in line with the national trend. Results at A-level have improved from being average to being above average. Since the previous inspection, the achievement of boys has improved and is now similar to that of the girls. Huge steps have been taken to improve the quality and condition of the school buildings which are now very good. Development plans are now satisfactory and the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT). However, there is still work to be done on the use of assessment data to evaluate the progress of students.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

The A in the box above indicates that compared to similar schools, students' achievement in GCSE examinations was very high compared to their results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally for achievement.*

Students' achievement is good. Standards are above average at the end of Year 9; standards are well above average by the end of Year 11. By the end of Year 13, standards are above average. Across the curriculum, standards of literacy are average. Many students are articulate and have a good understanding of what they read. However, writing is a relative weakness in the school, especially in Years 7 to 9. Standards of numeracy are above average. The strategy for teaching mathematics as a basic skill in subjects is good. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good overall. The achievement of the very highest attainers and talented students, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as that of other students. The school is much further behind other schools in providing special activities really to stretch this group of students.

Students' personal development and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Students' good attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to their achievement. Good behaviour in lessons and around the school creates an environment that is conducive to learning. Attendance is good and enhances students' learning and achievement. Provision for students' moral and social development is very good. Spiritual development is good. Opportunities to promote students' cultural development are too limited, although provision is satisfactory overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching is good. The major strength of the teaching is the high level of consistency in the quality of teaching that students experience, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This enables students to learn quickly and achieve well overall. Some lessons, however, are rather boring and do not allow students to learn as quickly as they might. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are good. Teachers do not make enough use of computers in lessons. Teachers do not create sufficient opportunities for students to be able to develop a full range of writing skills. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in business studies in Years 10 and 11 because some of the teaching lacks challenge.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form because not all students are taught religious education which is a statutory breach. There is a good range of extra clubs and activities. Also, the curriculum is not planned well enough to provide continuity for students from the age of 14 through to the age of 19. The school has sufficient resources: a good match of teachers to the curriculum and very good accommodation. The quality of support and guidance for students is satisfactory. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good. It has strong and effective links with other schools, and with colleges and universities. The school has a completely new building and good access to the leisure centre that shares the school campus.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.

The headteacher, together with the leadership team, has successfully steered the school through a period of significant change. Management of the school is satisfactory. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. However, a number of the school's systems are not as well developed as those seen in other 'good' schools. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory because governors are not ensuring that the school provides lessons in religious education for all students in Years 10 to 13 and there is no daily act of collective worship. The governing body is well organised and the committee structure works well in informing governors about the work of the school. The sixth form is satisfactorily led and managed.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Comments are based on those made by students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. Parents are very interested in students' learning and are keen for them to do well. Their high aspirations influence their children, who come to school expecting to learn and to work hard. Virtually all students pre-16 thought the school was good. A significant minority of sixth formers who completed the inspection's questionnaire said that they did not get helpful advice on what to study after Year 11. Inspectors agree that evidence shows that there are some concerns about the guidance on the transfer from Year 11 to Year 12.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve students' achievement in business studies in Years 10 and 11. (1)
- Ensure the curriculum provides progression for students aged 14 to 19. (2)
- Implement a whole-school strategy for improving students' writing skills. (3)
- Improve students' achievement in religious education in Years 10 and 11. (4)

Point 2 also applies to the sixth form.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure students have their full curriculum entitlement in religious education in the sixth form.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good and its cost-effectiveness is good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Students' attitudes are very good.
- Students achieve very well in drama and physics in both Years 12 and 13.
- Students do not receive their full statutory entitlement to religious education.
- The curriculum for students aged 14 to 19 does not allow for natural progression.

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 good . In 2002, results at A-level were below average. Teachers know their subject well. Some of the teaching allows students to become passive.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . The good level of knowledge of the teachers leads to clear explanations of concepts. The A-level results in 2002 were well above average.
Science	Provision in chemistry is good . Teaching is good and students achieve well. Provision in physics is very good . Teaching is very good and leads to students achieving very well. The A-level results in 2002 were well above average.
Humanities	Provision in geography is good . Good teaching results in students achieving well. The A-level results in 2002 were average. Provision in history is very good . Very good teaching results in students achieving very well in Year 12. The A-level results in 2002 were well below average. Provision in sociology is good . Good teaching results in students achieving well. The A-level results in 2002 were average.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and design is good . Good teaching results in students achieving well. The A-level results in 2002 were average. Provision in drama is very good . Teachers have very good specialist knowledge and high expectations, and students achieve very well as a result. The A-level results in 2002 were below average.
Business	Provision in business is satisfactory . Teaching is satisfactory and results in satisfactory achievement. The A-level results in 2002 were above average.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is very good . Very good teaching leads to students achieving very well in Year 13. The A-level results in 2002 were well above average.

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

The school gives good support and guidance to students in the sixth form, and has satisfactory procedures for seeking out and acting on their views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Examination results at A-level have risen from average to above average since the previous inspection report. The head of sixth form provides good support for students. The monitoring of students' performance is good. However, there is little evidence of curriculum development; there is not a natural progression for students who study vocational courses pre-16. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties in providing sufficient religious education for all students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Approximately three out of ten sixth formers who completed the inspection's questionnaire said that they did not get helpful advice on what to study after Year 11. On the other hand, more than eight out of ten said that the courses that they had chosen suited their abilities and career plans. The inspection evidence shows that the school does not always give good advice to students on the transfer from Year 11 to Year 12. Students get good support from members of staff which enables them to cope with the demands of the sixth form. They say that teachers use marking well to advise them on how to improve their work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The vast majority of students join the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are above average and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards are well above average. Students in the current Year 10 joined the school in Year 7 with slightly above average standards of attainment. Students' achievement is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 and attain well above average examination results.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs is good.
- In 2003, all Year 11 students left the school with at least one GCSE; this places the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in business studies and compulsory religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- The written work of many students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The achievement of the very highest attainers and talented students, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as that of other students.

Commentary

1. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in all other subjects, with the exception of English, geography, physical education and citizenship, where they are average. Students achieve very well in mathematics and well in all other subjects with the exception of English, design and technology and history, where achievement is satisfactory.
2. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average in science and above average in all other subjects, with the exception of geography, music, physical education and citizenship, where standards are average. Students achieve well in all subjects with the exception of design and technology, music, physical education and citizenship, where achievement is satisfactory. Achievement in business studies and compulsory religious education is unsatisfactory.
3. It is the consistency of students achieving well and attaining above average standards that enables them to attain well above average GCSE results. Another contributing factor is the students' good attitudes to learning and their willingness to spend long hours preparing for examinations. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The school has worked hard to improve the achievement of boys which was an area for improvement noted in the previous report.
4. In Years 7 to 9, students' achievement is best in mathematics. This is because the teachers have adopted the strategy of dividing the lesson into three parts; this ensures a good structure and brisk pace to lessons. The students respond well to this and make gains in their learning. On the other hand, achievement is only satisfactory in English because teachers do not always use this strategy and there is insufficient focus on improving students' writing skills.
5. In Years 10 and 11, students underachieve in business studies because of the unsatisfactory teaching they receive. Teaching takes no account of what students already know and there is

insufficient challenge. In compulsory religious education, achievement and standards are severely affected by the lack of curriculum time in Years 10 and 11.

6. Across the curriculum, standards of literacy are average. Many students are articulate and have a good understanding of what they read. However, writing is a relative weakness in the school, especially in Years 7 to 9. The school admits very few students who are at the early stages of learning English. However, such students have their attainment assessed when they enter the school and support is provided. Students learn the language quickly, adapt well socially and achieve well. Standards of numeracy are above average. The strategy for teaching mathematics as a basic skill in subjects is good.
7. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good overall. Teachers provide suitable work for students, and teaching assistants give well-focused support. At the end of Year 11, students do very well in the GCSE examinations.
8. The achievement of the very highest attainers and talented students, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as that of other students. The school is much further behind other schools in providing special activities to really stretch this group of students.

The school set and met challenging targets for improvement in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.8 (33.5)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	37.6 (36.4)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	35.3 (35.2)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 183 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	70 (61)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	99 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	42.2 (n/a)	34.6

There were 185 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are above average in mathematics and science but average in English.
- Students' achievement in Year 9 was good given their results when they were in Year 6.
- Overall, results are above average and have been improving at a rate in line with the national trend.
- Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations are well above average and students achieved exceedingly well given their standards at the end of Year 9. The trend in results is in line with the national trend.

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 13, standards are above average and students achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well overall because of the good teaching they receive.
- Students achieve very well in physics and drama in Years 12 and 13.
- Examination results have risen significantly since the previous inspection report.
- Achievement is only satisfactory in business studies.

Commentary

9. In the subjects inspected in detail, in Year 12, students attain very high standards in physics and well above average standards in art and design and history. They attain above average standards in English, chemistry and drama. Standards are average in mathematics, geography, physical education, sociology and business studies. Students achieve very well in history, physics and drama. They achieve well in all other subjects with the exception of business studies where achievement is satisfactory.
10. In Year 13, students attain well above average standards in mathematics, drama and physics. Standards are above average in chemistry, art and design, physical education and sociology. Standards are below average in English literature. Students achieve very well in mathematics, physical education, drama and physics. Students achieve well in all other subjects with the exception of business studies where achievement is satisfactory.
11. In physics, students are very confident in their understanding of ideas and also possess very good practical skills. They are keen to question their teachers and debate the theories they are being taught. Students' very positive attitudes to drama and the very good relationships lead to swift improvements. In mathematics, teachers give good support with clear explanations, allowing students to improve their understanding and achievement. In physical education, teachers have high expectations and set a demanding pace, using a variety of teaching strategies effectively. Students are expected to take an active role in their learning and they respond very positively. In business studies, achievement is only satisfactory because students are not challenged enough to develop answers or to engage with other students; this results in over-reliance on the teacher.
12. There is no significant difference in the achievement of males and females. The vast majority of students complete their chosen courses.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	100	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	36.7	39.4
Average point score per student	255.4	263.3

There were 190 students in the year group.

- Results overall in the 2002 A-level examinations were above average. Males attained above average results whilst females attained average results.
- Results have risen significantly since the previous inspection report.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Main school

Students have good attitudes to school and behave well. Their attendance is good and their punctuality is satisfactory. Provision for students' personal development is good. The school promotes students' moral and social development very effectively and makes good arrangements to enhance their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. Provision for students' cultural development is satisfactory. Overall, students' attitudes, values and personal qualities make a positive contribution to their academic and personal achievements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy lessons and have good attitudes to learning.
- Attendance is good across the school.
- Behaviour is good. It has improved in the current year.
- Students are confident and their self-esteem is high.
- Students have very good relationships with one another and with adults in the school.
- The school makes very good provision for students' moral and social development.
- A small number of students sometimes show negative attitudes in lessons.
- The fixed-term exclusion rate was high in the year 2002/2003.

Commentary

13. Students like coming to school. They are keen to learn and to achieve well in lessons. They show interest in the subjects and concentrate well on their work. They enjoy being actively involved in tasks that challenge their abilities. They do not enjoy undemanding work such as copying out notes. Attitudes to learning are very good in lessons that have good pace, contain stimulating activities, and give students the chance to use their initiative. They have the confidence and the desire to be successful learners. Many of them name art and design as their favourite subject because, in their view, teachers allow them to take responsibility for their own learning. In general, students have good attitudes to all subjects of the curriculum. A small number of them require skilled management by teachers to keep them on task and learning in lessons. This was evident during the inspection with a group of low attaining students in Year 10. They were reluctant to work in a science lesson and only concentrated and made progress because the quality of teaching was good. These students are a small minority. Overall, lower attaining students, including those who have special educational needs, have good attitudes to learning.
14. Attendance is above the national average for secondary schools. Punctuality is satisfactory overall even though there is a significant amount of unpunctuality at the start of the day. Students who come to school by bus are often late for registration because bus services run behind schedule. Where students have control, they are generally punctual and arrive on time for their lessons. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance, and in co-operation with the education welfare officer, takes effective action to get absentees back into lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2001-2002) (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.9
National data (secondary)	7.8	National data (secondary)	1.2

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

15. Students respond well to the school's very good provision for moral development and high expectations regarding conduct. Behaviour and discipline have improved substantially in the current academic year. There were problems in the year 2002/2003 because of cramped conditions on site while the school was being rebuilt. Standards of behaviour declined and the rate of exclusion rose above the national average. The number of exclusions is now declining, as is the use of internal isolation to deal with disruption to lessons. Overall, students' behaviour is good. They behave well and often very well in lessons, particularly when the quality of teaching is good. Relationships between students, and between students and adults, are very good. They are enhanced by the school's very good provision for social development. The latter also helps to raise standards of behaviour across the school; for example the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) contains much preventative work on bullying and racism. The school's work is effective. Aggressive behaviour is rare and students are not worried about bullying or other forms of harassment. A few individuals have behavioural problems. The school makes good provision for their needs. It sets them targets for improvement, gives them extra support, and monitors their progress closely.
16. The lack of religious education in Years 10 and 11 reduces opportunities for students to reflect on their beliefs and values; however, opportunities in religious education for younger students are very good. Other areas of the curriculum provide time for students to think about the significance of what they learn and they respond well to these opportunities to reflect on wider issues.
17. Opportunities for students' cultural development are too limited. Few students choose to be involved in extra-curricular music and opportunities to participate in performance or observation of concerts or plays are generally limited to the needs of the curriculum. There are better opportunities through the art club that enables students to experiment with their own ideas. The annual performance by Year 7 students is a very good example of students working together on the performing arts. There are good opportunities for European visits; however, opportunities to appreciate the multi-cultural nature of England are too limited.

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	1081	97	4
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	11		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	4	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	4		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4		
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	1		
No ethnic group recorded	12		

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

Sixth form attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Sixth form students have very positive attitudes to learning and are willing to take responsibility for their work. Their attendance is good and their behaviour is very good. They have very good relationships with each other, with younger students in the school, and with members of staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students show very good interest and involvement in their work and in the life of the school.
- Students are mature, confident and keen to take responsibility for their learning.
- The very good quality of their relationships with teachers, and with one another, enhances their learning.

Commentary

18. Sixth form students are very well motivated and respond very positively to the opportunities for learning that the school offers. They rise to the challenge of organising their work and thinking for themselves. Students like lessons even when they find the subject demanding, and are very appreciative of good teaching. They are keen to succeed, and value high quality marking that helps them to improve their work. A minority of students, mainly boys, do not prepare

enough in advance of lessons or organise their work as carefully as they should. For example, they are reluctant to write down their calculations in mathematics and science lessons. Overall, students enjoy being in the sixth form and have very good attitudes to learning. However, in some cases, students go into the sixth form for the wrong reasons, such as taking A-levels because everyone else is doing so, or wanting to remain with friends.

19. Other aspects of students' attitudes and values are very good. They are confident, articulate young adults. They behave very well in lessons and around the school and are prepared to accept responsibility. They enjoy taking part in extra-curricular activities and serving the school community, as when they act as volunteer assistants on residential trips. Their relationships with one another and with members of staff are based on trust and mutual respect and help to create a good environment for learning. Occasionally their attitudes and behaviour are immature, as when they show little urgency about making decisions and meeting deadlines.
20. The moral and social development of members of the sixth form is very good. Students in the sixth form make a significant contribution to the rest of the school through their work on the anti-bullying campaign, charity fundraising and the mentoring of younger students. Their annual review is a 'high spot' of the year and they are aware of their responsibility as role models for the rest of the school. The raising of funds and the planning and execution of the annual children's party develop their sense of responsibility and organisation, and they work well in teams. They co-operate well as separate year groups, although there is limited integration between them. Opportunities for the spiritual and cultural development of the sixth form are satisfactory and are largely limited to areas of the curriculum. The lack of religious education in the sixth form reduces the opportunities for reflection that are evident amongst those who are following the A-level course.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory because the school does not provide religious education for all students in Years 10 and 11. The quality of support and guidance for students is satisfactory and has a positive effect on their academic achievement and personal development.

Teaching and learning in the main school

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of assessment of students' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and leads to students achieving well.
- Teachers manage students well which aids achievement and learning.
- Teachers use very engaging methods and resources to capture students' interest and involve them in learning.
- The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are good.
- Teachers do not monitor students' progress sufficiently.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in business studies and, as a result, students underachieve.
- Teachers do not systematically and comprehensively tackle students' basic shortcomings in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Commentary

21. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is very good in mathematics, and good in all other subjects, with the exception of English, design and technology and history where it is satisfactory.
22. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good in all subjects, with the exception of design and technology where it is satisfactory and business education where it is unsatisfactory.
23. The major strength of the teaching is the high level of consistency in quality that students experience, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This enables students to learn quickly throughout Years 10 and 11, to build effectively on earlier learning and eventually to achieve well overall. A particular strength of the teaching is the very engaging methods and resources teachers use to capture students' interest and involve them in active learning. Colourful visual aids, productive pair work, competitions – all these and more are successful in helping students learn. In the best lessons there is a joyful buzz of purposeful activity expecting a great deal of students and leading to rapid learning.
24. Another strength in the teaching is the control of behaviour. There is very little disruption to teaching and parents agree that their children enjoy school. Good behaviour is common in lessons, partly as a result of the students' good attitudes to learning, but also because teachers' control is such that the simple raising of the voice is enough to quieten any student who does start to misbehave.
25. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are good. Teachers know students well, so that they help students learn quickly. In-class support from teaching assistants is very good, though insufficient support in Years 7 to 9 slows progress. Assistants have considerable expertise in knowing how best to help students improve.
26. There are weaknesses in the occasional lessons that are less than satisfactory. For example, an activity may be rather boring and not allow students to learn as quickly as they might. Teachers do not make enough use of computers in lessons, notably in getting students to present coursework and gaining information from the Internet.
27. Whilst teachers' assessment and marking of work are satisfactory, their monitoring of students' progress is not sufficiently rooted in close analysis of their attainment on entry to the school to identify accurately how far teaching is taking students forward.
28. Teachers do not create sufficient opportunities for students to be able to develop a full range of reading and writing skills. Teachers do not systematically and comprehensively tackle students' shortcomings in the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. This results in weaknesses in coursework.
29. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in business studies because students are unsure what they are meant to be doing. Teaching does not always take account of what students already know; teaching in these lessons is weak and without challenge. Some students, however, do benefit from good teaching which encourages and engages them well. In these lessons, effective teaching methods are used and efficient use is made of time and resources.
30. A substantial amount of data is collected on the students when they enter the school and this is used well to set targets for students' achievement. The use of assessment information by subject teachers to ensure that their planning is accurate is satisfactory overall. In science and

ICT, teachers assess work thoroughly and provide good detailed feedback so that students know how well they are doing and how they can improve. In other subjects, the quality of assessment is satisfactory. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection when a key issue was the further development of arrangements for monitoring students' progress and acting upon the findings.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 207 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (2%)	45 (22%)	105 (51%)	45(22%)	2 (1%)	1(1%)	0

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

Sixth form

The quality of teaching is good and results in good learning. Procedures for, and use of, assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in history, physical education, physics and drama, and results in students achieving very well.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject.
- The quality of teachers' feedback to students is good.
- Learning is not as strong when students become passive and have limited input into the lesson.

Commentary

31. In the subjects inspected in detail, the quality of teaching and learning is very good in history, physical education, physics and drama. It is good in all other subjects, with the exception of business studies where it is satisfactory.
32. Teachers know their subject well and have a very good knowledge of the subject. A good example of this was seen in a Year 13 lesson on Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, when rigorous questioning by the teacher resulted in students confidently analysing and responding to a complex examination question. Teachers plan their lessons well, including in them a range of individual and interactive tasks that challenge and stimulate their students. As a result students both learn and achieve well. The monitoring of students' achievement and progress, through frequent assessment and student target setting, is good. Students' attitudes towards the teaching are very positive and they enjoy the lessons.
33. Less effective teaching was seen when students assumed an essentially passive role as the teacher led them through the work, providing them with ideas and interpretations, or when some students were allowed to dominate discussion. Occasionally, insufficient opportunities are provided for students to develop their study skills, by encouraging them to research and prepare for topics in advance of their lessons.
34. There is a wealth of assessment data available to subjects and its use is effective. The quality of teachers' feedback to students on their work, and how well they are performing against examination criteria, is good in English, drama and history. Annual analyses of examination results are rigorous and directly influence planning for teaching. However, in chemistry,

physics and business studies, teachers do not make enough use of assessment data in evaluating the achievement of students.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. There is a good range of extra clubs and activities. The curriculum is not planned well enough to provide continuity for students from the age of 14 through to the age of 19. The school has sufficient resources: a good match of teachers to the curriculum and very good accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students study two languages in Years 8 and 9.
- Students in Years 10 to 13 are not all taught religious education.
- The way that the school promotes literacy in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum does not provide continuity for students aged 14 to 19.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

35. There are strengths in the curriculum. The course in PSHE, for example, is well planned and works well in improving students' attitudes. Similarly, the school provides a good range of activities during lunchtimes and after school to enhance students' education. Of particular note are the very good range of sporting activities and the numerous extra classes that are provided for students who are studying for examinations, which play a significant part in improving students' results.
36. The provision for students with special educational needs is good overall. In the learning support department it is only satisfactory because the base does not have up-to-date computers or suitable benches to house them. This restricts small group work, especially with students who have specific learning difficulties. Teaching is good across the school and teaching assistants give very good support, which has a significant impact on how fast students learn. Lunchtime provision is good. Teaching assistants supervise the popular games club, which gives students of all abilities a chance to socialise or to seek help with homework. In a computer room, students with learning difficulties improve spelling by using a commercial software program. At the same time, gifted and talented students work on a challenging competition run by a university. Students of differing abilities take an interest in what others are doing and relationships are very good. Teaching assistants also take an active part in the literacy work for small groups in Year 7 and this helps students to improve their reading and writing. Individual education plans provide good support through the clear targets set for students to help them learn better.
37. Students spend much less time in lessons than is usual, and well below the amount of time recommended by the government. This means that the school does not have enough time to teach religious education in Years 10 and 11, a subject to which the students are entitled. The situation is better in Years 7 to 9, where all students study drama and two foreign languages, as well as all the subjects to which they are entitled. Nevertheless, the school has been slow to implement national programmes to improve students' language and literacy, so students' achievement in English is behind that in mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9; this aspect of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
38. The school has done little to make any significant changes to the curriculum in the past few years, particularly for students aged 14 to 19. There are students in the school who would benefit from vocational courses. The school is only now considering introducing more

vocational courses. Similarly, the school is much further behind other schools in providing special activities really to stretch the most able and talented students; there is a register of such students but few planned activities.

39. The new building provides very good accommodation and is already having a significant impact on the behaviour of students, their expectations and the teaching strategies used by teachers. The accommodation does have its drawbacks, for example there are few displays celebrating students' work in the corridors. The soundproofing in the music area is not very effective and the noise from this area impacts on adjacent classrooms and disrupts learning.

Sixth form

The school provides a range of courses, at different levels, that are suitable for the students staying on to the sixth form. However, the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because the school does not provide religious education for all students. Furthermore, the school has yet to introduce courses that provide a natural progression for students who study vocational courses, such as health and social care, in Year 11. Students in the sixth form have the same good opportunities to enrich their studies as other students in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Main school

The quality of support and guidance for students is satisfactory and has a positive effect on their academic achievement and personal development. The school has adequate procedures for sounding out and acting on students' views. At the time of the inspection there were satisfactory arrangements for ensuring that students work in a healthy and safe environment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The trusting relationships that students have with adults in the school enhance the quality of support and guidance.
- Students have access to a good range of sources of advice and receive good guidance from the school's programme of PSHE.
- The school gives good support to students who have emotional, behavioural and social problems.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of students into Year 7.
- Tutor periods are not used to best effect and the form tutors' role is underdeveloped in respect of monitoring students' academic progress,
- Guidance on future options for students in Year 11 is not wholly effective, and as a result some of them choose inappropriate courses for the sixth form.

Commentary

40. The school's provision for pastoral care has some significant strengths. There is a good induction programme for primary school pupils in Year 6. This prepares them well for the transfer to Harry Carlton School and helps them to settle quickly in Year 7. There is a good and well-taught programme of PSHE. Students say that they enjoy PSHE lessons and find them helpful. Anyone who needs individual advice has good access to alternative sources of guidance. Students who do not feel comfortable about confiding in members of staff can obtain advice from the school nurse or the anti-bullying campaign (ABC). The latter consists of members of the sixth form who are specially trained to deal with cases of bullying. Students have a high regard for the 'ABC', and say that they would definitely use it if they were bullied. In general though, they prefer to turn to their teachers for help with problems. The quality of

personal support and guidance is enhanced by very good relationships. Pastoral staff are approachable, know students well as individuals and care about their welfare. Students for their part have confidence in the ability of form tutors and heads of year to give them effective help.

41. There are good procedures supporting students who have serious difficulty in coping with the demands of school life. Members of staff monitor students' personal development effectively through progress checks, individuals' commendations and disciplinary records and identify anyone who gives cause for concern. Students who cannot control their behaviour and are in danger of being excluded are given special help in the form of pastoral support plans. The school's measures are often successful in modifying the behaviour and improving the motivation of some difficult students.
42. Learning support staff offer good guidance to students with special educational needs. They know students well and are available at lunchtimes to offer assistance.
43. The strengths of the school's provision for students' welfare are balanced by weaknesses. It is unclear as to who is responsible for carrying out general risk assessments of the buildings and grounds, and there is no evidence that any have been done.
44. There are also shortcomings in procedures for supporting and guiding students. Form tutors have only a limited role in academic monitoring, target setting, and measures to promote academic progress. The school is aware of this and has identified it as an area for development. The time allocated for tutor periods is adequate but is rarely used to best effect. During the inspection some tutor groups in Years 10 and 11 worked on their progress files, but in general, students treated the morning tutorial as a time for social chat. Many of them clearly regarded both tutor periods and assemblies as a waste of time. Guidance on careers and courses of study is satisfactory overall, but is not effective for all students. In the sixth form questionnaire a substantial minority of students were critical of the advice they received in Year 11. This is in part true, since some students are allowed to start courses for which they are ill-equipped.

Sixth form

The school gives good support and guidance to students in the sixth form, and has satisfactory procedures for seeking out and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, students receive well-informed support and guidance from members of staff.
- Teachers give good feedback to students on their work and good guidance on how to improve.
- The quality of PSHE in the sixth form is good.
- Some students are allowed to persist with courses with which they cannot cope.

Commentary

45. Students are appreciative of the support that members of staff give them. In general they are correct in their belief that the quality of guidance is good and helps to promote their progress. Students receive good feedback on the standards that they have attained, together with predictions of what are likely to attain and constructive advice on how to improve their work. However, there are occasions when they do not get guidance that serves their best interests. Students who are struggling to cope with the demands of AS and A-level are not advised strongly enough to follow alternative courses. Sometimes they are allowed to continue with their chosen subject even though they have no realistic prospects of success. This was the

case with a student who went on to take A-level after obtaining a 'U' grade at AS-level. The student was again awarded a 'U' grade, which meant that they had devoted two years to a subject without obtaining a qualification in it.

46. Students have good access to sources of personal guidance. They have very good relations with members of staff and feel free to discuss problems with them. The majority of students feel that PSHE lessons help to prepare them for life after school. They have a high regard for the PSHE co-ordinator as someone to whom they can turn for sympathetic and effective support. The school provides plenty of information on career choices and on courses in higher education, and the majority of students make good use of it. However, more than a quarter of the students who completed the inspection's questionnaire said that they did not receive well-informed advice on careers.
47. Provision for students with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants offer valued support in class and in individual sessions where students are helped to organise and draft their coursework. However, access for students in wheelchairs is difficult in that swing doors are impossible to manage, so students are reliant on others to help and this takes away some of their independence.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Main school

The school's partnership with parents and the community is good and enhances students' learning and achievement. It has strong and effective links with other schools, and with colleges and universities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents give strong support to their children's learning and the work of the school.
- Parents get good information about the school and their children's learning and progress.
- The partnership with parents of students with special educational needs has improved in the current year.
- The school makes good use of the local area and local organisations to widen students' opportunities for learning.

Commentary

48. Parents are very supportive of the school and of students' learning. They have good relations with teachers and make the most of opportunities to meet them to discuss their children's progress. Attendance at formal consultation evenings is very good. Parents of students whose attendance, attitudes or behaviour give cause for concern are usually keen to meet members of staff for informal discussions. In the majority of cases they co-operate closely with the school on strategies to overcome the children's problems. Parents' high expectations make an important contribution to academic standards.
49. The quality of information for parents is good and helps them to support their children's learning. Day-to-day communications have been improved by the introduction of a new student planner. There are effective arrangements for informing parents about their children's learning. The school makes good provision for consultation evenings and for interim progress reports. End-of-year reports are satisfactory overall and provide much factual information for parents.
50. Parents of students with special educational needs have a good partnership with the school. There was a period in the recent past when they felt inadequately informed about their

children's learning and progress. The situation improved considerably with the appointment of the new co-ordinator of special educational needs, who has worked hard to restore good relations with parents. They are now happy with their links with the school and the quality of the information that they receive.

51. The good partnership that exists between the school and with the community enhances students' learning. It promotes their personal development well by giving them the opportunity to take part in enrichment activities, including residential trips. Subject teachers make good use of the local and wider areas as resources for learning. Good contacts with local employers enhance the quality of careers education and guidance and enable Year 11 to benefit from a week of work experience.
52. The school has good links with South Nottingham College over the provision of courses in health and social care. Its partnership with local primary schools is well established and effective, resulting in close co-operation over the transfer of Year 6 pupils to secondary education.

Sixth form

Partnership with parents of sixth form students is good. The school has good links with the community and with local universities, and these make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and to arrangements for support and guidance. Parents receive satisfactory information on sixth form courses and their children's progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents support and encourage students' learning in the sixth form.
 - The curriculum for sixth form students is enhanced by the school's links with the local community.
 - The school's contacts with universities and colleges enhance the quality of guidance to sixth form students on courses in higher education.
53. Parents of sixth form students have high aspirations for their children. They want them to gain good qualifications and go on to higher education, and are therefore very supportive of students' learning. Parents' expectations generally have a positive effect on their children's attainment and progress. They encourage students to aim high and to work hard to achieve their goals.
 54. Good links with the local community enhance students' opportunities for personal development, as when they organise and host a party for underprivileged primary school children. A number of subjects make good use of the local area to promote learning. For example, history students have visited Southwell workhouse.
 55. The school has strong links with local universities and colleges, and as a result students get the chance to visit them to learn more about courses in higher education. This is particularly valuable for students from families who have not had a university education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership is good and the effectiveness of management is satisfactory. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, together with the leadership team, has successfully steered the school through a period of significant change.
 - In modern foreign languages, very effective leadership is moving the department forward rapidly.
 - The quality of leadership of the learning support department is good.
 - A number of the school's systems are not as fully developed as those seen in other 'good' schools.
 - Governors fail to meet their statutory responsibilities.
56. The school is going through a period of transition. The school moved to new premises in September 2003 as part of a multi-million pound PFI. At the same time, a new headteacher took up post.
57. The leadership of the headteacher since the previous inspection has been good. The previous headteacher successfully steered the school through a period of significant change. The current headteacher is continuing that voyage of change; there are new and exciting ideas afoot, not least the consolidation of a long-term partnership with its PFI partner in the development of community education. At all times, the leadership of the school has stuck to its principles of ensuring that all students are treated equally. The school's core values of 'Care, Courtesy and Consideration' have been maintained. There is a real sense of students wanting to learn and being proud of their school.
58. The headteacher has been successful because he has the support of a senior leadership team, whose skills and expertise complement one another and who are there to provide a healthy challenge to his ideas. They themselves have demonstrated equally as good leadership in holding the school together, particularly over the past two years.
59. The 1998 inspection report acknowledged that the old buildings were in an unfit state and required radical work. Five years later and after much hard work, students and staff finally moved into the new buildings. All this has come at a cost to how the school is managed. Over the last two years, virtually all the senior leadership team's time has gone into 'managing' the development of the new building. A number of the school's systems are not as well developed as those seen in other 'good' schools. Monitoring systems have not moved on, the curriculum is in need of review and assessment systems are not fully embedded across the school. However, these deficiencies do not detract from a school where management is satisfactory overall; the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Staff have worked hard during the transition and ensured that the students' education has not suffered noticeably; for example, results in the GCSE examinations have improved in line with the national trend. The school is aware of the deficiencies in its systems and is already planning improvements.
60. The school improvement plan provides a sound basis for moving the school forward. There are secure financial systems. The school compares and challenges itself well. This year the school has a large deficit, which, in part, has been caused by the move to the new building. However, this deficit is set to fall significantly this year. The school receives broadly average funding and provides good value for money.
61. There are many examples of effective teamwork among staff. For example, in modern foreign languages, very effective leadership, supported by a strong committed team, is moving the department forward with clear direction. However, in English, teaching is not being monitored sufficiently to share best practice and eliminate less effective teaching.
62. Leadership and management of learning support are good. Students with special educational needs achieve well overall and do very well in GCSE examinations. The recently appointed co-ordinator has worked hard to prepare up-dated individual education plans, and produce a

departmental policy and development plan. This gives the work of the department a clear direction for improvement.

63. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are involved in the production of the school improvement plan. For example, governors influenced the 'travel plan' which helped to reduce the movement of traffic on the site. However, governance as a whole is unsatisfactory because the governors are not ensuring that the school provides lessons in religious education for all students in Years 10 and 11 and there is no daily act of collective worship.

Sixth form

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results have risen significantly since the previous inspection.
 - The monitoring of students' performance is good.
 - The quality of leadership and management of business studies in the sixth form is unsatisfactory.
 - The curriculum provides insufficient progression for students aged 14 to 19.
 - Governors do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
64. The sixth form is satisfactorily led and managed. Examination results at A-level have risen from average to above average since the previous inspection report. The head of sixth form provides good support for students. Many extra-curricular activities are arranged and students benefit greatly from these. The monitoring of students' performance is good; each student has a number of interviews with the head of sixth form throughout the year; remedial action is taken if thought necessary. However, there is little evidence of curriculum development; there is not a natural progression for students who study vocational courses pre-16 and some students are allowed to follow courses for which they are ill-equipped.
65. Drama is very well led and students speak highly of the subject; they enjoy the subject and achieve very well. However, the quality of leadership and management of business studies is unsatisfactory and students are not happy with the current provision. Monitoring systems are not rigorous enough to eliminate weak teaching and data is not used to give an accurate evaluation of student performance.
66. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties in providing sufficient religious education for all students.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3087410
Total expenditure	3197822
Expenditure per student	2950

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-41178
Balance carried forward to the next	-151590

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are high in Years 7 to 11.
- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of the good teaching they receive.
- Standards in writing in Years 7 to 9 are relatively weak.
- The monitoring of teaching has not been effective in sharing best practice and eliminating less effective teaching.

Commentary

Examination results

67. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 results were average. In 2003, GCSE results in English and English literature were above average. This continues the trend of results being above average.

Standards and achievement

68. Students' skills in speaking and listening are above average and are a relative strength throughout Years 7 to 11. By Year 9, many students are willing to take part in group or whole-class discussion. They are mostly confident, possess a full vocabulary and can elaborate their ideas in response to being questioned. Students listen to each other alertly and are respectful of different points of view or of those students who are more hesitant speakers. Standards in reading are also generally good. Most students understand what they read and higher attainers can offer some analysis of a writer's techniques. However, standards in writing are only just in line with the national average. Whilst higher attainers can use a full range of sentences and an extensive vocabulary, the written communication of many other students lacks sophistication. Lower attainers tend only to use simple sentences and rely heavily upon colloquialisms. Students are not able to use the technical terms necessary to recognise and describe fairly basic grammatical structures to the extent that might be expected. The work of many middle and lower attaining students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
69. In Year 10 and 11, students develop their skills at a rate that means their standards improve to being above the national average. Skills in speaking and listening remain strong. Reading skills also improve as many students show a good understanding of more demanding literature and

a readiness to find out about the social and historical circumstances under which it was written. Writing skills improve most significantly. Most students come to realise the need to write at greater length, to structure their work more carefully and to write with greater attention to accuracy. Many students take greater responsibility for improving their own skills and this is especially well seen in the thorough way in which they re-draft essays.

Teaching and learning

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Examples of very good teaching were also seen. When teaching is most effective, teachers possess a good knowledge of the subject and are fully aware of the requirements of the course that the students are following. This is to be seen most consistently in the way in which students are prepared for GCSE. In a number of GCSE lessons, teachers displayed a close understanding of the literary texts being studied and their questions encouraged students to think more critically. The best lessons are complemented by regular marking, which is thorough and accurate and explains to students what they need to do to improve. This approach leads students to feeling confident, to knowing what to do if they are going to raise their standards and generally to taking a pride in their work. Though the situation is less consistent in Years 7 to 9, some very effective teaching and learning were seen when the teacher had a very good understanding of how to improve students' skills in literacy, based upon the National Strategy for Literacy. This work was all the more effective because it took into account the students' prior attainment and their earlier learning, including topics they had covered in primary school. However, this is not common practice within the department in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is effective when the teacher *shows* students *how* to complete a task rather than relying upon *telling* them *what* to do. Most teachers maintain good discipline.
71. When teaching is less effective, the work lacks pace and variety and students' prior attainment is not taken into account. In some such lessons, the teachers talked their way through the lesson, creating few opportunities for students to contribute ideas or to be active in their own learning. In these lessons students become bored and restless. The use of ICT in teaching and learning is less than what is expected nationally.
72. Students' attitudes are generally good and often very good. They are typically polite, co-operative and tolerant. These attitudes make an important contribution to students' achievement.

Leadership and management

73. The department has recently improved the schemes of work, especially for Years 7 to 9. However, there is still significant variation in how well the curriculum is taught. Teaching is not being monitored effectively to share best practice and eliminate less effective teaching, as demonstrated by the relatively weaker teacher in Years 7 to 9.

Literacy across the curriculum

74. Standards of literacy are average. Many students are articulate and have a good understanding of what they read. However, writing is a relative weakness in the school, especially in Years 7 to 9. The school has taken some action to improve standards. In the English department there has been some revision of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and arrangements exist for the lowest attainers in Year 7 to receive additional support. The school has a literacy co-ordinator but does not yet have an agreed whole-school policy for teaching literacy. Only very limited monitoring takes place to assess the quality of the school's teaching of this basic skill.
75. Examples of good practice were seen in some subjects, for example history and art and design. In general, however, the wider curriculum does not create sufficient opportunities for students to be able to develop a full range of reading and writing skills. The school does not

have procedures in place to systematically and comprehensively address students' shortcomings in the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages (French and German) is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lower attaining students and those with learning needs have achieved very well in GCSE French.
- Teaching is good and the large majority of students achieve well. Students have very positive attitudes to learning a foreign language.
- The department enjoys strong, clear-sighted leadership.
- Keen linguists would benefit from more opportunities to broaden their experience of learning a foreign language through ICT and reading.

Commentary

Examination results

76. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations in French and German were above average and better than in 2002. Girls did better than boys by a wider margin than nationally. Nearly all students were entered for French or German, many for both of them, and all gained grades A*-F. This represents very good achievement, particularly for lower attaining students.

Standards and achievement

77. In Year 9, standards are above average in French and German. All students are achieving well. Higher attaining students are reaching well above average standards. They speak and write in the language with confidence and fluency. Lower attaining students and those with learning needs are taught in appropriately small groups and they too are achieving well. In Year 11, standards in French are also above average and achievement is good. Higher attaining students have produced written coursework of a very high standard. They are well rehearsed for the GCSE speaking test and have good accent and pronunciation. Other students, however, have very English-sounding pronunciation and need more practice in getting this right. Year 11 students learning German are reaching only average standards. They are in a group with a very wide range of attainment and a few of them, mostly boys, have lost interest. The large majority of students, however, help themselves considerably by sensible, co-operative behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning.

Teaching and learning.

78. A particular strength of the department is the very engaging methods and resources teachers use to capture students' interest and involve them in active learning. Colourful visual material, productive pair work, competitions – all these and more are successful in helping students learn. In the best lessons there is a joyful buzz of purposeful activity expecting a great deal of students and leading to very fast and seamless learning. None of the teaching observed was less than satisfactory. However, occasionally teaching could be more demanding, for example by using the foreign language more in the classroom and expecting students themselves to use it for routine requests such as asking to borrow something.

Leadership and management

79. The department is led with real vision and energy. Teachers are all competent specialists who work closely together and share ideas and resources. They are considerably helped in this by the department's fine new accommodation which staff have made very welcoming with colourful displays of students' work. Teachers would benefit, as would students, from opportunities of observing others teach so that the very best practice could be more evenly spread. An important area for development is finding ways to broaden and enrich students' experience of learning a foreign language through extra reading, trips and exchanges to France and the regular use of ICT which students are not currently having. In every other respect, however, the department has moved on successfully since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and results in students achieving well.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and they have a good knowledge of mathematics.
- The head of department provides good leadership of a strong department.
- The use of assessment and performance data is not sufficiently developed.
- Schemes of work in Years 10 and 11 do not provide enough guidance for teachers, especially in challenging the higher attainers.
- The use of ICT in the teaching and learning of mathematics is limited.

Commentary

Examination results

80. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above average, and were an improvement upon those of 2002. The GCSE results in 2003 were above average and were higher than those in 2002.

Standards and achievement

81. By the end of Year 9, student's numerical skills are well above average. Higher attaining students calculate the interior and exterior angles of regular polygons. The lower attainers can convert fractions to decimals and have a basic understanding of improper fractions. The current Year 10 have above average standards of attainment and are achieving well given their standards on entry to the course. In Year 11, higher attaining students can analyse data in their coursework using complex statistical techniques learnt in their lessons. The lower attainers can use scatter graphs to represent data in their coursework. Lower attaining students and those with learning needs are achieving well.

Teaching and learning

82. Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good understanding of mathematics. The adoption of the three-part lesson, especially in Years 7 to 9, ensures a good structure and brisk pace to lessons. The students respond well to this and make gains in their learning. However, more challenge could be built into lessons for individual higher attaining students in order that they may achieve their potential. Teachers do share lesson objectives with the students, though only in the better lessons are the tasks and time allocated made known to them. Where this happens, students understand the relevance of their learning and the achievements to be made. Good work is carried out in improving basic literacy. Teachers insist on the use of mathematical vocabulary and note-taking by boys has been encouraged to assist with their revision skills. In one Year 8 lesson on number patterns, students were asked to indicate what learning they had made. This allowed the teacher to see who was achieving and so extend their work, whilst giving support to the others. Wider use of this student self-evaluation of learning is needed to raise standards. Homework is provided, but not on a timetabled basis. This leads to inconsistent expectations of students. Formative comments are evident in some teachers' marking; however, greater consistency across classes is needed.

Leadership and management

83. The good leadership has resulted in a strong team with a positive ethos; standards are rising. There is effective co-ordination and monitoring in Years 7 to 9 with a clear vision and strategy for raising attainment. However, ICT in teaching and learning is not being used enough and is not firmly embedded in schemes of work. In Years 10 and 11, schemes of work do not guide teachers on the best teaching methods and resources to use. The use of performance data is not sufficiently developed to identify, track and monitor the students' value added progress or to substantiate targets. Extra-curricular activities, such as revision and booster classes are offered, but only prior to tests/examinations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. Standards of numeracy are above average. The strategy for teaching mathematics as a basic skill in subjects is good. There is a good numeracy strategy in place that supports other subjects well. This is led effectively by an experienced numeracy co-ordinator, who has provided training on numeracy across departments. There is regular liaison with primary schools. Year 6 higher attainers from each primary school attend this school twice in their transition year to take part in mathematical team games and activities. A transition day for all students also takes place. In religious education students use statistics from a website to show graphically the relative wealth of different countries. In citizenship, the students work out the maximum number of units of alcohol, males and females could drink safely.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students do very much better in GCSE examinations than might be expected from their test results when they enter the school.
- Students in all year groups, and of all ability levels, experience good teaching. This consistency of good teaching quality enables students to build on earlier learning as they move through the school and to achieve very well overall.
- Teachers use a wide variety of effective strategies and techniques to attract students' interest and maintain their concentration.
- The department does not yet have an established programme of lesson observations, in particular to enable very good ideas and techniques to be identified and shared.

Commentary

Examination results

85. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were above the national average, continuing the marked upward trend. Results in the 2003 GCSE science examinations were well above the national average and an improvement on the results for 2002.

Standards and achievement

86. Most students have at least a good basic knowledge of the topics they are currently studying and higher attainers often have skills and detailed understanding well beyond those expected for their age. For example, higher attainers in Year 11 explain endothermic and exothermic reactions in terms of the making and breaking of bonds, using an energy level diagram. Lower attainers often find it difficult to recall topics they have studied earlier in the course but benefit from teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve and constant reinforcement of basic ideas.
87. Students' investigative skills generally match their standards in other aspects of science. Higher attainers in Year 9 work quickly, and with care and precision, whether investigating the effect of various chemicals and antibiotics on the growth of bacteria or the relationship between the image size and 'lens to object' distance for a convex lens.
88. At the end of Year 9, students do better in tests and examinations than might be expected, given their test results when they entered the school. They continue to make good progress through Years 10 and 11 so that, by the end of Year 11, their GCSE results are very much better than expected in relation to their standards when they joined the school. Hence, although achievement is good in each individual key stage, students' overall achievement by the age of 16 is very good.

Teaching and learning

89. The major strength of the teaching in this department is the high level of consistency in the quality of teaching that students experience in the various year groups and from different teachers. This enables students to learn quickly throughout their time in school, to build effectively on earlier learning and eventually to achieve very well overall.
90. Teachers plan their lessons with great care. They make sure that students know what they are aiming to learn during the lesson and then check at the end that students have absorbed and understood the important ideas. They use a wide variety of activities to interest students and ensure that they are always learning. Games, discussion in pairs, using whiteboards to display answers, working in groups and presenting findings to the class are just as common in this department as the question-and-answer sessions and practical work more usually associated with science lessons. Teachers give students independence so that they really learn for themselves, rather than passively receiving information. The department prepares students well for tests and examinations, for example by getting them to identify their weaknesses in answering certain types of questions and by making practising multiple choice questions both enjoyable and satisfying.
91. There are minor weaknesses in the occasional lessons that are satisfactory rather than good or very good. For example, an activity may be rather mechanical and not allow students to learn as quickly as they might. The department does make some use of computers in science lessons, notably in presenting coursework and gaining information from the Internet. However, the use of ICT within science lessons is not yet as frequent or regular as it should be.

Leadership and management

92. The head of department provides good leadership for a team of skilful and experienced teachers, who share his commitment to raising standards and have enthusiastically adopted new and effective teaching strategies. The department makes good use of its test and examination results to identify any areas where improvements are needed. However, it does not yet have a programme of regular lesson observations which would be valuable in further enhancing the consistency and quality of teaching and would be particularly helpful in identifying and sharing the very good ideas and techniques that exist within the department. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection because the GCSE results and the quality of teaching are both significantly better than they were at that time.

Example of outstanding practice

In a revision lesson on the digestive system for lower attainers in Year 10, students arrived at the lesson with a basic understanding of food groups and the enzymes that break them down. From the beginning of the lesson, exciting and interesting activities followed one after another: bread dissolved in students' mouths, they arranged cards into the correct groups, they used a specially labelled model torso, they tested 'food' samples to find what groups they contained, they made and tested their own question-and-answer revision booklets and used their understanding in a discussion about various samples, supposedly taken from the body. All this took place in one lesson, without anybody feeling rushed. Concentration was intense throughout and everybody had time to think. All the activities were carefully designed to reinforce the basic ideas that students needed to remember and to get them to apply those ideas. By the end of the lesson, there was a great sense of achievement and satisfaction. Students had secured their existing knowledge and also knew just where in the body the various enzymes were secreted. Even more impressively, they could deduce through which parts of the body various partly digested samples must have passed – an exercise that would have seriously tested many older or more able students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Good leadership has resulted in good progress being made since the previous inspection.
- There are good methods of monitoring and tracking achievement so that students can see how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Lessons are planned well so that students know what they are to do.
- There is no overall strategic plan for the development of ICT in the school.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

93. By the end of Year 9, students' practical skills in ICT are above average. Lower attainers make the same good progress as others because teachers match the work well to the needs of these students. Students use desktop publishing programs well, applying the features of the software appropriately to produce good quality work. They are very good at combining different forms of information from a variety of resources. By the end of Year 11, students' skills are above average. They produce good quality presentations and use the Internet well in the development of their coursework. Their ability to use spreadsheets is very good. The students who study key skills in ICT work with enthusiasm and produce good work when creating games for small children. They have a good understanding of the design needs appropriate for the age range.

Teaching and learning

94. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and students learn quickly as a result. In Years 10 and 11, teachers know the requirements of the examination syllabuses very well; this enables them to provide exemplars of good practice, for example when students on the key skills course were investigating children's games before creating their own. Teachers plan the lessons well with a variety of activities and encourage students to work with each other and evaluate their work. As a result students' attitudes are good and they take a high degree of responsibility for their own learning, for example in recording their achievements. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and also of how they should behave. The behaviour of students is very good and they work well both individually and with other students. In all years, teachers assess students' work well with comments that help students to improve. Students work is regularly assessed and students contribute to the assessments so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to achieve a higher level of work. Homework is set regularly and supports the work that students carry out in class well. It consolidates the new learning that takes place in the lessons and sets tasks so that students prepare well for the following lesson.

Leadership and management

95. Good leadership has enabled the department to make good progress since the previous inspection; it has introduced appropriate courses in Key Stage 4 so that the national requirements are taught to all students. The programme of key skills is particularly effective. Standards are much improved as a result of the good leadership and management.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

96. The use of computers in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a reasonable number of activities in other subjects of the curriculum which is better in some departments, for example religious education, music and design and technology. However, in other subjects ICT is insufficiently developed to give students the opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability. In religious education, students are confident in the use of desktop publishing techniques and produce an article for a magazine tackling 'Is there life after death?' In English and science, there is some application of ICT, but students do not use it as well as expected in lessons.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to students achieving well.
- Very good use of ICT in GCSE coursework significantly raises standards.
- Students' good attitudes ensure much is achieved in lessons.
- The work of many middle and lower attaining students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Commentary

Examination results

97. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were average and continued the trend of recent years. Girls' achieved higher than boys did but students overall achieved a higher proportion of A*/A grades than nationally.

Standards and achievement

98. By the end of Year 9, students have a good range of geographical skills and knowledge of topics. They understand the links between the physical and human environments such as the conflict of interests in the use of the Peak District National Park. Students are competent in using ICT to research assignments and use appropriate technical terms in explanations. Weaknesses are evident in written work however, because they do not give sufficient detail in answers and some leave work unfinished. The work of many middle and lower attaining

students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. By the end of Year 11, students build on map and graphical skills and apply them well in assignments. They are knowledgeable about topics such as regional flooding and earthquakes in Japan but do not use examples enough in written assignments to link theoretical understanding with places. ICT is used well in coursework, to present data and graphs, and is usually well integrated with analysis.

Teaching and learning

99. In Years 7 to 9, teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and as a result, students achieve well. The aims of lessons are clear and carefully structured so that learning is continuous. Students achieved very well in a Year 9 lesson on changes in the tropical rainforests of Ecuador, because they were set thought-provoking tasks that required them to evaluate and decide about the impact of change on the culture of local tribes. On occasions, learning is less effective because teachers do not incorporate sufficient strategies to meet the different learning needs of students. Work is regularly marked but insufficient attention is given to comment on the content and to correcting grammatical weaknesses.
100. In Years 10 and 11, students achieve well given their standards of attainment on starting the course. This is because of the guidance teachers give them, particularly in the development of GCSE coursework when they take much care in organisation and presentation. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace; students concentrate well, so much is achieved in the lesson. Occasionally, however, students do not achieve well enough because lessons are too dominated by the teacher and not enough is expected of students.

Leadership and management

101. The subject is well led and managed and morale among students and teachers is high. Development planning is sound and the priorities for development are appropriate except for the need to give attention to improving students' literacy skills. There is high reliance on reprographic resources because there are not enough textbooks and this reduces opportunities for book-based research. Assessment procedures are good in Years 10 and 11 but identification of students' National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9 is insecure. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the use of ICT in learning.

Example of outstanding practice

The students had been learning about the people of the Amazon rain forest – their culture and habitat. For this lesson they were taken to the computer room and shown a website where they would carry out a simulation involving them in making decisions that would affect the life of the Amazonian Indians. The students were immediately captivated by the idea, boys in particular responding to the element of competition in the lesson. Students with special educational needs were well supported in the lesson and energetically responded to working out solutions to the task. But the main reason for the success of the lesson was the way that students were made to feel that the decisions they would make would change peoples' lives. There were no easy answers, every decision they made would have benefits, but also have a down side for the people involved; how do you balance the benefits of tourism with the impact on the environment and the culture of politically powerless people? The quality of debate was exceptionally high as students struggled to come to terms with the potential impacts of their decisions became clear; some were clearly devastated. They learnt that there are no easy choices and that their own values may well clash with those of others; there may well be no right or wrong answers. One hour later they were very reluctant to stop at the end of the lesson; and these were only Year 9 students.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The proportion of students choosing to continue with history to the age of 16, and beyond, is much higher than the national average.
- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because teachers expect them to do well and prepare them thoroughly for GCSE examinations.
- Boys' achievement has improved so that they now achieve as well as the girls in GCSE examinations.
- Teachers' monitoring of students' progress in Years 7 to 9 is not sufficiently rooted in close analysis of their attainment on entry to the school.
- The teaching of basic literacy skills is satisfactory but the use of agreed strategies for further improvement is not yet common across all lessons.

Commentary

Examination results

102. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average and students' achievement was good. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.

Standards and achievement

103. In Year 9, students develop good skills in using sources of evidence to interpret events and a satisfactory number of them write well-developed answers. In lessons that set out to increase students' understanding of topics and plan to improve their literacy skills, students of all attainment levels achieve well. For instance, in a lesson on trench warfare in World War I, all the students in a mixed ability Year 9 group interpreted photographic evidence well and, at the same time, developed their thinking, verbal and written skills because the teacher's plan was clearly aimed at that outcome. Such well-targeted planning to improve literacy is not yet common across all lessons, which results in achievement being merely satisfactory.
104. By the end of Year 11, students' achievement is good. The proportion of students who opt to continue with history is far higher than the national average and they achieve GCSE results that are above average. Higher attaining students write particularly well and display a clear understanding of, for example, why war broke out in 1914 and that the build-up of armaments that contributed to the event was offensive in some countries and defensive in others. Lower attaining students and those with learning needs are achieving well. The achievement of boys is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection.

Teaching and learning

105. In Year 9, all students benefit from being taught by enthusiastic teachers who expect high standards of work and behaviour. Teachers explain clearly the aims of lessons and there are examples of lessons in which the teaching employs a good range of learning strategies that skilfully ensure gains in both knowledge, and the skills students need to convey their understanding when writing as well as when speaking. Such lessons are not yet common enough. Whilst teachers' assessment and marking of work are satisfactory, their monitoring of students' progress in Years 7 to 9 is not sufficiently rooted in close analysis of their attainment on entry to the school to identify accurately how far teaching is taking students forward. Resulting from satisfactory teaching, students' achievement is satisfactory.
106. By the end of Year 11 students have achieved well in developing skills in organising and presenting assignments because teachers have emphasised this in lessons. Similarly, teachers' extensive knowledge of examination requirements results in students being well prepared. A lively inter-action in one lesson, in which the teacher really challenged students' thinking, resulted in a good answer plan on the board that left the great majority confident that they could tackle such a question if it faced them in the examination. Learning is enhanced by teachers organising visits to places such as the neighbouring village of Ruddington and the Medical Museum in Leeds; this enables students to link theoretical study to events and places.

Leadership and management

107. The subject is well led and satisfactorily managed. The enthusiastic subject leader has a clear vision that is reflected in development plans that are clearly focused on further raising students' achievement. However, the strategies that must be used to improve students' literacy skills are not yet consistently embedded in the planning of all teachers. For this reason, despite the improvement in boys' GCSE results, progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 10 and 11, there is insufficient time to enable students to develop their understanding of religious beliefs and the effects on their lives; the school is failing to provide students with their statutory entitlement to a religious education.
- Opportunity for reflection is very good; teachers encourage students to use their own experiences, to enable them to understand religious concepts.
- Teachers use a wide variety of activities in their lessons in order to involve students actively in their learning.
- General marking contains insufficient information to enable students to understand how they might improve their work.
- There is insufficient regular assessment to monitor the progress of individuals and groups.

Commentary

Examination results

108. Results in the 2003 examination for the full course GCSE were above average. Results have been above average over recent years.

Standards and achievement

109. Standards in Year 9 are above average and achievement is good. Students' oral contributions indicate interest and respect for the religions they study. The supplementary questions put by teachers enable students to develop understanding to a higher level than is indicated in their written work. Students are developing an overview of the major faiths they study, and recognise the support they give at significant times in our lives. They have a good grasp of the effects of poverty on third world countries and the environmental issues that threaten the world.
110. Most students in Years 10 and 11 receive no religious education. As a consequence the standard of their knowledge and understanding has not had the opportunity to develop since the end of Year 9 and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in the examination group in Year 11 are above average. Students have a good understanding of contemporary moral issues and can relate them to the main teachings of the Christian church. They identify different views and make their own judgements that they support with reasons. Students can reflect on abstract issues, such as 'life after death' and compare the views of different faiths. Higher attaining students consider the problems of reconciling the beliefs of different faiths.
111. Students make very good progress in their oral work as a result of the challenging questions and high expectations of teachers. Lower attaining students make good progress, because of the support of teachers and the use of group work that enables them to work to their strengths.

Teaching and learning

112. Lessons are characterised by the active involvement of the students. Specialist teachers provide clear explanations, and encourage the students to contribute through the respect and interest with which they receive their responses. Lessons are well planned to enable students to consider new religious concepts through the light of their own experiences before moving on to wider applications. The best lessons begin with a quick starter activity that engages students and involves them immediately in their lessons. Teachers provide very good opportunities for reflection and students are challenged to consider the significance of the concepts they learn. The very good relations between teachers and their students encourage their confidence that their views will be valued. Teaching is less successful where the oral work of the class is overlong and students do not have sufficient opportunity to consolidate their ideas through writing. Where teachers' expectations of students' written work in lessons are too low, or the pace of lessons falls, achievement is unsatisfactory. Examination preparation is very good and teachers' expertise supports students understanding of examination requirements. The end of module assessment tasks are well marked; however, day-to-day marking is limited throughout all the years. Although many receive good oral feedback from teachers, written comments in their books are not informative and students receive insufficient guidance about how to improve.

Leadership and management

113. Teachers work well together and the focus on understanding and active learning is resulting in very good attitudes from the students. Since the previous inspection the subject leader has developed the use of ICT and the new accommodation is enabling the department to introduce a wider range of teaching methods. Good progress has been made to support the development of numeracy; however, support for literacy is underdeveloped. Monitoring of

teaching and learning is not yet developed sufficiently to identify the progress of individuals or groups of students.

114. Since the previous inspection, little progress has been made on the provision of religious education to all students in Years 10 to 13, and as such overall provision is unsatisfactory although provision in the lower school is good.

TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good relationships with their students and control behaviour well.
- The team of teachers is not learning from one another's strengths.
- Teachers are very well organised, but do not do enough to deal with the wide range of attainment in their classes.
- Students have a wide range of courses from which to choose in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

Examination results

115. Results in GCSE examinations have been above average for some years and were similar in 2003.

Standards and achievement

116. Students arrive at the school with above average standards in the subject. By the end of Years 9 and 11 standards remain above average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Higher attainers have good design skills and also good practical skills. Lower attainers, on the other hand, produce practical work that is above average but their writing is poorer, so their design work is of a lower standard. Girls tend to achieve better than boys; they work harder and spend more time on improving the detail of their work. Students in Years 8 and 9, in particular, do not demonstrate the degree of flair in their work that would usually be expected and are much more likely to copy the teacher's ideas rather than coming up with their own.

Teaching and learning

117. Teachers have good relationships with their students and so can control behaviour well. If a student does start to misbehave, the teacher takes them to one side, has a quiet word and quickly reintegrates them into the lesson. In this way, the teachers ensure that the students are not losing valuable teaching time. Teaching is always well organised and structured, so no time is wasted hunting for resources. However, the main problem with the teaching is the lack of consistency; an aspect that is a strength in one lesson will be a weakness in another. Take the work on literacy, for example. In one lesson the teacher will ask students to explain the vocabulary they are using and get them to spell the words, while in another, the teacher does all the reading and does not ensure that the students understand the new words. One fault that is common to most lessons is the way that the content is aimed at the middle attaining students in the relatively large classes with students of a wide range of attainment. Lower attainers usually get extra support from the teacher, but higher attainers who finish early are often left to wait, with nothing to do. Similarly, much of the questioning requires only short answers, so students do not get a chance to show how much they understand.

Leadership and management

118. The standards and quality of teaching are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Much time and effort has gone into the planning for the new school. As a result, aspects such as checking on the quality of teaching, analysing achievement and learning from each others' strengths have been put on hold. The new build has not been without its problems either; restrictions on what can be placed on the walls and floors mean that emergency stop buttons are not labelled, for example. There is not enough technician time, so students have to spend time cutting out materials in lessons, when a technician would usually carry out such duties. Nevertheless, the staff work well together as a team and students benefit from a very wide range of courses at GCSE level, as well as good assessment techniques that give them a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching that inspires students to be creative and imaginative.
- Excellent relationships throughout the department have a positive impact on achievement.
- There is very good accommodation and resources that support learning.
- There is not enough use of ceramics.

Commentary

Examination results

119. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average. Girls did significantly better than boys and significantly better than girls nationally. Standards have been above the national average over the past three years.

Standards and achievement

120. By the end of Year 9, students exhibit good drawing skills, particularly in the use of line. They are helped by the excellent illustrations in the resource pack on 'Line' produced by their teachers. They have a good knowledge and understanding of surrealism, again supported by a resource pack that illustrates the essence and development of this art movement. By Year 11, students' works on natural forms have observations in exquisite detail, especially in the use of a range of techniques for shading and surface texture. In all years, students learn to use a good range of media. However, there is little use of ceramics at present. The very highest attaining students have produced wall hangings of a high standard during the extra lunchtime lessons provided. In all years, students achieve well as they work towards perfecting their skills in drawing and applying surface texture and colour. Lower attaining students and those with learning needs are achieving well.

Teaching and learning

121. The teachers have good knowledge and expertise and inspire their students with imaginative ideas. They give good visual demonstrations and illustrations of the key skills in art. These enable all students, including those with special educational needs, to understand what is to be achieved. They have prepared excellent illustrated resource packs on the use of line and on portraits, masks and surrealism initially to support and inspire boys. These are in such depth and detail that they benefit all students from Years 7 to 11. Assessment is good. It is ongoing in all lessons and students are aware of the criteria on which their work will be judged in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE. However, there is not enough close marking of students' written work to raise their skills in literacy.

Leadership and management

122. There is good management and a clear vision for extending the provision in art and design. The classrooms are inspiring with displays of students' best work. There is good order everywhere. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching and students' standards have improved. Accommodation is now very good. All the good features reported then, including the excellent relationships, have been maintained.
123. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These aspects are considered in the works of artists and art movements, particularly in studies of Aboriginal art, masks and totem poles.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures students are very well motivated and achieve well overall.
- Less time than usual is allocated to the GCSE course, holding back standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Good leadership and management of the subject ensure good teamwork and an above average proportion of students taking instrumental lessons.
- Cross-curricular initiatives – especially developing rigorously language for learning – are not embedded in the schemes of work.
- Poor soundproofing limits the use of practice rooms as a resource for learning.
- Enrichment through extra-curricular activities is underdeveloped.

Commentary

Examination results

124. Due to the small number of students who took the GCSE course in 2003, the results cannot be reliably judged: eight out of ten students obtained grades between A* and C.

Standards and achievement

125. By the end of Year 9, students perform well in groups and use a range of percussion instruments and keyboards, with a good basic understanding of the concepts of rhythm, melody and chords. They develop and refine compositions, using simple forms of notation, and have a good understanding of a range of styles of music from western and non-western cultures. Higher attaining students, those who learn other instruments, use standard notation and computers to develop compositions. GCSE groups are of average size, but with a wider than usual range of abilities and with less teaching time than usually allocated, and this restricts achievement to being only satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, students perform well in ensembles, regardless of their instrumental or singing technique, and compose using ideas from topics of study, such as Bhangra. Overall, students with special educational needs achieve well.

Teaching and learning

126. Students in all years have very good attitudes to music. Lessons are well planned and interesting. Teachers manage students' behaviour very well and encourage them to develop very good routines. The good climate for learning is reflected in the students' ability to work collaboratively with one another and in good teacher-led discussion. Work is regularly monitored and assessed, but students' learning would benefit from more detailed feedback. Furthermore, teaching does not develop and consolidate the students' ability to apply technical language in practical contexts, especially holding back progress in composition. Occasionally,

listening activities are pitched too high for the lower attaining students and opportunity is missed for students to reflect on their interpretations of music heard.

Leadership and management

127. The department is well led: there is a clear sense of purpose and good teamwork amongst the staff, including the seven instrumental teachers who provide individual and group tuition to an above average proportion of students. The use of the school as a centre for Associated Board examinations creates links to other schools and the wider community. The school has no choir, orchestra or annual productions, however there are a good range of other opportunities for music making including a range of bands, a theory group and the Year 7 curricular collaboration with drama. Nonetheless, good progress has been made since the previous inspection: standards are higher in Years 7 to 9, more students opt for the subject in Years 10 and 11, and the quality of teaching has improved. The potential of the new accommodation is seriously limited due to poor soundproofing. Percussion can no longer be offered, and both music and other lessons in the proximity are markedly disturbed by ambient music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to above average examination results.
- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9, as a result of good teaching.
- Extensive new accommodation enhances students' learning and achievement by providing a wide range of sporting opportunities.
- Very good provision for extra-curricular sport enables all students, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel in school and beyond.
- Risk assessments are in place, but they lack detail and give insufficient guidance.

Commentary

Examination results

128. The 2003 GCSE examination results were above average.

Standards and achievement

129. By Year 9, standards in games and swimming are average, reflecting good achievement, considering students' standards on entering the school. Students of all abilities achieve well in badminton; boys also achieve well in rugby, and girls in netball. Students with special educational needs are well integrated, achieving appropriately alongside their classmates. By Year 11, standards are still average, and achievement is satisfactory overall. This can be attributed to the reduction in time given to the subject, and the severe disruption to the facilities caused by the new building programme over the past two years. Standards in GCSE practical work are average, as seen in volleyball and badminton. Written coursework indicates a broadly

average knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects. Performance in extra-curricular sport is often above average, reflected in students' achievements in football, netball and cricket.

Teaching and learning

130. Students benefit from enthusiastic, knowledgeable teaching in all years. Good relationships create a positive climate for learning, and most students have good attitudes to the subject, reflected in their motivation and generally good behaviour. Teachers' planning is of a high order, well illustrated in a Year 9 badminton lesson, where imaginatively designed tasks enabled students to make good progress in mastering the smash. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
131. In Years 10 and 11, the best teaching successfully combines pace, challenge and high expectations. In football, low attaining students achieved very well in response to a dynamic approach, which made motivating demands on them to improve their performance. The boys left the lesson with a discernible sense of achievement, and satisfaction with their success. Unsatisfactory teaching lacked this focus on improvement, and students made limited progress with many underachieving, particularly the higher attainers. Although teaching and learning are good overall, a significant proportion lacks the precision and rigour to bring about more than satisfactory improvement in students' performance.

Leadership and management

132. The department has a clear focus on raising the attainment of boys in the GCSE examination, and there is evidence of improvement. Effective assessment procedures are now in place, but teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are too low and inaccurate. Rapid changes in staffing are having an impact on the management of the department. Currently, there are nine teachers, only two of whom, both newly qualified teachers, are full-time in the subject. The head of department has a major whole-school responsibility, as a member of the senior leadership team. He constantly has to balance his time between the two roles, and this is not in the best interest of the subject during this period of change. There is much to be done. Alongside detailed management of the extensive and exciting new accommodation, curriculum development and the monitoring and development of so many teachers need time and an undivided focus. The departmental policies and schemes of work urgently require further attention to give guidance on their implementation. Risk assessments are in place, but they lack detail and give insufficient guidance to be meaningful in their present form. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards at GCSE are higher and teaching is now good overall.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Not applicable	Average
Achievement	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the better lessons, work is interesting and well matched to students' needs.
- There have been inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in recent years.
- Unsatisfactory teaching is resulting in unsatisfactory achievement, as students are not being adequately challenged.
- Teachers have failed to monitor performance, set individual targets and support students adequately.

Commentary

Examination results

133. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations are average. Students do worse in business studies than in most of their other subjects. Girls outperform boys and this is particularly evident at the higher grades.

Standards and achievement

134. By the end of Year 11, students' work is below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Students do not have a secure understanding of key business terms and concepts. In Year 11, some students are struggling to understand terms such as 'gross' and 'net' profit. Standards attained relate directly to the quality of teaching. When teaching is good, achievement is good. When teaching is unsatisfactory, students underachieve. Standards are now beginning to rise as the acting head of department has improved GCSE coursework assignments. They are becoming more highly structured and focused on the different stakeholders in our economy. They give students the chance to view the business world from alternative perspectives and apply their knowledge and understanding to real situations. Standards were affected in 2003 when students made insufficient use of ICT in their coursework. Their coursework marks were lower than expected and this in turn lowered GCSE results.

Teaching and learning

135. In some lessons, students are unsure what they are meant to be doing. Teaching takes no account of what they already know and is weak and without challenge. Lessons are poorly organised and time is wasted. There is a complete lack of awareness of students' distinct individual needs. Some students, however, do benefit from good teaching that encourages and engages students well. In these lessons, effective teaching methods are used and efficient use is made of time and resources. This was noticeable in lessons where students had to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of external recruitment of staff.

Leadership and management

136. The department has lacked effective leadership and management in recent years. The current acting head of department is a recently qualified teacher who is committed to improving standards. She is beginning to put in place many of the systems that should already be there. She has raised the profile of monitoring, evaluation and target setting within the department. However, as so little had been done prior to her appointment, there has still been unsatisfactory progress since the time of the previous inspection. The issues of monitoring, evaluation, access to ICT, and insufficient challenge of boys, are still problems that the department needs to sort out.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly appointed citizenship co-ordinator is giving clear leadership which is enabling the analysis of existing citizenship provision.
- The Year 10 camp in the Lake District provides students with a good opportunity for active citizenship.
- The monitoring and evaluation of citizenship are unsatisfactory.
- There are no assessment procedures for checking the progress that students are making in developing the skills of citizenship.
- Citizenship within subjects is not given a high enough profile.

Commentary

Examination results

137. Students do not follow an examination course in citizenship.

Standards and achievement

138. Students join the school with a very wide range of experience in PSHE and citizenship. By the end of Year 9, students show average skills of enquiry and knowledge about becoming informed citizens. They are developing their listening and discussion skills. Higher attaining students support their views with good reasons; for example, in a Year 7 lesson on Islam they give reasons for bowing and covering heads. Students in Year 8 show a good understanding of the mass media and the power of advertising. Students begin to understand the importance of living and working as a community, well exemplified by the different residential experiences, especially the Year 10 school camp. By the end of Year 11, students demonstrate average skills of citizenship; achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory because as yet, students have not had enough lessons in citizenship although they are achieving well in individual lessons. By the end of Year 11, students have investigated such issues as law making, sexism, racism and prejudice.

Teaching and learning

139. During PSHE lessons, teachers benefit from well-thought-out lesson plans that support consistency across the year group. Knowledgeable teachers now undertake the majority of teaching of the PSHE courses. In the best lessons, teachers have thought about the delivery of these plans and identified how they can develop students' understanding of the issues. Lessons include practical activities, which ensure all students are kept well involved, as seen in a Year 8 lesson debating the power of the media. Year 10 lessons on sexuality successfully challenge students about the changing role and acceptance of different relationships. This ensures that they become better-informed citizens about world issues. In such lessons teachers successfully encourage students to share opinions with others and to develop their

own ideas. Science brings an awareness of the issues surrounding genetically modified crops, global warming and waste and pollution. Year 9 students, in ICT, learn how to buy shares over the Internet. However, in the majority of subjects, citizenship is not made sufficiently explicit, as illustrated in music when looking at the impact of music in the media.

Leadership and management

140. The recently appointed citizenship co-ordinator is giving a clear vision and direction for the subject. Working with colleagues she has almost completed a thorough analysis of the citizenship programme. However, the status of the subject needs to be given a higher priority across the curriculum. The co-ordinator has identified areas, like monitoring and assessment of the programme and student assessment, which await development. At present there is insufficient information to enable her to monitor progress or to judge achievement over time. Citizenship was not a curriculum subject at the time of the last report.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 11 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	14	100	93.3	78.6	52.2	98.6	84.7
Biology	14	100	91.6	50	36.3	90	74.1
Physics	10	100	92.8	50	42.8	90	78.6
Design and technology	8	100	95.3	25	35.5	75	76.5
Business studies	6	100	96.4	33.3	32.8	83.3	76.5
Economics	14	100	96.2	21.4	45.8	74.3	83.1
Physical education	9	100	95.4	44.4	29.5	86.7	73.2
Art and design	6	100	96.1	33.3	48.7	80	85.1
Drama	15	100	98.1	20	41.5	78.7	82.9
Geography	11	100	97.1	27.3	40.5	76.4	80.9
History	39	100	97.1	23.1	41	68.2	81.2
Religious education	10	100	96.3	60	44	92	82.2
Sociology	24	100	95.4	29.2	39.6	77.5	79.1
Other social sciences	14	100	94.3	35.7	38.9	80	77.7
English literature	40	100	98.5	37.5	43.7	78.5	84.3

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus for the inspection was English literature. The subject is a popular choice with males and females at AS and A-level.

English

Provision in English literature is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; teachers possess a good knowledge of the subject and prepare students very well for the rigours of examinations.
- Students are articulate and enjoy exchanging their views and opinions.
- Some of the teaching causes students to become too passive and reliant on the teacher.
- Resources to support students to learn on their own are limited.

Commentary

Examination results

141. In 2002, results at A-level were below average. They have improved in 2003 with almost half of the students attaining higher grades. Results have fluctuated over the past four years from being well above average to below average. The subject is a popular choice for AS-level and almost all students continue to A-level.

Standards and achievement

142. By Year 13, students demonstrate good skills of critical analysis and are able to discuss challenging texts with confidence. Some students prefer to be passive listeners, allowing others to dominate discussions, but, when encouraged, all students contribute, are articulate and possess a sound technical vocabulary. In Year 12, most students understand the value of sharing their ideas with others in order to increase their understanding and do so most readily in pair or small group work. By Year 13, high attainers produce well-structured, well-illustrated essays in response to demanding tasks and texts. Thus, some of the most thorough and thoughtful written work was seen in response to an extract from *The Rainbow*, exploring the ways in which D.H. Lawrence presents the main character's feelings and experiences and their impact on the reader. Middle and lower attaining students occasionally use colloquial language but show sound knowledge and understanding of the texts studied and an awareness of appropriate technical terminology. Students engage independently in written tasks very well, but too little encouragement or support is given to them to undertake their own research. Students in Year 13 are below average because a number of them started the course with lower than usual GCSE grades.

Teaching and learning

143. Teachers know their subject well and have a very good knowledge of the subject. A good example of this was seen in a Year 13 lesson on Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, when rigorous questioning by the teacher resulted in students confidently analysing and responding to a complex examination question. Less effective teaching was seen when students assumed an essentially passive role as the teacher led them through the work, providing them with ideas and interpretations, or when some students were allowed to dominate the discussion. The quality of teachers' feedback on written work is thorough and provides clear guidance to students on how to improve. Students take a lively interest in social and historical issues related to the literature studied.

Leadership and management

144. The head of department uses individual student assessment data effectively to monitor progress and inform teaching for examinations. She creates good relationships with students.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

145. Standards of literacy are above average. Most students are articulate and contribute well to classroom discussion when they are required to do so. Students have a good range of skills in reading and writing which enables them to produce full, well-reasoned work.

MATHEMATICS

The school offers GCSE re-take mathematics, AS and A-level mathematics and further mathematics. The work of students studying GCSE and further mathematics was sampled. At GCSE achievement is satisfactory and in further mathematics it is clear that students do very well indeed at the school.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good level of teachers' knowledge leads to clear explanations of concepts.
- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- A comprehensive post-16 programme of study is required.

Examination results

146. In 2002, the results at A-level were well above average. In 2003 the results were lower, though as yet there are no figures for national comparisons.

Standards and achievement

147. Students have a good understanding of mathematics and make effective use of past work when introduced to a new topic. In Year 12 at AS-level, students are developing their skills in calculus and can differentiate at a basic level. In Year 13, students appreciate and understand

the use of differential equations in real-life situations, such as the rate of population increase. Overall students are achieving well.

Teaching and learning

148. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics. They give good support with clear explanations, allowing students to improve their understanding and to achieve well. Students freely participate in discussions, respond well to questions and volunteer suggestions articulately. The lessons proceed at a brisk pace, are planned well, and allow students to build on each stage of new learning before progressing to the next. Homework is set regularly; it is used effectively to consolidate and extend new work that is introduced in the lesson. However, further opportunities are needed for students to develop their study skills, by encouraging them to research and/or prepare for topics in advance of their lessons. The notes and calculations made in class by some students lack structure and do not always lend themselves to future revision and learning. The marking of students' work contains good diagnostic comments that show the students where they have made mistakes and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

149. Teachers work well together. They give students good support by providing tuition at lunchtimes when required. A comprehensive post-16 programme of study is needed to guide teachers on the appropriate teaching methods and the best use of resources to raise the standards of teaching and learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

150. Standards of mathematics are above average. Good use is made of mathematics across the curriculum. There is extensive use of graphs in post-16 sciences where students use calculators competently and can transpose formulae with ease.

SCIENCE

The focus for the inspection was chemistry and physics. One lesson of Year 13 biology was observed. This was an excellent lesson where the teacher used a variety of visual aids to convey to students how the human eye operates and detects colour. Students were very active and enjoyed the investigation, and their achievement was excellent. Results in biology A-level in 2002 were well above average.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	N/A

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students generally gain better A-level results in chemistry than might be expected from their GCSE results when they started the course.
- Students have particularly good practical and investigative skills.

- Teachers ensure that students are constantly having to think hard, use what they already know and discover things for themselves, so that learning is quick and secure.
- The department does not use examination data to assess the 'value added', or achievement, for various groups of students and hence to deduce strengths and weaknesses in performance.

Commentary

Examination results

151. Four students took A-level chemistry in each of the years 2002 and 2003. In 2002, three students gained grade A and one a grade C. In 2003, three of the four students gained pass grades, two with grade A and one grade C. With such small numbers, it is not appropriate to analyse the results statistically or compare them with national averages.

Standards and achievement

152. Students in both Year 12 and Year 13 generally have better knowledge and understanding of current topics than expected at this stage in the course. In a Year 12 group, for example, most students were successful in calculations on reacting volumes. In Year 13, students can explain the different behaviour of various ions in a water softener. In both year groups, most students have well-ordered files containing detailed notes of good quality. However, some male students in Year 12 do not present their calculations with sufficient care and their files are not as well organised as they should be, making them less useful for revision.
153. Students have particularly good practical and investigative skills, notably in Year 13 where students worked quickly and efficiently to investigate the effect of enzyme or substrate concentration on rate of reaction. Students generally gain higher marks for investigative coursework than they do in other aspects of the examinations.
154. Students enter the AS-level chemistry course with GCSE grades in science that are broadly average for students starting such a course. Their standards in Year 12 and Year 13 are better overall than might be expected in relation to their GCSE grades and they achieve well. However, a few students begin the AS-level course with low GCSE grades. They do not have enough background understanding to take advantage of the good teaching they receive. These students do not yet receive sufficiently firm advice to prevent them embarking on a course in which they have little chance of success.

Teaching and learning

155. Each group of students is taught by two of the three teachers of A-level chemistry. Teachers' styles vary but they share an enthusiasm for the subject and the quality of teaching is consistently good. Students enjoy teachers' different approaches and appreciate having ready access to an alternative explanation of difficult ideas if the first one does not precisely meet their needs. The increasing popularity of chemistry, with eight students now in Year 13 and 28 in Year 12, reflects the positive attitudes to the subject shown by students and observed by Year 11 students as they come to choose their own A-level subjects.
156. Students have to think hard from the very beginning of a lesson and teachers make sure that students are active learners, always having to test themselves and prove that their understanding is secure. For example, in a lesson on the octane rating of fuels, students in Year 12 were immediately tested on their understanding of structural formulae, learnt about the internal combustion engine and auto-ignition and used a graph to investigate the relationship between molecular structure and octane rating and draw their own conclusions.
157. Teachers make very good use of challenging homework to reinforce and extend students' learning. They mark tests and homework very effectively, giving students precise information

about how the work could be improved. Teachers do not make as much use as they should of ICT in chemistry lessons because, until recently, there has been only limited access to suitable equipment and software.

Leadership and management

158. The head of chemistry provides good leadership for the group of skilled and experienced teachers of the Salters chemistry course. Teachers work well together as a team and share a clear commitment to raising standards. The department is generally quick to identify weaknesses and take action to overcome them. For example, this year teachers have introduced additional testing and better tracking of students' progress. However, the department does not make use of examination results to estimate 'value added', to deduce how well various groups of students are achieving and hence to discover where further improvements can be made.
159. The previous inspection report only referred to the A-level pass rate in chemistry at that time. Since so few students took A-level chemistry in 2002 and 2003, the results cannot be used to make meaningful comparisons with those in earlier years. Hence it is not possible to judge the progress since the previous inspection.

Physics

Provision in physics is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Very high	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to students achieving very well.
- Results are continuing to rise as a result of good leadership.
- Teachers make students think for themselves.

Commentary

Examination results

160. Examination results were well above average in 2002 and improved in 2003. Results have been rising steadily for some years.

Standards and achievement

161. Standards in Years 12 are already very high at this early stage in the year. Standards in Year 13 are well above average. In both years, the standards represent a very good level of achievement given students' examination grades on joining the sixth form. Students are very confident in their understanding of ideas and also possess very good practical skills. They are keen to question their teachers and debate the theories they are being taught.

Teaching and learning

162. There are several aspects that stand out in the teaching that explain why students achieve so well. Firstly, teachers are very good at breaking down complex ideas into manageable chunks. They then choose excellent analogies for teaching these chunks of knowledge, such as painting the inside of a sphere to show how light intensity will vary with the distance from a light source. Teachers are also insistent that students will think for themselves; they ask demanding questions that are developed into problems for students to solve practically. One example of this approach is the way that students were asked to produce a demonstration to a local Women's Institute group as to how ancient astronomers could tell how far stars were from the Earth. The teacher skilfully got the students to design their own experiments, knowing full well that there would be a problem with the results that the students would have to explain. All of this happened in just one hour; an indication of the rapid pace at which teachers expect their students to learn.

Leadership and management

163. The choice of course has breathed new life into the school's curriculum; numbers are rising rapidly. However, the students do not just choose to study physics because the course is interesting. They also know that results are high and still improving. The two teachers work very well together, but are not sufficiently aware of how well different groups or individuals are doing, because examination results are not analysed in enough detail.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus for the inspection was physical education.

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to students achieving very well in Year 13.
- Assessment data is used, effectively, to predict grades and set individual targets.
- Very good relationships between staff and students contribute, significantly, to students' very good attitudes to the subject.
- There is no opportunity for all students to participate in physical activities, as part of their enrichment curriculum.

Commentary

Examination results

164. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were well above average, but they dipped in 2003.

Standards and achievement

165. In Year 12, students work hard and achieve better standards than might be expected given their standards on starting the course. Students make very good progress in identifying the key features of motor skill programmes, illustrating them with appropriate sporting examples. In Year 13, standards are above average. Students show good knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the use of drugs in competitive sport. Speaking and listening skills developed well in a debate on this topic, and students argued their points of view convincingly.

Teaching and learning

166. Very good teaching in Year 13 reflects enthusiasm and very good knowledge of the subject and the examination syllabus. Teachers have high expectations and set a demanding pace, using a variety of teaching strategies, effectively. Students are expected to take an active role in their learning, and they respond very positively. In most lessons, resources are used exceptionally well to extend the depth and breadth of students' learning. Students of all abilities receive very good support and guidance through thoughtful teacher intervention on an individual basis. Marking is very good, clearly indicating how students can improve their work, but there is little indication in coursework of how students are performing against targets set.

Leadership and management

167. Leadership provides a clear vision and direction for the subject. There are very good opportunities for students to take responsibility and develop leadership skills. Students widen their experience by coaching younger students in swimming, and assisting with extra-curricular activities. Very good links have been developed with the adjacent Community Leisure Centre through these activities. Students taking the Community Sports Leader Award are also preparing to work in local primary schools. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The A-level course has been introduced, standards have risen and the quality of teaching is better.

HUMANITIES

The focus for the inspection was geography, history and sociology. Two lessons of Year 12 religious education were also sampled. In both these lessons, the quality of teaching was at least good and students achieved well. Students discussed the philosophy of religion. Students were confident and had good relationships with the teacher.

A Year 12 psychology lesson was also sampled. The teaching was very good and students achieved very well. The lesson extended students' knowledge of retrieval cues in memory.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Residential field study makes a significant contribution to students' achievement, particularly in Year 12.
- Learning is enriched through the use of ICT for research and presentation.
- Standards are rising because of consistently good teaching.
- Teachers do not make enough demands on students in discussion.

Commentary

Examination results

168. The 2002 A-level results were average but improved in 2003.

Standards and achievement

169. By the end of Year 13, students have knowledge of a wide range of topics such as natural hazards across the world. They understand the reasons for and impact of major flooding in Bangladesh and how advances in knowledge have led to improvements in understanding about tectonic movements in the Earth's crust. Students achieve well in developing research skills, through the use of ICT and the collection of data to analyse information to test hypotheses to reach a conclusion. Students in Year 12 achieve well because of the opportunity of residential study in Malham, making rapid gains in knowledge and developing their practical skills in the field. Assignments are well structured but often work is generalised with insufficient use of examples to link theoretical study to places. The minority reveal limitations in knowledge and understanding so that discussion aspects in learning are not as well developed as expected.

Teaching and learning

170. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and this makes a significant contribution to the good achievement that students reach. Careful curriculum planning ensures that students are quickly initiated in the demands of the AS-level course so that they acquire the knowledge and skills required at an early stage. Teachers plan lessons well and homework is used to develop self-reliance and to extend learning. In the best lessons, planning ensures students are challenged to think about topics they are studying. In a Year 13 lesson about world trade issues in food products, students discussed ideas about prices and trade on people and the economy in developing countries. Learning was effective because students discussed ideas and made clear gains in knowledge and understanding about the economic and moral aspects of trade in bananas. On other occasions, teachers do not expect enough of students in the depth of oral answers.

Leadership and management

171. The head of subject has clear vision about the development needs of the subject and has identified priorities to achieve them. Regular review of students' performance is undertaken and strategies for improvement are implemented. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Results at A-level have improved and teaching remains good.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching produces challenging lessons that move at pace and lead to very good student achievement.
- Students work well independently and relish the frequent opportunities to bounce their ideas off their teacher and each other in class discussions.
- Analysis of students' previous examination performance data and the setting of realistic targets for students' achievements are rigorous.

Commentary

Examination results

172. Results in the 2002 examinations were well below average but improved significantly in 2003.

Standards and achievement

173. An exceptionally higher number of students than is common choose history in Year 12, and they quickly adjust to the greater demands of AS-level work. The great majority produce writing that critically analyses source evidence, evaluates different views and reaches well-supported conclusions. This very good standard of work is evident, to quote one example, in the depth with which students analyse the long and short-term causes of the General Strike of 1926. The history skills developed stand up very well in examinations.
174. Almost all students continue the subject to A-level standard and, at the end of Year 13, most students demonstrate well above average investigative skills. They become confident, independent learners. Students are very well prepared for the university courses, often in history, that most of them go on to study.

Teaching and learning

175. Students benefit from very knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching. Teachers plan their lessons very well, including in them a range of individual and interactive tasks that challenge and stimulate their students. As a result students both learn and achieve very well. For example, in a Year 13 class, the lesson was planned so well that very good advances were made both in understanding the extent to which the Bolsheviks influenced the 1917 Russian Revolution, and in students' grasp of techniques that will enhance their examination performance. Teachers' assessment of written assignments is accurate and the marking is detailed and thorough. The monitoring of students' achievement and progress, through frequent assessment and target setting, is rigorous. Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive and they enjoy the lessons.

Leadership and management

176. The subject is managed well and clear vision and direction are provided. A well-structured handbook that contains thorough schemes of work and guidance for staff is in place. An annual evaluation of students' performance in examinations is carried out and this feeds directly into teaching and learning plans. Standards, particularly in examination results, have improved since the previous inspection and this represents good progress.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and know course requirements well.
- Teaching is lively and teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is infectious.
- Males need to be more effectively challenged in order to attain the higher grades.

Commentary

Examination results

177. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were average and improved in 2003.

Standards and achievement

178. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. In Year 12, students demonstrate a secure understanding of key sociological terms and concepts. They apply their theory to real situations and demonstrated this well in a lesson on covert and overt observations and types of observational research. Members of Year 13 demonstrate an understanding of the methodology of the subject, including the strengths and limitations of particular research techniques. They draw concepts and theories from different sociological traditions. This was evident in lessons about white-collar crimes and the differences between corporate and occupational crimes.

Teaching and learning

179. Students in Years 12 and 13 benefit from good teaching by teachers who have good subject knowledge. The range of teaching activities employed generally allows teachers to meet students' differing individual needs. When class discussions take place, they are skilfully led in order to ensure that all contributions are encouraged and valued. This was particularly evident when Year 12 students were discussing trends and consequences of divorce and separation. Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive and they enjoy their work. Higher attaining males, however, need extension activities and greater challenge, in order to be able to attain the higher A/B grades at A-level.

Leadership and management

180. The head of department leads and manages the department well. Procedures are clear and teachers are committed to improving standards. There has been good progress made since the previous inspection. Teaching and standards have improved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus for the inspection was art and design and drama. Two lessons of music were also sampled. In both Year 12 lessons, the quality of teaching was good and students achieved well. Students engaged well in discussion and reflected on basic jazz terminology.

Art and design

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give good guidance on research and development and as a result, students achieve well.
- This is a vibrant department where students enjoy working hard.
- There is not enough use of ceramics.

Commentary

Examination results

181. Results in A-level examinations in 2002 were average and improved in 2003.

Standards and achievement

182. By Year 13, students research their topics in good depth and develop and present their ideas imaginatively. They have very good skills in drawing, painting and shading subtly, particularly in chalk and oil pastels. They experiment boldly with a range of surface textures. Individuals make good use of ICT in the research and development of their work but this is not extensive.
183. In Year 12, standards are well above average. Students' work on portraiture shows well above average standards of observation and drawing skills. They develop their ideas in highly imaginative ways and in a very good range of textures and three-dimensional effects. There is some good use of the digital camera and ICT in their developments. However, there is little use of ceramics although there are good resources. There is no significant difference in the achievement of males and females.

Teaching and learning

184. Teachers have good knowledge and expertise and guide the students in how to research and explore their ideas in depth. They give good visual demonstrations and illustrations that enable all students to extend their ideas and make creative and imaginative individual responses. Assessment is ongoing in all lessons. Students are made aware of the criteria on which their

work will be examined so that they can improve stage by stage. The excellent relationships encourage students to do extra work within the department and so improve their standards.

Leadership and management

185. This is a well-managed, vibrant department where students take pleasure in working hard. There are inspiring displays of students' best work that enhance the learning environment. There is very good order and emphasis on the presentation of students' work. There is good improvement in students' work and progress since the previous inspection. Accommodation and resources have improved very significantly.
186. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through studies of the emotional and uplifting aspects of artists' work, including their own.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	N/A

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 13, students reach a high standard in performance work because of the very good teaching they receive.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge helps students to learn very rapidly.
- Students' very positive attitudes to drama and the very good relationships lead to swift improvements.
- Although accommodation is good, lack of soundproofing sometimes affects students' concentration.

Commentary

Examination results

187. Examination results at A-level in 2002 were below average. In 2003 they were significantly higher.

Standards and achievement

188. In Year 12, students rapidly improve vocalisation skills in rehearsing scripted extracts, from *A Man for All Season*. They read with fluency and good understanding of character, though not always varying tone and pace. Through discussion with other students they gain a greater insight into the subtleties of Bolt's language. Students write on Godber's *Bouncers*, showing appreciation of Eric as a confused but intelligent man, very different from his fellow bouncers. Lower attaining students do not always back up their ideas with reference to the text.
189. Year 13 students learn the value of close collaboration when preparing devised pieces for the A-level examination. Relationships are very good, so that students are very supportive of one

another in performance. Students use space well and show good awareness of audience, though they are sometimes reluctant to try dramatic pause. The majority reach a high standard in practical work, portraying a character convincingly and engaging an audience's interest, as when a group presented scenes to a Year 11 drama class. Written work shows a firm grasp of what Miller's *The Crucible* is about. Students write about the play's structure and how it might be staged. Presentation is very good, showing students' commitment to their work.

Teaching and learning

190. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which enables them to ask key questions assessing what has been learnt, and to demonstrate how to improve performance. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace with a high level of student involvement. Teachers are enthusiastic. They encourage very good co-operation in group work, so that students learn from one another, show considerable initiative and have very good attitudes to their work. Appropriate opportunities are given for reflecting on personal performance and that of others. This helps to raise standards. Teachers make very good use of resources and a variety of accommodation, though a lack of soundproofing in the drama area affects audience concentration during student group performances, when sound from adjoining rooms intrudes.

Leadership and management

191. The acting head of drama works closely with other drama teachers to plan and assess work. All share a common commitment to helping all students achieve their best. Schemes of work are well planned to meet the requirements of the examination syllabus. Teachers share ideas so that, where classes are taught by more than one teacher, learning proceeds smoothly. An excellent working atmosphere prevails throughout the department. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection, so progress cannot be judged.

BUSINESS

The focus for the inspection was business studies.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting head of department is committed to improving standards within the department.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questions well to probe students' understanding.
- There is a need for more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of students' performance.
- Students are not challenged enough to develop answers or to engage with other students; this results in over-reliance on the teacher.

Commentary

Examination results

192. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were above average but dipped in 2003.

Standards and achievement

193. In Year 12, students demonstrate a sound understanding of key business terms and concepts. They interpret and evaluate information from various sources. Students are beginning to apply concepts and theories to case studies and problems in real organisations. This was demonstrated well in a lesson on market analysis and approaches to marketing.

194. In Year 13, students demonstrate a clear understanding of key business concepts. They apply what they have learned to case studies, actual organisations and the real economy. In a lesson on gross domestic product, students were able to correctly identify both positive and negative features of economic growth. The same students also showed proficient knowledge and understanding of interest and exchange rates and could state how they affect the various stages of the business cycle. Students analyse the information that they collect, draw conclusions and make predictions. Students do not always develop answers or engage with other students; this results in many students giving rather simplistic answers.

Teaching and learning

195. Students are always made aware of lesson objectives. They know exactly what they are meant to be doing. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to expand students' learning and this was evident when students were examining past and present rates of inflation matched to government targets. The range of teaching activities employed in the sixth form allows the teaching to meet individual needs. Lessons are well planned and organised and presentation software is used effectively. Good lessons are varied and well structured with high expectations of effort and engagement, but on other occasions students are not challenged enough to develop answers or to engage with other students; this results in over-reliance on the teacher. Similarly, students are not engaged enough to show how effective learning has been through lesson summary sessions.

Leadership and management

196. There has been unsatisfactory leadership and management of the subject in recent years; progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. The acting head of department is a recently qualified teacher who is committed to improving standards. She is putting in place many of the systems that should already be there. Monitoring systems are not rigorous enough to eliminate weak teaching. Data is not used to give an accurate evaluation of student performance. Young Enterprise is offered by the department to enhance the learning opportunities for any student in Year 12.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

poor (6); very poor (7).