

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIESTHORPE SCHOOL

Pudsey

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108087

Headteacher: Mr Clive Pickles

Lead inspector: Mr Denis Pittman

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th February 2004

Inspection number: 259386

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

Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1180
School address:	Priesthorpe Lane Farsley Pudsey West Yorkshire
Postcode:	LS28 5SG
Telephone number:	0113 2572618
Fax number:	0113 2362167
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Tom Spamer
Date of previous inspection:	9 th February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Priesthorpe is a larger than average comprehensive school, situated between the suburbs of Leeds and Bradford. There are 1180 pupils and students on roll, with 180 students in the sixth form. The school has a multi-cultural intake with 24 per cent of the roll having an Indian or Pakistani background. However, the number of pupils who need support with their English is very few. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the number of pupils on the special educational needs register are broadly the same as the national averages. The levels of attainment on entry to the school are average. The school acquired sports college status in September 2002 and is actively involved in a number of initiatives to promote its development. These include the 'Excellence in Cities' programme for talented students.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16976	Denis Pittman	Lead inspector	
13786	Susan Walsh	Lay inspector	
12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English as an additional language, English (whole school)
23082	Graham Loach	Team inspector	Mathematics (whole school)
5985	Michael Holland	Team inspector	Chemistry (sixth form)
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (main school)
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design (whole school)
3548	Gywn Hughes	Team inspector	Design and technology (main school)
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	Geography (whole school), History (sixth form)
17404	Judith Tolley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (main school), Spanish (sixth form)
11676	Gareth Thomas	Team inspector	Expressive arts (main school), Drama (whole school)
4676	Mary Griffiths	Team inspector	Special educational needs, Physical education (whole school)
10275	John Cosgrove	Team inspector	History (main school), Religious education (main school)
18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	Citizenship (main school), Business education (sixth form)
13623	Jim Waddington	Team inspector	Health and social care (sixth form), Sociology (sixth form)
21785	Veronica Kerr	Team inspector	Science (main school), Biology (sixth form)

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus Ltd
 BPS Business Centre
 Brake Lane
 Boughton
 Notts
 NG22 9HQ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	12
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	16
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	23
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	57

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Priesthorpe School provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. The headteacher's commitment and enthusiasm have created a supportive ethos within the school and it is effectively led.

Standards currently are broadly the same as the national average at both key stages. The school's overall performance in GCSE examinations is well above that of similar schools. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory; students and pupils achieve in line with their capabilities. Pupils are given good guidance and support; their progress is monitored well.

A wide range of enrichment activities enhances students' and pupils' personal development. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Results in GCSE examinations are well above those of similar schools. However, standards in mathematics and science National Curriculum tests for Year 9 were well below the average of similar schools.
- The school is well led with an open and supportive style of management.
- The school's partnership and involvement with the community are good.
- There is a strong ethos of care and support for pupils and students.
- Assessment and marking procedures are not consistently applied in all departments.
- The accommodation provision is unsatisfactory in drama, history and music, which has an adverse affect on the effectiveness of teaching.
- The provision for the spiritual development of pupils and students is inadequate.
- The co-ordination and assessment of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection. Standards in GCSE examinations have risen but this is not reflected in the performance in National Curriculum tests for Year 9. The curriculum provision for older students has been enhanced by a vocational dimension and benefits from a consortium arrangement at sixth form level. The achievement of sports college status has helped to promote high standards in this area of the school's activities. Attendance rates are above average. The refurbishment of some areas of school has provided an improved learning environment but the overall accommodation provision still remains unsatisfactory. Many of the current problems with accommodation will be resolved once the ongoing building programme is complete. Financial management is a strength.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	D	D	C	A

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

Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory in both key stages and in the sixth form. However, achievement in Year 12 in AS courses is not as high as it should be. Examination and test results have shown a static picture in previous years but GCSE performance has improved, particularly in the grade range five or more A* to G; results here were above average. In the 2003

National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, standards in English were above average but in mathematics and science they were below average. Lack of stability in staffing and long-term absence adversely affected some of these results, particularly in mathematics. These staffing difficulties have now been rectified. In the context of GCSE performance, standards are well above those of similar schools. Particularly good standards were achieved in geography, German and Spanish. Examination performances were weaker in mathematics, art and design and design and technology. In the sixth form standards are well above average in business education and above average in geography, physical education and drama. Standards are below average in English, history and art.

The overall provision for the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to the good provision for social, moral and cultural education but insufficient attention is given to spiritual development. Overall, the personal development of students is satisfactory. Relationships with staff are good. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, although a small minority of boys in Year 9 can be disruptive in lessons. Exclusion rates are low and attendance levels are good. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and take advantage of the learning opportunities provided by the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and there are examples of good or better teaching. Teaching in ICT, geography, history, religious education, modern foreign languages and vocational courses is of a good standard; it is very good in physical education. Teachers' detailed planning is good throughout the school and helps to promote students' and pupils' learning skills. Most teaching motivates pupils and students, although in a minority of lessons tasks are not matched well to pupils' abilities and they become demotivated. The overall quality of learning is satisfactory. Some pupils are too reliant on the teacher and are not sufficiently engaged in independent learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory although there are some inconsistencies in the way assessment is used to gauge pupil progress and addressing underachievement at an earlier stage.

The overall curriculum provision is satisfactory. It has developed since the last inspection and has strengths in keeping with its status as a sports college and through the enhanced provision as the result of the consortium arrangements. Some weaknesses affect the efficiency of its delivery, which mainly relate to the use of ICT in other subjects and the suitability of courses, especially in the sixth form. The extra-curricular provision for the school is good.

Procedures to promote pupils' care and welfare are satisfactory overall. The school provides good quality support and guidance but there is insufficient impartial careers advice in Years 10 and 11. The school council is an effective mechanism for seeking pupils' views. The school has a good reputation and successfully established itself in the local community; it is over-subscribed. There are good links with parents and an effective partnership with the community. The school has good links with other schools and colleges. Health and safety assessments need to be more broadly based.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **effectively led and satisfactorily managed.** The headteacher is highly committed and enthusiastic about the school. A good team ethos has been created. Long-term planning is insufficiently clear and focused enough on priorities. The leadership and management shown by senior managers and other key staff are satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and have worked hard to bring about changes in the school. However, they are not sufficiently challenging of decisions. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are supportive of the school and of what it achieves. Pupils and students are involved in a wide range of activities provided and value the social benefits they gain from life in the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the help and support pupils are given by individual subject teachers, and the good relationship they have with them. Parents and students appreciate the wide choices of courses offered by the consortium.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 and achievement in AS examinations in Year 12.
- Achieve greater consistency in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' and students' progress.
- Improve the quality of marking.
- Improve the accommodation in drama, history and music.
- Review the entry requirements and guidance strategy in the sixth form.
- Give greater emphasis to spiritual development of pupils and students.
- Improve the co-ordination and assessment of ICT across the curriculum.
- Enhance the sixth form curriculum to give greater emphasis on key skills and study skills.

Statutory issues

- The school needs to provide for a daily act of collective worship.
- Complete a full risk assessment audit so that health and safety requirements are met.

THE SIXTH FORM AT PRIESTHORPE SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

Priesthorpe School has a satisfactory sixth form that is cost-effective. Priesthorpe sixth form is slightly smaller than average. Students enter the sixth form with broadly average attainment. The school has active links with two other schools within a consortium, which allows its students a wide range of courses at AS and advanced level, and intermediate and advanced level vocational courses. In addition, it offers students the opportunity to re-sit mathematics and English at GCSE level.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in geography, drama and physical education, and well above average in business education.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Monitoring of individual progress is good.
- Students do not achieve as well as they should in AS examinations in Year 12.
- Support and guidance are unsatisfactory; it leads to students being placed on inappropriate courses and slow learning for them.
- There is insufficient support for students to develop key skills and study skills.

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	Unsatisfactory in English. Standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Some students are placed on inappropriate courses. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
Mathematics	Satisfactory in Spanish. Standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. Management is good. Satisfactory in mathematics. Standards are average and achievement overall is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching. Management is satisfactory.
Science	Satisfactory in biology. Standards at A-level are average. Achievement is satisfactory at A-level but unsatisfactory at AS-level. Teaching is good and learning is satisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Good in chemistry Standards are average. Student achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good.
Humanities	Good in geography. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good. Students are well motivated and achieve well. Leadership and management are good. Satisfactory in history. Standards are average. A number of students underachieve on the AS course due to poor motivation and unsuitable entry qualifications. Teaching is good and most students make satisfactory progress. The course is well managed. Satisfactory in sociology. Standards are average. Achievement is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is good.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory in art and design. Standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory but learning is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good in drama. Standards are above average and students achieve well because of very good teaching. Leadership and management are good.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Very good in physical education. Achievement is good as a result of very good teaching. Leadership and management are excellent.
Business	Very good in business education. Standards are well above average. Students achieve very well in a wide range of courses as a result of very good teaching. Leadership and management are very good.
Health and social care	Satisfactory in health and social care. Standards are below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on entry is lower than in other sixth form subjects.

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'.

In addition to the focus subjects, lessons were also sampled in ICT. Standards are average. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students' progress is carefully monitored and personal support through form tutors is good. A lack of effective support and guidance at an earlier stage together with insufficiently rigorous induction procedures result in a number of students following courses which they find too difficult. Support for

the development of study skills is inadequate. Support for university applications is satisfactory but there is insufficient guidance for those students who intend to go directly into employment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory overall. Day-to-day management is effective but elements of long-term planning have weaknesses. The outcomes of a commitment to a fully inclusive sixth form have not been adequately monitored. The consortium has had an 'informal' management arrangement which has worked well in providing extended opportunities for students. The leadership of the consortium has recently been rationalised with the appointment of an overall co-ordinator. The head of sixth form has been very supportive of the new co-ordinator during this transitional stage.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They appreciate the help and guidance they are given by individual subject teachers and the good relationships they have with them. They also appreciate the wide choice of courses offered by the consortium. They consider support they receive for university applications to be adequate. They would appreciate better private study facilities. They feel that there is a lack of an effective forum where they can air their own views to ensure that they have a positive influence on the work of the sixth form.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES.

The results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above the national average in English but below the national average in mathematics and science. Overall standards in GCSE examinations were average when compared nationally, but well above those of similar schools. From the quality of work seen, current standards are broadly average at the end of Year 9 and 11. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 12 are below average due mainly to too many students studying courses that are not well matched to their needs and capabilities. Standards by the end of the sixth form are average. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, and all groups make satisfactory progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, modern foreign languages and physical education are above average by the end of Year 9.
- In 2003 GCSE examination standards were particularly high in geography.
- Standards in history, modern foreign languages and physical education are above average by the time pupils sit GCSE examinations.
- Standards and achievement in science are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 9.
- Standards in art and design are below average at the end of Year 9, in GCSE examinations and at A-level.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.5 (32.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.7 (33.8)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.7 (33.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 198 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. In 2003 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 the combined results were average. In English, results were above the national average but in mathematics and science results were below the national average. In comparison to similar schools' results were well below average, although English performed well. Over the past three years the performance was close to the national average for boys and girls.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	49.0 (43.0)	52.0 (50.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94.0 (86.0)	91.0 (91.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98.0 (93.0)	96.0 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.1 (34.7)	32.1 (34.7)

There were 200 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Overall performance in GCSE 2003 examinations was similar to the national average and the trend of improvement was also similar to the national picture. Performance for five A*- G grades is above average and in comparison to similar schools standards are well above average. Particularly good standards were achieved in geography, German and Spanish. Examination performances were weaker in mathematics, art and design, and design and technology.

Standards seen during the inspection

- Standards seen during lessons and in samples of pupils' work generally reflected average standards of performance. By the end of Year 9 standards were average but were above average in English, modern foreign languages and physical education. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Teaching is often good and teachers have thorough subject knowledge and high expectations, which encourage pupils to achieve well. However, achievement is often only satisfactory in this group because of the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of a minority of boys, which have a detrimental effect on learning. Standards in art and design and science were below average by the end of Year 9. Achievement in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory.
- In Years 10 and 11 standards generally continue to be average but higher standards are reached in history and modern foreign languages. The positive effect of the sports college status, including a very well managed department and very good teaching, can be clearly seen and high standards are reached in physical education. Standards in art and design are below average because there is not enough good teaching and learning. However, accommodation also has a negative impact on standards in a significant number of subjects including art and design, music and science.
- Gifted and talented pupils are usually appropriately challenged by the work in lessons and usually reach their potential. However, there are times in lessons when able groups are not sufficiently challenged; for example, previous work may be repeated or work may only involve recall of knowledge rather than its application.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets that are set for them. This is due to good teaching and support both within the mainstream classroom as well as in the learning resource base. It is here that pupils are sometimes withdrawn to work in small groups or for individual corrective work. Pre-school and lunchtime workshops are available to all pupils with special educational needs who wish to consolidate areas of weakness. Pupils work hard and achieve well and are encouraged to make the best possible progress.

Sixth form

Standards in GCE A/AS-level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	89.0 (85.8)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	22.0 (15.9)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	221.4 (209.5)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- GCE A-level results were similar to the national average in 2002 and in 2003. However, standards in AS-levels were well below the national average. Too many students abandoned their studies because the work was too hard for them, or failed to reach pass grades in AS examinations.

8. In lessons seen and in samples of work scrutinised standards were average in Year 13, but below average in Year 12. Achievement by the end of Year 13 is satisfactory but there are too many students in Year 12 whose achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because admission criteria to AS courses lack rigour and students study courses without the necessary key skills, prior subject knowledge and sometimes motivation that are needed, and subsequently fail to achieve any worthwhile success. The detrimental effect of a too generous entry policy can be clearly seen in the results of biology and history examinations at AS-level. In subject areas where courses are well matched to students' needs, abilities and aspirations, such as in business studies, many students achieve very well.
9. Standards are well above average in business education and above average in geography, physical education and drama. Students have good attitudes to these subjects and respond well to good teaching. Standards are below average in English, history and art. Students' achievements are also unsatisfactory in English and art. This is associated with lack of challenging teaching in English lessons and students' casual attitudes towards studying art and design. Examination results in health and social care both at intermediate and advanced level were below average in recent years but students are working at or near their capacity.
10. The literacy skills of some students are below average, and this inhibits their progress in a significant number of courses. Students in Year 12 often have poorly developed study skills and low motivation and these have a detrimental effect on achievement. Gifted and talented students generally achieve in accordance with their potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour of pupils are satisfactory and exclusion rates are low. Good provision for social, moral and cultural education enhances pupils' personal development but provision for spiritual development remains unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance rates are good.
- Many pupils have good attitudes and behave in an appropriate manner.
- A small number of boys, mainly but not exclusively in Year 9, have unsatisfactory attitudes which have an adverse effect on their own learning and that of others in the class.
- Provision for social, moral and cultural development is good and enhances pupils' personal development.
- Spiritual development is insufficiently emphasised through the curriculum.

Commentary

11. Pupils attend school regularly and most arrive on time. The school arrangements to promote and monitor regular attendance are satisfactory. Good support from parents is a major factor regarding good attendance.
12. Pupils like school and many take a full part in out-of-class activities especially games and team sports; many pupils are normally interested in their work and want to do well. There are, however, a significant number of boys, often in Year 9, whose inappropriate behaviour and poor attitudes can disrupt their own learning and that of others. Unacceptable behaviour was seen in a number of subject areas but was most common in art and design lessons. Unsatisfactory attitudes were often associated with weaknesses in teaching including less well developed behaviour management skills. However where lessons are very well organised and behaviour management is rigorous such as in physical education lessons pupils' attitudes and behaviour can be very good. The school has a behaviour policy but it is not always successfully applied. Internal isolation and the work of the PASS unit keep exclusion rates low.

13. Behaviour in supervised situations such as assemblies is very good but pupils can be boisterous around the overcrowded corridors. Younger pupils report some verbal bullying and this is usually successfully resolved by teachers. Not all pupils enter the school with tolerant attitudes but the school works hard to promote racial harmony and by the time pupils enter the sixth form, relationships between different groups are very good.
14. Most pupils accept responsibility for their own actions and personal, social and health education lessons including the citizenship element help pupils become aware of their place in society. There are good social opportunities in many lessons and most pupils co-operate well. Moral understanding is good; lessons such as history and personal, social and health education help pupils to consider moral issues and help them to appreciate the difference between right and wrong. A good range of visits together with religious education and history lessons help pupils appreciate other faiths, and also a range of cultures.
15. Although provision for religious education has much improved since the previous inspection, provision to promote pupils' spirituality remains unsatisfactory. A lack of teachers specialising in religious education results in lack of depth when considering major spiritual and moral issues. As a result of this, pupils learn about religions rather than from religions. There is a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding and appreciation of the intangible and to develop their own belief systems, including an appreciation of art, beauty and mystery. Important opportunities to promote spiritual understanding are missed in lessons such as English, art and design and music. The school does not provide a daily act of worship and assemblies are sometimes dull and focus on notices and administrative tasks.
16. The school is successfully developing the confidence and independence of pupils with special educational needs. Their ability to work collaboratively as well as independently is good. Other pupils are generally supportive of them. Teachers and support staff work continually to improve pupils' social skills, ensuring that they enjoy lessons and respond well to the challenges set. Levels of co-operation are usually good.

Sixth form

17. Students report that they enjoy their time in the sixth form. They enjoy school life and are actively involved in voluntary work such as providing support for younger pupils or those who need support with reading. Students have good attitudes in classes and behave very well. Usually students do the work that is asked of them and some go beyond this. However, some students have limited study skills and little work is done to address this or to develop key skills such as communication, numeracy and use of ICT. Private study is not well monitored; students report that there is a lack of an area conducive to study and access to computers is limited. These factors have a negative effect on achievement especially in Year 12. Overall attendance rates are satisfactory although students in the sixth form attend less well than Year 11 pupils. Monitoring of attendance has improved to satisfactory.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.7
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	884	43	1
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	9	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	135	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	99	3	1
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	2	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	2	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	12	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The overall curriculum and resource provision is satisfactory but there are unsatisfactory aspects of accommodation. Students are achieving satisfactorily because of the quality of teaching and the positive attitudes to learning of most pupils and students.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and promotes average standards of attainment. Assessment procedures are generally good but results are not used well by all staff to monitor progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' effective planning and very secure subject knowledge helps to promote and develop pupils' skills.
- The active encouragement of enthusiastic teachers helps motivate pupils and can lead to a high level of productivity.
- Marking is sometimes cursory and does not give pupils a clear idea of how to improve.
- Sometimes teachers accept too much unsatisfactory behaviour and this can have a negative impact on learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 159 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	30 (19%)	77 (48%)	43 (27%)	8 (5%)	0	0

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

Commentary

18. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and expertise and many teachers show enjoyment of their subject that is often enthusiastically shared with pupils. This ensures that pupils are able to acquire new knowledge and skills at a satisfactory rate. Teachers relate well to pupils and are able to motivate pupils. There is often an atmosphere of achievement and mutual respect. Pupils have the confidence to question teachers and develop new ideas and increase their understanding. Very detailed planning together with good classroom organisation and a clear style of delivery often result in good learning, for example in modern foreign languages. However, there are times, for example in science and geography, when a more precise focus on what pupils should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the lesson would improve learning.
19. In some subjects, which are delivered by many teachers, such as design and technology, there can be inconsistencies in expectations. Religious education is often delivered by teachers who do not have in-depth specialist knowledge. This can affect learning, as pupils are not always challenged to examine issues at a deeper level.
20. Occasionally work is not well matched to pupils' capabilities. This results in higher attaining pupils not being appropriately challenged and lower attaining pupils not being able to fully grasp concepts. This can result in unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour as pupils struggle and lose interest. A significant number of younger pupils, usually boys, do not have well-developed listening skills. Teachers have to work hard to keep these pupils interested and involved and most are very successful. However, there are occasions when a lack of rigour in behaviour management results in these pupils, and sometimes their classmates, not learning effectively.
21. Teachers are well informed about pupils with special educational needs. All are provided with information about the needs of each pupil. Guidelines for meeting a wide range of individual needs are generally used successfully to improve learning. Teachers are generally sensitive and provide good support for pupils. They are instrumental in setting targets, which are monitored and updated on a regular basis. Teaching in the learning resource base is good and there is a high level of specialist expertise. In mainstream classes, however, pupils' individual education plans are not always regarded as working documents and consequently, as in science lessons, are not necessarily as prominent in the classroom as they should be.
22. Classroom support assistants work closely with teachers and are valued for the contributions they make to pupils' learning. They form a large team and are committed to helping raise standards. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and this has a limiting effect on the learning opportunities that can be developed in subjects such as drama and music. The overall resource provision whilst being satisfactory is often well used. For example, in history very good use is made of models, costumes and artefacts, and in ICT those resources available such as interactive whiteboards are made good use of. This makes lessons more interesting for pupils and ensures that they remain involved.

Sixth form

23. The standard of teaching is good overall but learning is only satisfactory for many students. This is because teachers have to work very hard to overcome weaknesses in their students' prior attainment and key skills.
24. Teaching is very good in business education, drama and physical education and students do well in these subjects. Teaching is good in ICT, and geography. However, in some subjects such as chemistry, history and sociology, the teaching is good but achievement is only satisfactory due to teachers concentrating on overcoming the intrinsic weaknesses of a number of students. Learning does not always match the quality of teaching, especially in Year 12 because work set at the standards to pass examinations is too difficult for some students. Those who are struggling can hold back the progress of more able students, as teachers try hard to give them extra support and attention.
25. Most teachers have very good subject expertise and lessons are carefully planned. Expectations are often high and result in satisfactory achievement. Skilful questioning extends students' knowledge and understanding. Relationships between students and teachers are often very good; students appreciate the good quality academic support offered by many teachers.
26. Teachers strive very hard to help and support their students. As a result students are sometimes offered too much information and do not spend enough time finding things out for themselves. They do not take enough responsibility for their own learning. For example, in art and design lessons, students are not reading and researching enough to develop their independent learning skills. Study skills are underdeveloped when students enter the sixth form, and there is little evidence that weaknesses in study skills and key skills are being addressed by subject teachers.

Assessment

27. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are satisfactory. However, assessment procedures are not consistently applied in all departments. The responsibility for establishing a school-wide assessment policy rests with a member of the senior management team who recognises the importance of regular and consistent assessment. Guidelines have been issued to departments in the form of a structured assessment policy and updates have been provided; there is recognition that the policy should now be reviewed to incorporate the updates to achieve greater consistency in practice. There is good tracking of pupils performance as they progress through the school and there is some analysis of performance by gender and by ethnicity. Target setting has been established and used to good effect with older pupils but has yet to be fully developed in Years 7 to 9.
28. The quality of marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall but there are significant variations. In the best practice pupils' work is regularly marked and good, constructive subject-specific advice is provided; where marking is unsatisfactory it is infrequent and provides very limited advice and there is an acceptance of poorly presented work.
29. In most subject areas pupils are aware of their current levels of achievement in terms of National Curriculum levels, or GCSE, AS or A-level grades but there are some weaknesses; in mathematics and design and technology, for example, pupils rarely receive indication of a level when their work is marked.

Curriculum

The curriculum provision is **satisfactory** overall but the accommodation in some subjects is unsatisfactory. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and it has strengths in keeping

with its status as a sports college but some weaknesses affect the efficiency of curriculum delivery, especially in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned curriculum provision is satisfactory, improved and flexible, and displays strengths in keeping with the school's status as a sports college.
- It provides a variety of general and vocational options to cater for individual needs, abilities and destinations.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The unsatisfactory accommodation in some subjects has a limiting effect on the teaching of the curriculum.
- Whilst the planned curriculum for the sixth form is satisfactory there are some weaknesses in guiding students onto appropriate courses in Year 12.
- Discrete key skills are not taught in the sixth form.
- Provision for an act of collective worship still does not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

30. Overall, curriculum planning is satisfactory and has some governor involvement. It is appropriately planned and evaluated by the senior management team and there are good links between the planners, the departments and cross-curricular groups. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, such as those in ICT, design and technology and religious education, have been largely remedied. There still remain instances of difficulty of accessing central ICT resources and a relative weakness in providing opportunities for spiritual development. Provision for an act of collective worship still does not meet statutory requirements. Art and design and music courses do not fully comply with National Curriculum requirements in respect of ICT in Years 7 to 9. Provision of religious education in the sixth form has improved but is too reliant upon the presence of the one religious education specialist in the school. The quality of its provision has been adversely affected by her maternity leave without adequate replacement. Strengths throughout the curriculum include those in physical education and participation in sporting activities and extra-curricular activities of many kinds in keeping with its status as a sports college. The school can demonstrate some impressive enrichment experiences in sport, music, drama and trips including international links. The curriculum provides good opportunities for children with special needs of various kinds to make progress. A sound course exists for personal development and citizenship although the spiritual element throughout the school is weak.
31. As well as covering the National Curriculum subjects and religious education as required by law, the provision in Years 7 to 9 includes a focus on the acquisition of basic skills such as those of literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills. The curriculum is designed to offer opportunities to all pupils regardless of background and one recent innovative feature has been to offer Year 9 the chance to start early on a GCSE course in ICT. Mentoring and booster classes inside and out of formal lessons help particular pupils to improve their performance. A discrete drama course and the possibility of studying more languages add some enrichment to the main provision.
32. In Years 10 and 11, the school provides a variety of general and vocational options in addition to the required subjects and these are designed to cater for individual needs, abilities and destinations. The planners have not shirked from taking hard decisions to end or to change some courses that have failed to live up to their promise in this respect. The previous requirements of studying a language or a technology subject have been relaxed for a large number of pupils in the interests of providing wider choice, options of more perceived value to pupils, and a greater chance of their achieving success. This success has not always materialised and option choices have not always been well guided. There is a weakness in the option scheme for science in Key Stage 4 that has a knock-on effect when the pupils enter the

sixth form. Language studies have not been adversely affected by the above arrangements and business studies, geography and history are strong and popular option choices.

33. The provision for pupils and students aged 14 to 19 is planned to give an appropriate range of general, vocational and work-oriented learning opportunities that meets the needs of most learners. The provision in sixth form subjects, except English, is at least satisfactory and is very good in physical education and business studies. An innovative consortium arrangement with other schools increases the range of choices available. Some courses, such as health and social care, are well matched to career aspirations and facilitate entry to work or higher education. Satisfactory but not impressive relationships exist with the Connexions service and careers services.
34. Whilst the planned provision of general courses, vocational courses, and extra-curricular activities in the sixth form is satisfactory, there are some weaknesses in the management of the provision that affect its efficiency. Some pupils are well mentored in Years 10 and 11 to help them to access sixth form courses but are not always guided onto courses on which they can be successful in Year 12. However, the learning outcomes over Years 12 and 13, when compared with predicted grades, are better than those evident in the single Year 12. Students are not taught discrete key skills although some of these are covered in subject areas of the curriculum as needed. Accommodation problems constitute a barrier to efficient realisation of some curricular aims in all in key stages although some subjects manage to overcome them very well.
35. Pupils with special educational needs, including students the sixth form, have access to the full curriculum, including the National Curriculum. They also have access to a wide range of activities, which are available out of school hours. Setting in some subjects from Years 8 to 11 ensures that pupils' work is planned at an appropriate level for their individual needs. Identified link teachers in each subject ensure that any problems relating to pupils with special educational needs are dealt with promptly. Pupils regularly take part in the Success Maker programme to improve standards in literacy and numeracy. However, at present they are withdrawn from the same lessons. Despite being for a relatively short time these arrangements are not changed frequently enough to ensure a more even distribution of lessons affected.

Staffing

36. The match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school has experienced a significant turnover of staff in key departments and has managed it effectively. Problems in recruiting a mathematics specialist have been resolved although another teacher is required. A history specialist is required for pupils in Year 9. The vast majority of staff are well qualified to teach their specialist subjects. Opportunities for professional development contribute to the effectiveness of all staff. The school values its staff and this is reflected in their positive attitudes to the school.

Resources

37. The quality and quantity of resources to meet the needs of all students in Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form are satisfactory. Subjects such as ICT and art and design have very good resources, but the majority of subjects have just sufficient to deliver the curriculum. The resources for design and technology are unsatisfactory. The learning resource centre is well managed and gives good support to the learning across the school. The stock of books is insufficient but the school has plans to overcome this difficulty in the near future. There are an above average number of computers in the school; these are accessible and well used.

Accommodation

38. Overall the accommodation provision is unsatisfactory; it is a mixture of good but mainly poor facilities. The current building programme will improve the school but until then it is making access difficult and in wet weather mud is brought into the school. Drama, history and music are taught in poor quality mobile classrooms. The music rooms are too cramped to accommodate desks for pupils to write at. The art and design department is housed in low, badly-lit rooms with old, damaged furniture. The learning support unit's poor quality portable classroom with its unsatisfactory décor and furnishing suffers from noise disturbance from the adjacent music room. In the sixth form there is a lack of space for personal study. The sports hall floor is rain-damaged due to its leaking roof. Accommodation for modern foreign languages, religious education, business studies and pupils with special educational needs is good. Geography enjoys very good, new accommodation. Four of the science laboratories are ancient, dirty and in urgent need of refurbishment. Much of the building requires maintenance; for example, doors do not close properly and tiles are missing from floors. There are insufficient cleaners to keep the school clean. The control of litter is a problem in school.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to promote pupils' care and welfare are satisfactory overall but aspects of health and safety procedures do not meet statutory requirements. The school provides good quality support and guidance but there is insufficient impartial careers advice in Years 10 and 11. The school council is an effective mechanism for seeking pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are a good range of effective mechanisms, which support good achievement in GCSE examinations.
- Induction procedures are good and help pupils settle quickly into secondary school.
- The PASS unit and learning mentors work very effectively together to support vulnerable children.
- There is insufficient impartial guidance for Year 11 pupils and this results in some pupils choosing inappropriate courses at post 16.
- Some health and safety requirements do not meet statutory levels.

Commentary

39. While the school provides a generally a safe and welcoming environment not all statutory requirements regarding health and safety are met at present. The school has responded well to new guidance regarding school visits and has ensured that risk assessments are carried out but there is an absence of routine procedures for whole-school risk assessments.
40. There are systematic and well-managed assessments procedures, especially in Years 10 and 11 which allow teachers to carefully monitor pupils' achievement. Underachieving pupils are successfully identified and then well supported through an extensive mentoring programme and this allows them to fulfil their potential in GCSE examinations. Further help is supplied through booster classes, revision groups and support for coursework. The PASS unit and learning mentors work very well together to provide support for vulnerable pupils. The bringing together of these important support services, including provision to ensure child protection, has been very successful and there is potential to expand this provision further. Unfortunately this is hampered by poor accommodation including lack of office space and space for sensitive discussions with both parents and pupils.
41. Induction procedures are good. A great deal of effort is made to ensure that pupils settle quickly into secondary school life. This includes support from sixth form students who are very willing to act as mentors. Careers education is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is a sound programme of careers education delivered as part of the personal, social and health education programme, which supports work experience and allows pupils to

identify their strengths and weaknesses. However, careers advice is focused on those pupils with the greatest difficulties and many pupils have limited access to impartial advice. Information about further education and employment is insufficient to help parents and pupils make reasoned choices. Success rates post 16 are reduced by inadequate guidance which leads to some students choosing inappropriate courses.

42. Pupils are consulted about their views. They know that they are usually listened to and are given reasons when their ideas are not acted upon. The school council give pupils an effective voice in the school.
43. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within a caring environment. They are quite clear about the progress they are making and are actively involved in evaluating and setting their targets. Clear procedures for the identification and assessment of their needs are understood throughout the school. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils requiring them. These are monitored regularly and targets re-set accordingly. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work and to ask for help when they need it. Support and guidance for students in the sixth form continue where they are required, although many no longer attend the learning support base. Support is also offered out of school when students attend college or use off-site facilities. The commitment to inclusion of all pupils is very strong and the school is the only one in the area to have been awarded the prestigious Inclusion Chartermark.

Sixth form

44. Students report that subject teachers are very supportive. Students' progress is carefully monitored and personal support through form tutors is good. Reports to students and parents about academic performance are of high quality and give clear indications how students can improve their work.
45. Induction procedures are unsatisfactory at present. There is lack of firm, effective guidance before students embark on their sixth form studies that would ensure that all students had a realistic chance of success. Students are allowed to embark on courses that are sometimes poorly matched to their needs, capabilities and aspirations. This, together with a lack of knowledge of the rigorous demands of sixth form study, and limited key skills and study skills, results in too many students abandoning their studies and underachievement for too many students in Year 12.
46. Support for university applications is satisfactory. There is a week at the end of the summer term dedicated to university applications but the timing is not well considered. Most students are able to develop a realistic strategy for their applications to higher education, but improved and earlier monitoring of applications might save some students from making basic mistakes. Students who are intending to access further education or employment report they have limited guidance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the local community. It works well with other schools and links with colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships with parents.
- Links with parents of pupils who have special educational needs are excellent.
- Communication with parents is of consistently good quality.
- The sports college status has helped to promote good links with other schools and the local community.
- Pupils and parents get too little information about wider opportunities at post 16.

Commentary

47. The school has good relationships with parents and responds well to their individual concerns. Care is taken to seek parents' views on a regular basis. Information to parents, including newsletters, the prospectus and the governors' report to parents, is of a high quality. The quality of pupils' annual reports has improved significantly since the recent introduction of a new format. High quality subject-specific written comments have been retained but all reports now contain clear strategies for improvement. Parents appreciate the way staff are very approachable and take issues seriously and this has helped the school to become popular and oversubscribed.
48. The school has productive links with the local community who are well represented on the governing body. Good use is made of local resources and expertise, and a wide range of visits both locally and further afield helps to make learning interesting and relevant. The sports college status has helped the school enhance links with local sports groups.
49. The movement of pupils from primary to secondary school is effectively supported by good quality arrangements for transition. Sporting links with primary schools are particularly good and help to raise standards in physical education. Links with other schools are good and help the school examine and improve its practice. The 14-19 curriculum is developing and a growing number of students have access to college courses that have improved their levels of achievement. Staff provide some information about post 16 opportunities but this is too little to help parents and pupils make reasoned choices.
50. Links with parents of pupils who have special educational needs are excellent. The school recognises the value of a close working relationship with them and regards them as partners. They are well informed and are involved at every stage of the learning support process. A high percentage of parents attend review meetings and annual reviews.

Sixth form

51. Parents are generally supportive of the sixth form and of what it achieves. They appreciate the help and guidance students are given by individual subject teachers and the good relationship they have with them. Parents value the greater breadth of courses available for students as a result of the consortium arrangements. They are concerned about the lack of private study facilities provided.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **effectively led and satisfactorily managed**. The headteacher is highly committed and enthusiastic about the school. A good team ethos has been created. Strategic planning has some weaknesses. The leadership and management shown by senior managers and other key staff are satisfactory. Governors carry out their responsibilities appropriately. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher provides a clear vision and sense of purpose for the school.
- Senior staff are very experienced and provide good role models for other staff.
- The school improvement plan is not sufficiently focused on priorities.
- The good quality of management shown in pastoral care adds to the school's ethos.
- The monitoring and review of performance data are not consistently applied within departments.
- The co-ordination of design and technology and ICT across the curriculum is inadequate.
- The leadership and management of physical education are excellent.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3957243	Balance from previous year	102020
Total expenditure	3930595	Balance carried forward to the next	128670
Expenditure per pupil	3323		

Commentary

52. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school. He has had a long association with the school being promoted through various management roles and responsibilities. During this period his commitment and enthusiasm for the school have been undiminished. The school is well led; there is a sense of common purpose amongst the staff and the desire to work in the best interests of the pupils and students. The overall quality of management is satisfactory. Whilst an infra-structure of management systems is in place, there are inconsistencies in the way these procedures are monitored and evaluated. For example, the monitoring and challenging of underperformance in science and lack of marking in some subjects have not been rigorous enough.
53. An experienced senior management team ably supports the headteacher. The team works well together and shows a firm commitment to the objectives of the school. The team has a long association of working together and provides a good role model for other staff. However, whilst being supportive of each other it has lost some of its challenging edge. There are some inconsistencies in the way that delegated responsibilities are performed such as conducting monitoring and review activities. Quality assurance procedures and data collection are detailed and support the intention to improve standards. For each subject, targets are drawn up which have clear criteria, so that success or otherwise can be measured. However, the school improvement plan is overly detailed and does not focus sufficiently on the school's major priorities.
54. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors show commitment and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. They support the school well and have been particularly active in promoting improvements to the school buildings and surrounding environment. Governors have been encouraged to be more proactive in the monitoring role but are not sufficiently challenging about strategic issues or questioning of performance details. The governing body has a good working relationship with the staff. The information given in the annual report is relevant and meets statutory requirements.
55. The overall quality of middle management is satisfactory. There are examples of effective management in a variety of contexts in the school. These are primarily in the areas of pastoral care, the humanities, the expressive arts and business education. The leadership and management of physical education are excellent. There are weaknesses, which require attention. These relate to the co-ordination of design and technology and ICT across the curriculum. A more general feature is the need to achieve greater consistency in use of assessment data and to make monitoring of pupils' and students' work more effective.
56. Arrangements for performance management are satisfactory. Teachers are aware of their strengths and weaknesses but further development is required in order to improve monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work. A structured programme of focused lesson observations, analysis of planning documents and review meetings is in place. Generally, this works well in identifying priorities for development. However, underachievement of some groups of pupils, in the main school and in the sixth form, is not noticed soon enough. Arrangements for the support and professional development of newly qualified teachers are good. The evaluation of

the effects of training, on teaching and learning, is established. All staff, including financial, administrative and site management staff, are involved in training and make a significant contribution to the work of the school.

57. Leadership and management in relation to special educational needs are good. Procedures for the support of pupils are well established and understood. Working relationships between the co-ordinator, other teachers and support staff are very good. The Code of Practice is fully implemented and the headteacher and governors are fulfilling legal requirements in respect of statemented pupils and students. Good links are maintained with primary feeder schools, other secondary schools within the consortium and with a range of outside agencies that support pupils in the school. A very knowledgeable governor gives good support to the department.

Sixth form

58. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory overall. Day-to-day management is well co-ordinated and effective. Pastoral support is generally good but academic guidance for the choice of courses is not sufficiently rigorous.
59. The school has a policy which allows most students who wish to continue their studies into the sixth form to do so. However, a large proportion of students enter the sixth form with weak study, numeracy and literacy skills. The impact of this strategy on the effectiveness of curriculum delivery and subsequent student attainment has not been sufficiently evaluated. The inappropriateness of some subject choices by students has had a constraining effect on the efficiency of teaching. Where students are placed on courses appropriate to their needs and capabilities, for example in business studies where a variety of courses at different levels are offered, they achieve well.
60. Governors fulfil their statutory duties relating to the sixth form. Whilst they are very supportive of the school's work they have not been sufficiently rigorous in questioning some of the outcomes of strategic decisions to broaden the base of student entry into the sixth form.
61. Leadership and management of individual subject areas are good. Documentation to support the work in the sixth form is generally good. However, there are some inconsistencies in the use of assessment data and the quality of marking to improve student performance. They are particularly strong in business education, but have weaknesses in biology.
62. The previous 'informal' management arrangements for the consortium have been rationalised with the appointment of a co-ordinator for all the partner schools. The head of the sixth form has been very supportive of this process of change. He is taking an active role in providing evidence for the production of a development plan for the whole consortium. The school recognises that under this new leadership some the strategic issues which have been identified in this inspection can be addressed.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 9 attain above average standards because of strong, focused leadership.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Good use of the National Literacy Strategy improves basic skills.
- Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not sure how to improve their work.

Commentary

63. Results and current standards reflect continuing improvement by Year 9 pupils. Overall, pupils' achievement is good, taking into account the 2003 results as well as work seen. The acting head of department, who started at the beginning of the year as second in department, has succeeded in developing a shared vision for the improvement of teaching and learning.
64. In work seen, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is above average and by Year 11 is broadly in line with the national average. This represents good achievement and improving standards for Year 9 and satisfactory achievement for Year 11 pupils, because when they joined the school their overall standards were average. Standards in literacy have improved, showing particularly good achievement. This is emerging as a strength for Year 11 pupils. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of literacy skills by the time they have been in school for three years. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and in formal situations. Listening skills are not as good because a minority of pupils do not listen attentively. Writing standards are above average in Year 9; most pupils have grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and their work is well presented. Writing is creative and poetic and pupils enjoy writing imaginative, descriptive stories. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and work that is planned to match the pupils' needs. Attainment in English by the end of Year 11 is average. Pupils write with understanding of Shakespearean texts and literature from different cultures. They can evaluate character and theme, and structure written work appropriately. A minority of pupils rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is lacking in detailed understanding and insight. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in the school because work is matched to their needs.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and sometimes very good. In a small minority of lessons, pupils learn less than in others because the pupils are not involved enough in their own learning, or classroom management strategies are less strong. In the good and very good lessons, there is a brisk pace, pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. Pupils respond well to their teachers' care for achievement and this helps develop the good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 10 lesson on writing, the pupils evaluated high grade assignments in order to improve their own writing. They enjoyed exchanging ideas and analysing the best possible structure for their own work. Consequently, they presented their findings intelligently and accurately. The teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. In a very good Year 8 lesson, pupils spoke

meaningfully to the class and each other, because the teacher established clear guidelines and set high standards.

66. The leadership of the department is good. The acting head of department has inspired loyalty and further developed a cohesive team. Teachers are beginning to share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they are regularly discussing what is best for the pupils. Procedures for assessment are clear and used by the head of department to set individual pupils' targets. This is not consistent in practice and ongoing assessment is sometimes bland and lacking in specific targets to guide pupils' improvement. This is more evident for pupils in Year 11. Some pupils are not aware of their standards or targets and therefore are not sure how to improve.
67. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained because of good teaching and learning. The use of data to improve the tracking of pupils' progress has improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Management in departments has been effective in putting into practice the improvement of pupils' literacy skills. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary, especially in modern foreign languages, geography and English. The English department has dictionaries available in each classroom and key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly in most subjects and in most cases show respect to their peers and staff by listening attentively. More developed discursive and analytical writing is not consistent, however, in subjects where literacy teaching is less emphasised. Opportunities were missed to correct mechanical accuracy in art. Reading fluency is encouraged and seen to particular effect in English and geography. Most subjects undertake the teaching of basic literacy skills conscientiously as a means of improving standards. The absence of communications skills teaching in the sixth form is a barrier to raising standards in English, history, geography, art and design and modern foreign languages.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Curriculum provision is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive, behaviour is very good and pupils have very good relationships with their teachers.
- Assessment information is used well to meet pupils' needs.
- Leadership and management are very good and teachers work as a very effective team.
- Opportunities for pupils to use the languages informally to increase confidence and competence

Commentary

69. In work seen by the end of Years 9 and 11, standards in French, German and Spanish are above average overall. This represents good achievement overall. Pupils have a good understanding of grammar and apply rules effectively to express their ideas. They write at length and in detail to describe events in the past, present and future and to express their opinions. Lower attaining pupils follow models and adapt set phrases whereas average and higher attaining pupils write independently. By the end of Year 11 the majority link their ideas effectively using adverbial and time phrases and use a good range of vocabulary and

structures. Most identify detail from extracts of speech and short texts with little need of guidance; lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs identify the main points and specific detail with guidance. They participate in dialogues with confidence and pronunciation is usually good. They are more hesitant, however, in responding spontaneously and many place too much reliance upon written notes in expressing their ideas in speech. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards are well below average; this is not supported by work seen during the inspection where standards are above average. In GCSE examinations in 2002 the proportion of candidates achieving A*-C grades in French is average, in Spanish below average and in German very high. There appears to have been a significant improvement in examination results in 2003 where the proportion gaining A*-C grades in French are above average, in Spanish well above average and in German very high. All pupils do better in all languages than they do in other subjects. Girls do better than boys in French but there is no significant difference in other languages.

70. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers' command of the languages they teach is excellent so that pupils have the benefit of excellent role models. The languages are used very effectively to conduct activities; the language used is very well matched to pupils' previous experience and capabilities and this is effective in developing listening skills. In some classes, however, opportunities are missed to challenge higher attainers to interpret for others and the English translation of instructions is given too readily, eliminating the need to listen to the original. Teachers use questioning well to enable pupils to respond successfully and so increase their confidence in speaking. Presentations of new language are clear, using visuals and the overhead projector so that pupils rapidly understand and use new language themselves. Teachers frequently ask pupils to identify, explain and apply patterns themselves and this results in pupils having a very good grasp of the way the languages work and being able to manipulate the languages successfully to express their ideas. Control and management are good; pupils have good relationships with their teachers, respond well, listen attentively and are concerned to do well. Teachers routinely share lesson objectives with pupils and key language is effectively consolidated on the board and in plenary sessions. Activities are appropriate and well sequenced, enabling pupils to build effectively on what has gone before. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise informally in pairs and increase in confidence and competence as a result, but this is often restricted to rehearsal; pupils are not always required to use the language to find out and give information and are therefore more hesitant in responding spontaneously. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the use of games and competition to consolidate learning; boys in particular are keen to participate in oral work as a result and there are clear gains in competence and confidence in speaking skills. They become restless and lose concentration in a minority of lessons where teacher-led activities are lengthy and they are not given the opportunity to try out the language themselves. Lower attaining pupils sometimes have difficulty identifying the main points in listening activities; this is because they are not always given sufficient guidance, for example by predicting key words they might hear, or the process of transferring what they have heard on to paper is too complex. Homework is used well to consolidate and extend learning, and marking is thorough and gives good guidance about how to improve.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department has a very clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses and development planning is focused clearly on raising standards. There has been good progress since the last inspection; appropriate and effective action has been taken to address issues raised in the last inspection and there has been a significant and continuing improvement in standards. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning are very effective, there is very good support for teachers new to the department, and very effective teamwork has resulted in a high level of consistency across the department. Curriculum provision is very good and opportunities for pupils to develop their learning in extra-curricular activities such as intensive language days and trips abroad are very good. Assessment procedures are good and information is used effectively to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils understand examination requirements and in Years 10 and 11 they are beginning to evaluate their own work; this has not yet been developed in Years 7 to 9. The use of ICT is restricted because of access to appropriate facilities. Specialist accommodation is

good and used well to celebrate pupils' achievement but some lessons are taught at a distance from the languages area; this limits the range of learning opportunities which can be provided and pupils do not benefit from support provided by display in specialist language rooms. Resources are adequate but some textbooks are outdated.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are below national standards and fell in 2003.
- Standards observed are improved from latest test results and are in line with national averages.
- There is a good use of the numeracy strategy across Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Teachers are secure and confident in their subject expertise.
- There is some unsatisfactory marking and insufficient guidance for pupils as to how to improve.

Commentary

72. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. In 2003 standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 9 were below the national average and well below the average when compared with similar schools. The department has had to cope with severe staffing difficulties, including long-term absences, and these have had an effect on pupil attainment; trends in results have been downwards and below the nation trend. However, in work seen during the inspection pupil attainment by Year 9 is now in line with national expectations and is a reflection of the much improved staffing.
73. The percentage of pupils obtaining a GCSE grade A*-C in 2003 was below the national average and below the level obtained in 2002. The performance of girls was better than that of the boys. In work seen during the inspection pupil attainment by Year 11 is in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory when prior attainment levels are taken into account.
74. Teaching overall is satisfactory with some examples of good, very good or excellent practice. The National Numeracy Strategy is embedded within the teaching of mathematics; the starter sessions are enjoyed by pupils and ensure that most lessons start in a relaxed and productive manner. The majority of pupils are set work that is suited to their needs and abilities; teachers are aware of individual education plans that are provided for pupils with special educational needs. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching and in over half of the lessons observed during the inspection teaching was at least good. Good teaching is characterised by teachers who are secure and confident in their subject knowledge and who relate well with their pupils; they recognise and anticipate likely pupil misconceptions and are able to motivate pupils by their own enthusiasm. This was the case in one excellent lesson in which both teacher and learning assistant displayed great awareness of individual pupil need and used a wide variety of techniques to keep pupils concentrating and enable very good progress to be made. Where there is weak or unsatisfactory teaching it is characterised by a lack of differentiation, resulting in the more able pupils in the group being unchallenged and drifting off task. In some cases there is a lack of awareness of pupil inactivity and an acceptance of poor behaviour that hinders learning.
75. Marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. There are significant gaps in marking and some pupils receive minimal constructive advice that gives subject-specific guidance for improvement. The department has implemented a tracking system that helps record and monitor pupil progress; targets are set and pupils in Years 10 and 11 are aware of their targets. In general, however, pupils are unaware of the National Curriculum level or GCSE standard at which they are working.

76. Learning is satisfactory with the majority of pupils being motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers. When given the opportunity to do so pupils are willing to contribute to class discussion and questioning. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and are built upon trust, respect and good humour. Where learning is unsatisfactory pupils are not sufficiently challenged. In some cases they are allowed to drift off task or engage in excessive social conversation with other pupils.
77. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory because the head of department has a clear commitment to improving standards. She has identified issues that need to be addressed and has policies and plans in place to make things happen, although some of these policies are in need of revision and others not fully implemented. The introduction of statistics as an extra GCSE subject for selected pupils has been a success and a number of extension activities such as the 'Maths Fun Week' have motivated pupils. Progress has been adversely affected by major staffing difficulties that have now been resolved.
78. Some aspects of management are unsatisfactory such as the monitoring of teacher performance, which has not been fully implemented. A fundamental area for development is the monitoring of marking. A helpful departmental handbook has been produced and new schemes of work introduced. The use of ICT is now integrated within schemes of work. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory; classroom displays are good and help to create a pleasant work ethos.
79. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because the department has overcome severe staffing difficulties and is adopting strategies to raise standards across all year groups. There has been an improvement in the use of ICT to enhance learning

Mathematics across the curriculum

80. The head of mathematics is the numeracy co-ordinator for the school and has provided good leadership in encouraging colleagues to adopt the school numeracy policy. A cross-curricular working party, with a representative from each department, has been established. A full audit of provision has been completed, gaps identified and provision improved. Guidelines that are subject specific have been issued to each department in order to assist the implementation of policy.
81. Pupils' competence in mathematics is satisfactory and they are able to apply their numeracy skills in most subject areas. In English, for example, pupils use bar charts and pie charts to illustrate the extent of mood, atmosphere and imagery in verse. In art, pupils show an understanding of perspective and are able to work to scale. In history and geography, pupils present and interpret data via the use of charts and graphs. Good numeracy skills are evident within the business vocational courses where students analyse cash flows and profit and loss accounts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the GCSE examinations match the national averages and show good achievement by all pupils.
- The department is staffed by well-qualified specialist teachers.
- Although aspects of leadership are good, there are deficiencies in management.
- Resources to support learning, including those for ICT, are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient technical support.

- Some of the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

82. Results in the national tests taken in Year 9 improved steadily from 1999 to 2002 when they matched the national standards. The 2002 results were above those of pupils from similar schools and matched the performance of pupils who were at the same standard in Year 6. In 2003, results fell below the national average. Although matching the results from similar schools, comparison with their attainment on entry to the school shows unsatisfactory achievement by all pupils. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicated that standards are again improving although they are not yet matching the national averages.
83. Over recent years, results in GCSE examinations have been below the national average. In 2003, there was a significant improvement. Results matched the national figures and were well above those gained by pupils in other schools of similar attainment in Year 9. These results represent good achievement, that is shared by all pupils. Observation of lessons and analyses of pupils' books and test results showed that the standards of 2003 are being maintained. Pupils of differing capability, both boys and girls, are all achieving well. This success was typified in a chemistry lesson for higher attaining pupils. The ease with which they used their knowledge of the periodic table of elements to predict the thermal decomposition of metal carbonates showed secure understanding of difficult concepts.
84. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and establish effective climates for learning. On the few occasions when pupils displayed poor attitudes, their behaviour was effectively and sensitively controlled and not allowed to disrupt the progress of other pupils. All teachers have an excellent command of the subject that is particularly well used in GCSE courses. Teachers work very hard and with great sensitivity to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In the best lessons, imaginative planning based on clear learning objectives provides stimulating activities that are supported by high quality resources. Year 11 pupils, of average attainment, were able to understand cloning because they worked out the sequence of event for themselves using cleverly prepared printed cards and were given plenty of opportunities to discuss the work. In less successful lessons, learning objectives are not explicit and sometimes the apparatus or printed resources used are not appropriate. Day-to-day marking of pupils' work is patchy. Some teachers mark work closely, celebrate achievement and provide helpful comment on errors. Others give only cursory attention to this aspect of work.
85. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Supportive leadership is engendering good morale and teamwork. All staff, both teachers and technicians, are fully committed to the pupils' education and welfare. The support given to inexperienced colleagues is exemplary. The mainstream science courses in Years 10 and 11 are well organised and underpinned by good schemes of work. The recent change to a more appropriate syllabus is in part responsible for the rise in standards evident in 2003. The assessment of pupils' progress across Years 10 and 11 is thorough and well used to set challenging targets and to monitor the effectiveness of teaching.
86. Partly because there are not enough teachers in a position to take responsibility for aspects of the department's work, some areas are unsatisfactorily managed. Recent changes to the curriculum for Years 7 to 9, made in response to the National Strategy for Science Teaching are underdeveloped. The schemes of work and printed resources, including textbooks and worksheets etc., are unsatisfactory. Although there have been improvements in tests used to measure progress, lack of moderation of the marking indicates that the data is not yet fully reliable.
87. The option to take all three science subjects as separate GCSE examinations is not meeting the needs of the small number of pupils who have elected to take this unusual choice. Some pupils are entered for the higher level papers and others for foundation level. This means that staff have to master the requirements of six GCSE examinations as well as the double and

single award courses taken by the majority. This is placing an undue burden on the management capacity of the department.

88. Resources to support learning are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of good textbooks, and not enough specialist ICT equipment or dedicated computers. The two well-qualified and dedicated technicians, who are employed only during term time, cannot meet all the needs of this large and complex subject. Although the new laboratories are very well designed, the older ones are in urgent need of refurbishment. The state of décor is dreadful and the provision of services (gas and electricity) is inadequate. These laboratories do not provide the proper environment for teaching and learning.
89. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement. Standards in GCSE have risen significantly and, despite the lapse in 2003, standards at the end of Year 9 have improved. The potential for further gains is dependent on rationalising the management structures within the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good, and responsible for the good improvement in the subject.
- The curriculum is good, focusing well on pupils' capabilities and needs.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve very well.
- The approach to the management and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

90. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that the attainment of pupils is below the standard expected nationally for pupils achieving the national average in 2003. The GCSE results for those pupils taking the examination in 2003 are above national averages.
91. For the present Year 9, attainment in ICT lessons is in line with the national expectation across a range of activities. In lessons pupils demonstrate skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. They are familiar with spreadsheets to organise information and with the simple use of formulae to make calculations. They can use desktop publishing to a good level of competence, combining text and images, and they can create web pages. Pupils have access to the Internet and use this to download images and data for research when creating their own websites.
92. By Year 11, pupils' attainment in the practical elements of ICT is above the expected standard. In the examination classes pupils are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software, including desktop publishing, use of data base and spreadsheets, to simulate business practice. Good use is made of computers to promote individual learning. Pupils are able to discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete. Basics skills in literacy and numeracy are adequate for the needs of the courses being offered. Pupils develop and apply their skills further through activities such as extended writing for coursework projects.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers' marking is frequent, enabling students to work continuously and individually in lessons. The use of a data projector and interactive board in lessons impacts very well on pupils' learning because basic skills are taught quickly and efficiently to the whole class. Younger pupils are sometimes excited by what they can do when creating web pages. In the good teaching, reference to marked coursework

is good at the start of lessons because it enables pupils to improve. The good whole-class discussion by way of conclusion widens pupils' knowledge through the sharing of ideas. The teaching provides good challenges to pupils' learning. In lessons pupils are given challenging tasks and this has a positive impact on the rate of learning.

94. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The good improvement achieved since the last inspection has been enabled partly by the decision to increase significantly the number of computers in the school. Standards have risen because teaching has improved. Good monitoring systems are now in place. The ICT curriculum has improved significantly, meeting the needs of all pupils because the good subject knowledge of the teachers has been used well in planning the schemes of work. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which is reflected in the work of the department. There is good delegation to ensure the effective contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities.
95. There are good assessment systems now in place. The tracking and assessment of pupil attainment and progress are used effectively to inform teachers' planning.

Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum

96. The management and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory. There is very little tracking of the contribution of other subjects to the use of ICT. A specific policy for ICT across the curriculum has not yet been implemented.
97. Standards of ICT work seen in a number of subjects are satisfactory and there is evidence of good quality work produced in design and technology, mathematics and business studies. There are missed opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and develop confidence in the use of computers in other subjects. The lack of ICT provision in music lessons is not enabling full access to the curriculum.
98. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications and access the network, and the ICT skills of individual teachers have been used effectively to deliver the curriculum. However, opportunities for the consistent application and development of ICT are not always sufficiently planned and co-ordinated across the curriculum to achieve full coherence and progression. Pupils' achievements across the curriculum are not assessed or fully recognised. There is no reporting of achievement for those pupils not being examined in the subject.
99. Technical support is very good. The computer rooms and the library provide good opportunities for pupils to use computers outside of lessons when they can develop their computer skills and have access to the internet.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and GCSE examination results are well above average.
- Leadership and management are effective and staff work very well as a team.
- Consistently good teaching helps all pupils learn well and very well in Years 10 and 11.
- Very good fieldwork projects exist but more are needed in Year 9.
- Assessment, including pupils' self-evaluations, does not target progress in learning sufficiently.

Commentary

100. Results in GCSE examinations are well above average. In 2003 girls did better than boys, the difference being much greater than that nationally. Pupils generally do much better in geography than they do in their other subjects.
101. By Year 9 standards are broadly average. Achievement over Years 7 to 9 is good due to good teaching and pupils' very positive attitude to learning. Pupils have a good grounding in geographical skills. Most use and interpret maps well and the plotting and analysing of statistical data graphically are good. Knowledge of place is satisfactory but the understanding that similar environments worldwide usually have similar characteristics is less well developed. Higher and average attainers work well, often producing work above expectation. Lower attainers often progress very well as tasks are simplified appropriately for their needs. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls or between pupils of different ethnic groups. By the end of Year 11 standards are well above average. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good. This is due to consistently high quality teaching precisely focused on GCSE examination needs, and well-motivated pupils who work hard. The best independent study GCSE projects are of exceptionally high quality. Good revision material and regular testing of pupils learning contribute noticeably to the well above average GCSE examination results.
102. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils. Classroom management and control are very good. There is a relaxed yet purposeful air in lessons that is conducive to good learning. Learning is effective, being underpinned by the teachers' detailed knowledge of topics taught and the very good rapport with pupils. The best teaching is enthusiastic, stimulating and has high expectations. A teaching strength is the emphasis placed on investigation skills and there is good enquiry project work. Lesson objectives, however, are sometimes not focused precisely enough on what pupils need to learn. Atlases need to be used more to develop understanding of spatial patterns.
103. The subject is competently run and effectively managed. A highly professional staff work together excellently. Curriculum planning is of high quality. Pupil self-evaluation is not used enough to target pupils' learning. There is a good coherent programme of ICT but work is not assessed. Fieldwork undertaken provides most effective learning and greatly stimulates pupils' interest in the subject and more is planned for Year 9. Very good displays in rooms and adjacent corridors provide an attractive and good learning environment. There is good improvement in the raising of standards since the previous inspection.

History

The provision of history is **good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching produces results above the national average in Years 10 and 11.
- The pupils display good attitudes to their work and history is a popular option choice.
- The leadership and management of the department are good and help to produce an effective teaching team.
- Very good use of models, artefacts, costumes and visits enlivens lessons and inspires pupils.
- Basic learning skills are well integrated into the historical learning objectives.
- Accommodation is poor and access to computers is limited.
- There are insufficient specialists in the subject.

Commentary

104. By the end of Year 9 the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with national expectations. This represents good overall achievement in the light of their attainment on entry to the school.
105. By the end of Year 11 a large number of pupils opt for history in the GCSE examination and their attainment is above the national and local averages. This represents good achievement in the light of their recorded prior attainment.
106. Assessment procedures effectively monitor pupil progress. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress with the help of adapted materials and modified teaching styles and some in-class support. Good strategies to improve basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT benefit all pupils but access to the central computer rooms proves difficult to obtain. Most pupils, including those designated as being gifted and talented, achieve their predicted grades in examinations and some exceed them. The history courses and the extra-curricular activities such as visits to such places as the trenches and the Holocaust museum make a good contribution to citizenship and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils studying history.
107. The work seen in lessons and in exercise books confirms the judgement that pupils in Years 7 to 9 can demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of topics such as castles (Year 7) or the social and economic changes of the 18th century (Year 9). The very good use of models, costumes, artefacts and fieldwork helps to lay the foundations for the popularity of the subject as a later option choice. In Years 10 and 11 the work seen showed conscientious attitudes and a good progression of knowledge and understanding of topics such as the modern history of China or developments in medicine. Some good preparation in source evaluation, thinking skills and examination techniques was seen.
108. Overall the specialist teaching is good and effective. A good deal of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is undertaken by up to five willing and competent non-specialist teachers, spread around the school, who advance pupils' knowledge and understanding but who sometimes miss more sophisticated opportunities which a specialist would take. The teaching seen was characterised by good subject knowledge, good planning and enthusiasm and good classroom management. The teachers usually worked at a brisk pace, employed a purposeful delivery and created good relationships. In every class observed the pupils responded accordingly and co-operated fully.
109. Underpinning the good results, relationships and teaching are good leadership and management. Some aspects of these, such as the welding together of a team of specialist and non-specialist teachers, the creation of a good learning environment out of very poor accommodation, and the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department, are very good. Improvements made since the last inspection have been good. Effectiveness would be even better if and when new accommodation comes on stream and the work is concentrated into specialist hands.

Religious education

The overall provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching seen is mostly good.
- The use of artefacts, music, videotapes and other aids is a strength.
- Measures to overcome weaknesses in pupils' literacy are good.
- The department teaches knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major religions well.

- Good guidance and good resource materials help the mainly non-specialist staff to teach the subject effectively
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There are insufficient specialist teachers.
- Access to the central facilities for ICT is inadequate.

Commentary

110. By the end of Year 9 the majority of the pupils attain standards that meet the expectations of the local agreed syllabus and this represents good achievement and progress in the light of their prior attainment on entry into the school. By the end of Year 11 standards attained in the short GCSE course are close to the national average. This represents good achievement and progress over the key stage.
111. In Years 7 to 9, pupils with special educational needs and those designated as gifted and talented attain appropriate standards and make good progress because the department makes good use of modified materials. It also has good strategies for overcoming pupils' weakness in literacy skills. The planned use of skills in ICT is satisfactory but access to the main computer facilities is difficult. The assessment and tracking of pupil progress are satisfactory and the religious education provision makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and to citizenship.
112. The work seen in lessons and in exercise books shows that pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are able to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major religions as required by the agreed syllabus. They know about the key figures and the chief beliefs of major religious groups and they understand the significance of signs and symbols and holy scriptures for different groups of believers. They show themselves to be co-operative learners and they respond well to the mainly good teaching they receive. What they learn *about* religions in terms of knowledge and understanding is a little more obvious than what they learn *from* religions in the sense of what they apply to their own personal set of values. However, they do develop a respect for the opinions of other people and they do encounter questions about the meaning of life and the existence of God. One lesson, taught by a non-specialist, was a very good example of how to reflect on the application of religious principles based on the work of Mother Teresa.
113. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow the short GCSE course and this is a marked improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. Some of the work is calculated to link with their own lives as when they consider attitudes to marriage from the initial standpoint of the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.
114. Teaching seen is good overall. Much of the teaching is in the hands of competent non-specialist teachers who are helped by the production of good course materials. Not all of these could be seen in inspection week. The good teaching is characterised by good planning and organisation and by delivery in brisk purposeful steps so that clear objectives are achieved in a good learning atmosphere. One good attempt to incorporate computers into the learning experience was not helped by the fact that only half the class could use them at one time and these were in a separate room.
115. Overall, the leadership and management of the religious provision are good and have been demonstrated in the raising of the standards and the status of the subject since the last inspection as well as in the co-ordination of the work of a team of mainly non-specialist teachers. There is a need for the teaching to be gathered into fewer and more specialist hands so that some of the more sophisticated aspects of the subject can be explored in greater depth.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The overall provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expertise and overall management of pupils are good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in food and textiles is good.
- There is improved curriculum provision in Years 7 to 9.
- The overall leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.
- There is inconsistency in expectations of pupils in lessons across the department and some more able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

Commentary

116. Since the last inspection standards have improved and the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 are now being met. Standards achieved in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations and overall satisfactory. There is improved curriculum provision made through the revised units of work planned in each material area. There is some inconsistency in the standards achieved by more able pupils across the department. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory and in line with expectations. Pupils' GCSE results include few higher grades and do not reflect the ability range of the pupils currently opting for design and technology courses.
117. Pupils' achievement in lessons is overall satisfactory. They achieve good standards where the teachers' expectations are consistently high and exemplars of work are used to promote the achievement of high quality outcomes. The use of assessment to set targets for pupils in Years 7 to 9 has been introduced using National Curriculum levels, including the use of pupil self-assessment but this is not yet consolidated and implemented across the department. In Years 10 and 11, whilst pupils have target grades, they are not sufficiently confident in their understanding of what they need to do to achieve that grade. Exemplars of graded GCSE work and more detailed marking are not used enough to assist pupils here.
118. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and good in Years 7 to 9. There is some inconsistency in expectations in lessons. Teacher expertise and overall management of pupils are good. The good lessons observed in food and textiles had clear learning objectives, good pace, high expectations and well-planned resources to stimulate ideas and encourage pupils to achieve their best. Pupils' attitudes were overall satisfactory and pupil relationships showed respect for each other.
119. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Currently the department does not have an overall co-ordinator for the subject and consequently there is a lack of vision and direction. Opportunities need to be created for good practice in teaching to be shared and expectations in lessons to be agreed, so that pupils experience more consistency across the department. The quality of accommodation is satisfactory but some workshop refurbishment is needed. Technician support does not fully meet the department's requirements and needs to be reviewed.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Overall the provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are not yet high enough.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils generally relate well to their teachers.
- Lesson planning is good but pupils rely on imagery from books rather than from first-hand observation and sketchbooks.
- The teaching of drawing and the use of sketchbooks need further attention.
- ICT is not used sufficiently in the subject.

Commentary

120. Examination results in 2003 and 2002 were well below average but an improvement on those at the last inspection. The boys outperformed the girls.
121. The standard of work seen in lessons is below average. Pupils draw from observation and work in paint, collage, sculpture and textiles. Compositional skills and work influenced by Cubism are impressive. Finished work has a high profile and drawings to research form, space or shape are overworked until their original purpose is lost. Pupils do not use computers to generate artwork. Sketchbooks are not used for experimentation or to collect information from the world around us, limiting pupils' independent working. Pupils find it difficult to talk about their work in any critical way. Year 11 pupils rely too much on imagery from books rather than taking inspiration from around them.
122. Pupils arrive in school with well below average knowledge of art and weak practical skills but they soon accept the challenge in lessons. Their achievements are satisfactory. Those who are least able also make satisfactory progress, learning from their classmates as well as their teachers. The most able achieve well and slightly above expected numbers gained the highest GCSE grade.
123. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and well-planned lessons centre on first-hand observation, linked to the work of artists such as Picasso and Hundertwasser. Pupils are influenced by Aboriginal art and North American Indians' crafts but their work does not reflect Bradford or Leeds with their rich history. Lessons begin with a clear introduction, often accompanied by engaging demonstrations. The ends of lessons are less well planned and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and their classmates' progress are sometimes missed. Some pupils in Year 11 do not have a clear view of their projected GCSE grades. Pupils enjoy art lessons and are keen to learn. The majority respect their teachers' genuine love of the subject. Teaching and learning in two lessons were unsatisfactory because a minority of pupils interfered with their classmates' learning. Firmer strategies are needed to combat this behaviour.
124. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is strong teamwork and a capacity to improve but the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous or formalised. The difficulty accessing computers has made full delivery of the National Curriculum impossible although more computers have recently been acquired. The accommodation in art remains poor because the rooms are too small and poorly lit. The furniture is also in poor repair and storage is inadequate. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Expressive arts

Overall, the provision in expressive arts is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination groups have continued to grow, whilst maintaining standards.
- The teachers are consistent in their high expectations of, and good relationships with, pupils.
- There is good subject knowledge and planning.
- The faculty makes a good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.
- Group work is effective, with pupils responding well to good pace and clear instructions.
- Leadership and management of the faculty are strong.
- Accommodation is poor and resources are inadequate.

Commentary

125. Standards are broadly average in both key stages. Results at GCSE, although lower in 2003 than in the previous year, are good. Successful group work, good relationships and self-critical approach aid refinement, improvement and result in confident performances. Pupils are comfortable when using subject-specific vocabulary. Year 9 pupils have trouble concentrating and listening; they demonstrate a lack of maturity in performance resulting in weak characterisation and poor use of space. However, Year 7 pupils contribute well, demonstrating good imagination and controlled use of 'freeze-frame'. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 demonstrate effective use of 'flash-back' and 'split-focus' techniques. They make good progress in well-structured lessons and are improving at analysing their own performing skills. All pupils understand theatrical concepts and conventions but written work is not of as good a standard as the practical. Cross-faculty links with music in 'Blodin the Beast' provide pupils with enhanced opportunities to use imagination and creativity.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; it is consistently good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers make effective use of their knowledge of the pupils by setting appropriate tasks with high expectations within short 'time-bites', which aid pace and achievement. Lessons are well structured and supported by very good knowledge of related scripts and texts. The teachers' contributions in group work are constructive and sensitive, helping pupils with such strategies as how to use a spider diagram whilst brainstorming.
127. Leadership and management are good. The faculty is taking shape, especially in the subject areas of music and drama. The new building will help, not only in terms of accommodation, but also in the geography of rooms for visits between staff, for monitoring and sharing resources. Accommodation in the main teaching room is adequate, but the outside hut is very poor. There is no ICT equipment for the pupils' use. The teachers provide very good role models for the pupils in the drama department.
128. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. The drama department has developed well. Examination courses are viable with a good number of entries. Attainment at the end of Year 11 has dropped slightly following a change of examination board. This has been attributed to the written component. Inspection confirms this view. The performance of teachers and pupils at both key stages has been maintained. Accommodation is still an issue, although one of the rooms now has rudimentary blackout and reasonable lighting.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of this very good department are excellent.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good from teachers who are well qualified and complement each other's strengths.
- The quality of assessment is very good.
- Standards of work are often above average and pupils' achievement is good.
- The breadth of curriculum opportunities is very good, as is the wide range of extra-curricular sporting provision.
- The school is making very good progress towards fulfilling the aims of its sports college status.
- Although the department is very well resourced, accommodation is at present unsatisfactory.

Commentary

129. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, pupils achieve above average levels of attainment and this represents good achievement. The quality of teaching is very good and this promotes very good learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and all groups make good progress.
130. The 2003 GCSE examination results were the best ever with 100 per cent of pupils achieving a grade. Numbers of pupils taking the examination have increased from 17 to 62 since the last inspection. Most boys seem to find the examination difficult and consequently the performance of girls is higher. The department has identified this and is currently looking to raise the potential of boys.
131. Standards of work seen are above average. From an early age pupils make good progress in team games, particularly rugby and football. Year 7 boys can run and pass a rugby ball with a fair degree of accuracy. Most continually find the concept of running forward and passing the ball backward, very difficult. By the time pupils reach Year 8 they are already working with confidence and poise in dance. They have a good sense of rhythm and their arms, legs and head movements effectively enhance the overall quality of their performance. Year 9 girls are competent football players. They have good understanding of passing techniques and the correct part of the foot to use and they dribble a ball accurately and at speed. Boys' badminton skills in Year 9 are sufficiently well developed to enable them to keep a rally going using forehand and backhand shots. Initially their game is somewhat static and they are slow to move their feet into position to play a shot. However, by applying themselves to good coaching they progress well during the course of a lesson. There is a consistency of expectation of pupils to evaluate their own and others' performance and to be supportive in their comments. These skills are well developed. Similarly, the development of technical vocabulary is a feature of many lessons, giving pupils a firm grasp of this aspect. Pupils understand the necessity for warming up prior to starting an activity and for cooling down afterwards.
132. Pupils maintain very good levels of learning in Years 10 and 11 and standards are again above average. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Well-developed departmental planning, to increase the range of activities on offer which are more suited to the needs of pupils in this school, accounts for these improved standards. Most Year 10 boys are able to carry out a wide range of exercises, which test different components of fitness. Despite some weakness in shoulder girdles most are sufficiently flexible to carry out the 'explosive' actions needed to test the height and length of jumps. The majority of boys continue to make good progress in basketball and have developed good dribbling skills using either hand. High attainers demonstrate advanced skills very well and are effectively used to challenge pupils whose skills are not as well developed. GCSE practical work shows that girls have good knowledge of the rules of netball. They are able to use a range of passes to suit the situation of

their game. Lack of flexibility prevents some girls from correctly performing a pike and straddle as part of a ten-bounce routine on the trampoline. However, many can achieve reasonable height with the bounce and are able to identify common mistakes that they and others are making. Good knowledge and understanding of technique and safety issues are well demonstrated. GCSE written coursework reflects a wide range of knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects. ICT is widely used to facilitate learning.

133. Teachers form a very close team and provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and demonstrates the excellent subject expertise of all members of the department. All teachers are very good disciplinarians while at the same time maintaining very good relationships with all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Those identified by the department as gifted and talented are effectively extended. Teachers' expectations are very high. Team teaching has been targeted at Year 9 and is proving very effective in terms of managing pupils and raising standards. Assessment is very thorough and there are effective systems in place for tracking the progress of pupils through to examination level.
134. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent, enabling the department to embrace change positively. There has been very good progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a very clear sense of educational direction evident in the very good departmental planning and subject documentation. A very successful, fully inclusive programme is provided for all pupils. This is complemented by the school's involvement in the new Sports Leaders' awards overseen by the sports leadership manager. Having successfully acquired sports college status less than two years ago the school is only now beginning to benefit from some of the initiatives. The co-ordinator of physical education works very closely with a very effective director of sport to fulfil the sports college aims. This has already been instrumental in raising standards of achievement through the increased quality of teaching and learning. Links with primary and other consortium schools are very good. A very good link with a local special school enables an exchange of pupils for a variety of activities. The department offers an extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities of a competitive and non-competitive nature, to which other staff outside the department make a valuable contribution. The current building programme has rendered accommodation unsatisfactory for physical education and it is to the credit of the department that they have not allowed this to have a negative impact on their valuable work.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

The quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use a range of strategies which encourages participation in activities within lessons, where they develop skills that can be employed outside lessons.
- The school is very effective at providing a setting for active citizenship.
- The recently appointed manager of citizenship has a strong sense of purpose concerning the subject and its future place in the school.
- Citizenship has not yet become fully embedded in the curriculum.
- Systems for monitoring, evaluation and reporting of standards are not yet firmly in place.

Commentary

135. Citizenship is delivered through personal, social and health education lessons.

136. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study; they show awareness of the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens, and some can contribute to discussions and debate. Most pupils show a mature recognition of a world beyond self.
137. By the end of Year 11, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They have a good knowledge of the topical events they study. In discussion, many pupils demonstrate a maturity of understanding, based on their own empathetic feelings. For example, Year 10 pupils address their colleagues on the environmental consequences of negative behaviour. However, overall, pupils, whilst making progress in developing ideas, find the lack of wider reading around the subject prevents the debate from reaching full maturity.
138. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and occasionally good. The best lessons are characterised by good planning and clear aims and objectives. In such lessons, the citizenship elements have specific references made to them. A teaching strength is the sensitivity displayed, universally by staff, when discussing sensitive or controversial issues. Successful lessons use of a range of strategies which encourage pupil participation in activities within lesson, where pupils develop skills that can be employed outside lessons in active citizenship. For example, pupils are involved in elections to, and participation in, the school council, and within the wider community, pupils are involved in local youth elections for the Youth Parliament for all Leeds' schools.
139. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. However, leadership is good. The very recently appointed co-ordinator of citizenship is enthusiastic and committed and has a very clear vision of how the school can incorporate citizenship. She is aware of the strengths of the subject and the challenges concerning the establishment of an appropriate syllabus for Years 10 and 11. Management is currently only satisfactory. In practical terms, the co-ordinator has completed the production of a development plan to formalise and enhance teaching and assessment of citizenship. Systems for monitoring and evaluation and reporting of standards are not yet firmly in place, and there is only an embryonic plan to formalise and enhance the contribution of individual subject areas to the provision of citizenship. However, she has not yet been in post long enough to see the firm establishment and firm embedding of her programmes.
140. Citizenship was not reported on in the previous report. The steps already taken are very appropriate and can be seen as important signals for the future development of the subject.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

Level 3 GCE AS-level courses 2002

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	6	100.0	81.6	0.0	33.2	20.0	33.2
Communication studies	7	100.0	94.2	100.0	36.1	54.3	38.5
Drama	10	60.0	94.6	20.0	37.6	21.0	39.1
General studies	7	71.4	78.6	14.3	25.7	21.4	30.0
Geography	5	80.0	88.3	0.0	36.4	20.0	36.3
Other Social studies	6	50.0	83.2	0.0	32.5	13.3	33.6
Sociology	10	40.0	83.7	20.0	33.6	15.0	33.8

Total	51	65.5	86.0	15.5	33.6	21.0	34.8
-------	----	------	------	------	------	------	------

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses 2002

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	100.0	96.1	0.0	48.7	66.7	85.1
Business studies	12	100.0	96.4	33.3	32.8	81.7	76.5
Chemistry	6	100.0	94.0	16.7	45.9	70.0	81.1
Drama	9	100.0	98.1	11.1	41.5	71.1	82.9
English literature	13	100.0	98.5	23.1	43.7	66.2	84.3
Design and technology	6	100.0	95.3	0.0	35.5	50.0	76.5
General studies	15	100.0	90.1	13.3	29.1	58.7	69.3
Geography	14	100.0	97.1	21.4	40.5	78.6	80.9
History	8	100.0	97.1	0.0	41.0	50.0	81.2
Mathematics	5	100.0	93.3	40.0	52.2	92.0	84.7
Other Social studies	6	100.0	94.3	50.0	38.9	96.7	77.7
Physics	7	85.7	92.8	28.6	42.8	74.3	78.6
Sociology	5	100.0	95.4	20.0	39.6	80.0	79.1
Total	112	99.2	94.8	18.9	39.4	70.5	78.6
VCE Business	22	90.9	87.1	9.1	16.5	65.5	60.1
VCE Health and social care	11	82.6	90.1	0.0	16.3	42.6	62.5
Total	33	88.1	87.4	6.1	18.5	57.8	62.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' relationships with the students are good.
- Overall the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and does not challenge the students.
- Standards are below average and the course is not suitable for a minority of students.
- Students are not given enough opportunity to be involved in their learning.
- There is not a sufficiently clear vision for the improvement of standards

Commentary

141. English literature is offered at AS and A-level. The retention rate is average.

142. Results in the 2002 GCE level English Literature examinations were below the national average. Results in 2003 indicate similar standards. Results in AS examinations are well below average mainly because the course is not suitable for a minority of students.

143. In the work seen students' attainment is below average in both Year 12 and Year 13. This represents an unsatisfactory level of achievement because their attainment was average when they joined the sixth form. Some students have a sound knowledge and understanding of their work. Their oral skills are average in classroom discussion and only falter when the teacher takes over the discussion and there is insufficient time for reflection. Students make valid and cogent observations and higher attaining students use sophisticated technical vocabulary in their writing. Extended writing is not a strong feature of the students' work and their independent research skills are generally limited. For example, background research from the Internet is not annotated and generally only serves to pad out their folders. Higher attaining students make sophisticated inferences from texts and sustain detailed textual analysis. Lower attaining students in Year 12 do not develop evaluative or analytical skills. Some students make good use of ICT to aid the presentation of their work.
144. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. In the better lessons there is a brisk pace, students are motivated and the teachers' knowledge informs learning. Students generally enjoy their work with each other and their teacher. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on *Hamlet*, students spoke confidently and accurately, placing the character of Ophelia in an historical setting and developed analytical skills. In contrast, in a Year 12 lesson on *The Bell Jar*, students spent too long on one activity without challenge and did not develop learning. In another unsatisfactory lesson students learnt even less because they were as confused by the questions as the inspector.
145. The department makes unsatisfactory use of assessment data for curriculum planning. This is largely because expectations of lower attaining students in Year 12 are unrealistically high. The background study of historical and multi-cultural texts is insufficient to deepen students' understanding of literature and life.
146. There is a lack of strategies for improving standards. The department recognises that it is an area for development and is a priority in its action planning.

Spanish

Spanish is currently taught to AS-level in Year 12.

Provision in Spanish is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' attitudes are positive and they have good relationships with their teachers.
- Opportunities for students to work independently of the teacher are limited.
- Students lack confidence in responding spontaneously and in manipulating the language to express their ideas.

Commentary

147. Standards in Spanish in Year 12 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to prior attainment. Students have a good understanding of grammar and apply rules appropriately in writing to write short accounts and essays on a variety of topics. Their listening skills are well developed and they identify the main points from extracts of speech with some guidance, and respond appropriately and promptly to instructions. Higher attaining students manipulate the language effectively to respond in detail and speak with a good degree of fluency to express their ideas. Average and lower attainers respond briefly with short phrases and single words. Most lack confidence in responding spontaneously or responding in detail. Reading skills are generally well developed; students identify detail from short texts from a variety of sources including the press and the Internet. In examinations standards are below

average but numbers entered are very low and any comparison with national results is unreliable.

148. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have an excellent command of Spanish and knowledge of their subject. They routinely use the language as the principal means of communication in lessons; as a result students have the benefit of excellent role models and listening skills are well developed. Teachers use questioning to ensure students respond successfully but this can be counter-productive, since most students are dependent upon such guidance in oral work. As a result of this they do not have the opportunity to develop their own strategies to cope with the unpredictable or to develop their skill in manipulating the language for themselves. Lessons are well planned with appropriate and well-sequenced activities and resources which enable students to build effectively on previous learning. In a Year 12 lesson about the Moorish occupation of Spain, key language was effectively identified and consolidated using the board and overhead projector. However, opportunities were also missed here to give students practice in using key structures to recount the main points for themselves. Photographs, video clips and the Internet were used very effectively to increase understanding, extend learning and develop reading and listening skills. However, opportunities for students to use the information gained from research to present the information themselves were missed. Guidance from the teacher is sometimes given too readily, so that students fail to develop independence in using the language themselves. Generally teachers do too much for their students who, in turn, rely too much on them instead of taking more responsibility for their own learning.
149. Students have positive attitudes towards their learning and good relationships with their teachers. They appreciate the help and guidance they are given and the opportunities they have to extend their learning outside lessons. Leadership and management of the subject are very good; the head of department has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses and appropriate action is being taken to raise standards. Teachers work well as a team and there is a good level of consistency across the course. Assessment is used well to meet needs and to inform students how to improve.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment in AS-level examinations are below average.
- Teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge.
- The marking of students' work is inconsistent and does not provide sufficient guidance for improvement.
- There are few opportunities for independent learning and investigative work.
- Good relationships between students and teachers create a good work ethos.

Commentary

150. A-level results in 2002 and 2003 were in line with national averages. AS-level results in 2003 were below those of 2002 and were below the national average. In work seen during the inspection student attainment at AS-level is now in line with national expectations although there is a wide spread of performance. The majority of students are making good progress but some students lack confidence when tackling problems that are not straightforward; this is in part a reflection of an entry policy that allows students to start the course with low overall attainment at GCSE level. Students find the transition from GCSE to AS-level mathematics difficult and some struggle with the more advanced concepts in algebra that are essential for success at this level. Students who have progressed to Year 13 are on target to achieve above average grades at A-level.

151. Advanced level teaching is satisfactory overall; teachers are secure in their own subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are conveyed to students. Lessons are, however, teacher dominated and there are limited opportunities for independent learning. The marking of students' work is unsatisfactory and there is a lack of constructive feedback that would help improve future performance. Good working relationships exist between students and teachers, as a result of which students are comfortable when approaching their teachers to request help and guidance.
152. At sixth form level leadership of the department is satisfactory but there are aspects of unsatisfactory management that have a negative impact on learning. There is no regular monitoring of marking and no obvious strategy for helping students with relatively low prior attainment levels cope with the demands of the AS-level course. Analysis of student performance has been established but not enough use is made of subject-specific value added measures to set targets and measure progress.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Year 13 and the higher set in Year 12 are achieving well.
- Overall, teaching is good and some is very good.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- The criteria for admission to the AS-level course lack rigour. This results in too many students taking the subject without the capability or motivation needed, and who subsequently fail to achieve any worthwhile success.

Commentary

153. In 2003, 14 students took the A-level examination and only one failed to achieve a pass grade. Although the number of higher grades (A or B) was below the national average, overall the results were close to the national figures. All students achieved satisfactorily with most at least matching expectations based on their performance at GCSE. In 2002, results were well below the national averages. The relatively weak performance in 2002 was in part due to staffing problems that have now been successfully resolved.
154. The seven students in the current Year 13 are working effectively and achieving well. All are in line at least to match the level of attainment predicted by their performance at GCSE and over half are exceeding it.
155. Recent results in AS-level examinations have been well below the national average. In 2002, 26 students completed the course, but only 16 gained a pass grade. In 2003, 17 of the 27 candidates failed the examination.
156. In the present Year 12 there are 36 students divided into two sets based on attainment in GCSE examinations. In the higher set, 16 students are working at standards that match national averages. Overall, achievement in this group is good. Approximately a third is exceeding the standard indicated by their prior attainment and almost all others are matching their predicted level. Students in this set displayed a good understanding of vegetative propagation, could explain the underlying principles using correct terminology and have high-level experimental skills.

157. In the lower attaining set, standards are well below the national expectations. Performance at GCSE predicts that 14 of the 20 students are unlikely to gain a pass grade. Marks so far gained on tests and examination questions indicate that the attainment of most of these students is below the standard required for success.
158. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The best lessons were based on very clear learning objectives and imaginative planning. Year 12 students, learning how to clone carrot plants by dissecting out cambium cells, improved their practical skills significantly because the lesson was clearly designed to enable them to learn sterile techniques. Teachers have good mastery of the subject and very good relationships with their students. Learning does not always match the overall quality of day-to-day teaching, which is good. Many students in Year 12 find work set at the standard needed to pass the examination too difficult and consequently their learning is unsatisfactory. Marking and assessment of progress sometimes lack rigour. Students mark too much of their own work.
159. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The central database kept to record students' attainment lacks detail and accuracy and is therefore of limited use to track progress or monitor the effectiveness of teaching. Record keeping is generally unsatisfactory; for example, the annual reports made by external coursework moderators are not retained. Insufficient attention has been given to recent national developments intended to improve the quality of science education. There is, for example, limited understanding of how to measure students' achievement.
160. The very high failure rate at AS-level is a major concern. The present procedures are admitting students with little chance of success to the course and then allowing them to continue, despite evidence of unsatisfactory attainment. This situation indicates unsatisfactory management both within the department and of the overall sixth form provision. Since the last inspection there has been unsatisfactory improvement.

Chemistry

The provision for chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in A-level examinations have been improving over the past three years.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- There is underachievement on the AS course.
- There are insufficient links with industry.

Commentary

161. Results in A2 examinations are at the national average and have improved steadily in the past three years. The 2003 results were above expectations based on predictive measures and higher than for those in biology and physics. When compared with prior attainment at GCSE, results are in line with expectations. There is evidence of some underachievement in AS results in 2003 which can partly be attributed to instability in staffing and an open entry policy with some students underestimating the intellectual demands in chemistry. Sixth form student guidance procedures have not been sufficiently robust. Students at A2 have all followed the dual award at GCSE. Some students are now entering the sixth form having taken triple sciences, but it too early to see the effect of this on standards.
162. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lesson time is well used and teachers ensure that it includes related practical work and a variety of learning approaches, as seen in a lesson on the oxidation states of transition metals in which role-play was used simulate the impact of photons

on atoms. Individual tasks, small group work and class discussion are also used effectively to aid understanding. All students display good concentration in lessons and are intellectually challenged. In the lessons observed teachers displayed very good subject knowledge and skill in the explanation of difficult conceptual ideas, for example in the calculation of enthalpy changes in chemical reactions. Substantial learning tasks are set following each taught session and these are integrated into subsequent lessons and assessed thoroughly. Student work seen in both years was well organised, included evidence of regular progress testing and was closely related to examination board requirements. In Year 13 there was good evidence of understanding of complex co-ordination compounds, carbonyl compounds and periodicity. Students cope well with calculations, for example for the pH of buffer solutions. They are able to access additional help from teachers outside lesson time. Teachers are well respected by students.

163. The subject is well led and managed and staff work well together to improve the learning experiences for students. The thorough analysis of performance data is influencing approaches for teaching and learning and plans to develop the subject further. Teachers are involved in professional associations and keep up to date. There are insufficient links with industry and insufficient use of ICT resources to facilitate learning outside lesson time. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT was sampled but was not a focus of the inspection. However, work was scrutinised and some lessons were observed.

164. Standards are average in ICT. Students have made a satisfactory start to their vocational course. This is a new development in the department, providing a better focus on these students' needs than the more academic computing course.

165. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The good planning of lessons provides a good challenge to problem-solving skills and also adds to the enjoyment of lessons. Teachers' uses of question and answer techniques are good. The challenge to students' learning is good, ensuring that there are clear gains in their understanding. Time is used well in lessons and students' study skills are well developed.

166. The good leadership and management have resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. This is because the curriculum now matches the needs of the students, enabling standards to rise and providing for more effective sixth form courses than was previously the case.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Overall the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are well motivated and achieve well over Years 12 and 13 due to good teaching.
- Standards are well above average.
- Students obtain great benefit from their fieldwork and practical elements of their courses.
- There is no study skills programme to benefit students at the start of Year 12.

Commentary

167. Overall recent GCE A-level examination results are well above average when compared with those in all schools. Average point scores in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average and above the school average. The AS examination results were below the average, with about half the students underachieving against prior attainment based on GCSE grades. The retention rate on the AS and A-level course is well above the average.
168. Standards on the AS-level course are average and students achieve satisfactorily. On the A-level course standards are above average and students achieve well. Students in Year 12 show good knowledge and understanding of introductory topics covered in both physical and human geography. Work on both courses is covered thoroughly and in great detail but the material is not sufficiently refined for all students to gain greatest value from it. Course units would benefit from a summary review at the end of each unit so that students do not lose sight of the overview focus of the topic. Students, particularly in Year 13, undertake independent research capably and confidently. Written work is generally well presented and of a good standard. Students organise their work well in Year 13.
169. Teaching on the AS and A-level course is of a consistently high standard. Teachers show good subject knowledge when presenting topics and when monitoring students' learning. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and well structured, and organised with the purpose, through enquiry activities, to develop students' self-learning. Students are given opportunities to contribute to discussion and develop their ideas, with Year 13 students responding very well. Many Year 12 students rely too much on their teachers. Learning would benefit from these students spending more time preparing themselves for discussion and the consolidation of ideas, both oral and written, in lessons. Generally lessons in Year 13 have good pace and productivity and teachers' expectations are high, but in some Year 12 lessons students work is much slower than that found nationally. Students use resource materials well and enjoy and gain great benefit from practical assignments, particularly fieldwork and related activities.
170. The AS and A-level courses are competently managed. The provision is well co-ordinated with staff who teach the subject working well together. Work is well marked and comments made on how work can be further improved are helpful. Students are, however, insufficiently clear of the progress they are making in Year 12, as marks for assignments are not related to AS-level grades. Students are very satisfied with the AS and A-level course but felt that a study skills induction programme in Years 12 would help them to improve their independent study skills.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; it reflects the strength of subject knowledge and high expectations of teachers.
- A few students in Year 12 do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning.
- Too many students with unsuitable entry qualifications study the subject in Year 12.
- There is no study skills programme to benefit students at the start of Year 12.

Commentary

171. The AS and A-level courses were inspected. A-level examination results in 2002 were very low but were better in 2003 although still below average. Few students achieved in line with expectation based on prior attainment. Students who completed the AS-level course in 2002 gained below average points scores but results were much lower in 2003. Too many students with inappropriate entry qualifications, low motivation and with no realistic prospect of being successful, study this course.

172. Standards of work on the AS-level course are variable but generally below average. Achievement in Year 12 is often unsatisfactory when placed against prior attainment at GCSE. Students have a good subject introduction to the course but the quality of application depends on students' capability and motivation. There is insufficient support for the development of study skills at the beginning of Year 12. Standards on the A-level course are broadly average. Students' knowledge and understanding of topics taught are satisfactory but there is little evidence of supplementary reading undertaken to compensate where deficiencies exist. Students in Year 13 have further developed critical analyses of historical sources and some students evaluate a range of evidence soundly to produce well-balanced arguments. However, for others the level of evaluation and synthesis is underdeveloped and coursework deadlines are not always met.
173. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and lessons are carefully planned and well organised. Expectations are appropriately high and lessons have a brisk pace. Learning benefits from skilful questioning that extends students' knowledge and understanding of the topic taught. The best teaching is enthusiastic, interesting and has good variety. However, at present the extent of visual materials and range of teaching methods are insufficient to add variety to lessons and to consolidate learning. Students are given good opportunities to contribute but, in some Year 12 lessons, students do not respond well. Generally teachers do not develop their students' independent learning skills.
174. Resources are satisfactory and ICT facilities to support students' independent learning are good. Students are given very helpful advice on how to improve assignments but more opportunities to write timed essays and closer monitoring of students' work and commitment are needed.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and is supporting the raising of standards.
- Assessment arrangements are robust and are enabling teaching strategies to be refined to meet the learning needs of weaker students.
- The use of work experience to deepen students' knowledge and understanding is underdeveloped.

Commentary

175. Results were well below average in 2002 for the AS course and in line for A-level. They have since improved and are now around average in both examination options. Numbers in the subject are too small for detailed comparisons to be made. Higher grades are now being achieved in AS and A-level and this represents good achievement for those students, the majority of whom have average attainment on entry to the sixth form. In the work seen and the lessons observed, the pace and quality of learning are improving as a result of good schemes of work, good time management and a good variety of learning challenges.
176. By the end of Year 12, students have a satisfactory grasp of concepts and theories drawn from different sociological traditions and a growing awareness of major issues in relation to socialisation and educational achievement. At A-level, students have deepened their understanding, for example, of social deviance and can more confidently use primary and secondary evidence. The majority of students complete courses and a significant proportion proceed to social science-related study in higher education. Sociology is steadily increasing in popularity.

177. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned. Subject knowledge is very good. Lessons have good pace with appropriately timed activities. There is a sense of purpose and urgency in the teaching observed. Students make good progress in debating critical issues. By Year 13, students' self-evaluation skills are better developed and extended writing is more carefully controlled. Those of higher ability make good progress in using sociological theories to explain the behaviour of gangs. Students feel well supported in their study of the subject.
178. Leadership is satisfactory. Teaching arrangements have been strengthened in the last 18 months. Management is good and the implementation of student reviews is contributing to setting appropriate challenge and expectation in students and raising standards. Opportunities to enhance learning via curriculum enhancement are underdeveloped, for example in relation to the use of work-experience placements.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of achievement are too low.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- There is an over-reliance on imagery taken from books.
- Sketchbooks and drawing are not well used for experimentation and investigation.
- Students' attitudes suggest they are not placed on appropriate courses.

Commentary

179. The advanced level results were well below average in 2003. Although every student gained a pass between A and E, none gained one of the top grades.
180. The work in school is well below average. Students improve their practical skills in painting, drawing and photography. They visit galleries and museums and link their work with that of other artists. Their continued failure to maintain a sketchbook for investigation and experimentation or develop the basic skills of drawing from the earlier years prevents them knowing how well they are doing and how they might improve. Annotation is largely missing from students' work. There is much greater reliance than usual on teachers for guidance. While students do draw from observation, including attendance at a life drawing class in Bradford, there remains a reliance on imagery taken from books, often reproduced with little modification. Students are not working hard enough in lessons or at home and are underachieving. They do not read or research enough to develop the necessary personal view and are uncomfortable discussing their work in any critical way. There was a strong element of discovery when a student, influenced by photographs of victims of the war in Iraq, experimented with deep shadow to reproduce the impact of those photographs in her portraiture.
181. Teaching is generally satisfactory. Students are far less committed to their studies than their teachers and learning is less good than teaching. A student starting to play his guitar as soon as the teacher left the room demonstrates their expectations. Their attitudes question the suitability of some students for advanced level courses. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons usually often begin with a discussion of students' work and how it will develop. Teachers plan well and encourage students to investigate artists such as Lautrec, Bosch, Schiele, Picasso and Jenny Saville but students' preference for ready-made imagery from magazines does little to improve their learning.

182. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Teachers work together and have the will and capacity to improve. Subject documentation and planning are directed at raising standards. The accommodation is poor, badly lit and cluttered with work and resources due to inadequate storage space. The furniture is old and damaged.
183. The department has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Students' lack of industry results in low standards and unsatisfactory achievement. There remains a dependence on imagery from books and students cannot yet record particular information through drawing. Accommodation remains poor.

Drama

Provision for drama in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The A and AS-level courses are popular and successful.
- There is a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from staff and students.
- The subject knowledge, lesson planning and complementary skills of the staff provide the students with very good teaching.
- The department makes a good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of its students.
- Independent and collaborative learning are features of student success.
- Accommodation is poor, and staff and students do well to minimise its detrimental effect.

Commentary

184. Results in the sixth form are above average at both A-level and AS-level. The numbers of students in examination groups are consistently in double figures. Students work maturely in a variety of situations, displaying a comfortable familiarity with the concepts and conventions of the stage and theatre. Performances are strong and students are able to adapt to the directions and constructive criticism of their peers. For example, Year 12 students responded to the teacher's high expectations with some mature, extended monologues, which demonstrated emotions, characterisation, and good use of space and sense of timing. Year 13 students benefited from their teacher's recent performance in a local production of *Much Ado about Nothing*, by being able to tackle short scenes as directors and actors and through their newspaper column reports on the production. The short scenes were well thought out, but the written reviews showed weaknesses in the written language.
185. Teaching and learning are very good. The commitment of the students and staff is demonstrated by their attendance at two-hour classes during the evening. There is a relaxed yet work-intensive atmosphere during these sessions which benefit from the amount of uninterrupted time given by the participants. Year 12 pupils demonstrated familiarity with lighting, staging and use of space in their session, as well as a good knowledge of the Ibsen and Strindberg characters. Most students are creative, imaginative and articulate, although diction and voice projection are underdeveloped. All members of the department do their best to minimise the effect of poor accommodation, although Year 13 students were limited by the poor facilities in the damp, musty hut.
186. Sixth form courses have begun since the previous inspection and have made an auspicious start.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The provision of a Community Sports Leaders award which is linked to an NVQ level 1 in sport and recreation is a good feature.
- There is a good provision of a wide range of enhancement courses using outside agencies, coaches and facilities.

Commentary

187. By the end of Year 13 students maintain above average levels of attainment and this represents very good achievement. The quality of teaching remains very good and promotes very good learning. Students have positive attitudes to the subject and all groups make good progress.

188. Students taking AS and A-level courses continue to do well in their studies. Results of examinations in 2003 showed that all 11 students entered gained A-E grades. This maintains the 100 per cent pass rate achieved since students embarked on these courses. By working with two other local secondary schools and a further education college, the department is able to accommodate other students on courses and they in turn are able to benefit from the range of expertise within the department.

189. Due to sixth form activities not coinciding with the days of the inspection, only one lesson was observed. Standards were judged to be above average. Students are knowledgeable about breaking down a skill technique, clearly identifying preparation, execution and follow through. This clearly demonstrates good use of prior knowledge and shows good understanding as they identify advanced skills, techniques and ideas. Girls and boys are equally involved in discussion and prepared to make judgements. Challenging but relevant tasks motivate students to carry out effective observations. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to facilitate good movement analysis. Teachers are able to use their own high level of expertise and quality of presentation to correct and support students when required. A very good rapport is established between teachers and students, promoting good working relationships and encouraging very good achievement, which is supported by students' work.

190. A wide range of activities is open to students in the sixth form, but unless they are taking examinations they are not compulsory. Students are, however, encouraged to become involved in a range of activities offered as enhancement courses, using outside agencies, coaches and facilities away from the school. These activities include mountain biking, sailing, canoeing, golf, dry slope skiing, an athletics leader's award and first aid qualifications. The Community Sports Leader's Award is offered to all students with a link to NVQ level 1. Most students indicate an interest in physical activities when questioned. They speak highly of the level of expertise of teachers who are capable of extending their talents and who encourage them to extend their activities beyond school.

191. Excellent leadership and management have ensured that there has been very good progress since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

Provision in business studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are well above those obtained in similar schools.
- A dedicated team provides very good teaching.

- Very good value is added and students achieve very well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- A lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject impacts on students' performance in both class work and examinations.
- Accommodation and lack of specialised ICT resources limit teaching and learning provision. This impacts negatively on standards.

Commentary

192. The inspection concentrated on provision in the sixth form, where the school offers AS, A-level, GNVQ intermediate level and AVCE.
193. Results at A-level are above average compared to similar schools. The standards reached by students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are well above average. Students' projects and written work are interesting, well-produced and professionally presented. Higher attaining students effectively evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and present appropriate and well-supported conclusions. Lower attaining students confidently use a wide range of business terminology. They demonstrate clear understanding of key business concepts and are increasingly confident with the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data, though these still remain relative weaknesses.
194. Standards at AS-level are above average. Higher attaining students apply relevant theory and show a good grasp of business concepts. However, they do not always develop an explanation into a fully substantiated view. Lower attaining students often make assertions which are unsupported and they present evidence which is not always evaluated.
195. At the intermediate level of GNVQ, results last year were in line with national standards. Current standards seen in class are well above average. Students confidently use a wide range of business terminology. For example, in their work on promotion of products, students refer accurately to cost-effective methods of penetrating the market. They demonstrate clear understanding of a wide range of business concepts such as the potential clash of interests between the motives of shareholders and other stakeholders when the company is making important strategic decisions. Work is thorough and covers the requirements of the assessment evidence grid in a broad way. Relative weaknesses are the interpretation and analysis of data and students' failure to retain the knowledge and understanding over time. Nevertheless, given the students' prior attainment at entry to the sixth form, there is tangible evidence of very good achievement.
196. Standards in AVCE are well above average. The strengths of the students' class work are their basic understanding of the subject matter and the steady accumulation of knowledge, which is well organised in their files, particularly of such underpinning business concepts as organisational functions and structures. Students' projects are interesting, well-produced and professionally presented.
197. Given the levels of prior attainment at entry to the sixth form, achievement in all courses is very good. However, students' progress is sometimes hindered by the lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject. The department's sixth form curriculum is broad and balanced and offers opportunities for success.
198. Teaching is very good. Teachers have excellent rapport with students and their expert subject knowledge underpins discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. Lessons are carefully planned, and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. Students are very well supported academically. Teachers endeavour to ensure that students have enough practice in the kinds of analysis that will enable them to become more independent learners. Progress is best where students apply assessment and evaluative criteria to their work.

199. Learning reflects teaching. Students respond very well in lessons. Their attitudes are mature and they sustain interest. Higher attaining students maintain intellectual rigour. However, some students are happy to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. Students have very positive views of the subject. They particularly appreciate the very clear organisation and structure of their courses, and the clear feedback on their attainment and progress.
200. Resources are satisfactory. Very good use is made of local, national and international visits to enhance students' learning. The students use computers very effectively to undertake research and to prepare reports for coursework. The lack of sufficient access to ICT for students and the lack of an appropriate interactive whiteboard system have an adverse effect on learning. Accommodation is only adequate, both in terms of size of rooms and the adequacy of appropriate specialist accommodation.
201. Leadership and management are very good. The department has effective links with local businesses, which the department uses well to enhance student learning. The head of department checks and analyses results carefully to identify areas of courses in which learning can be improved, and sets clear targets for action. She has a clear vision for the future of the department. This sensibly encompasses plans to strengthen even more the current strong academic and vocational aspects of the department's provision to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of future cohorts of students. In all of this, she is well supported by her colleagues, whom she in turn supports. She is an excellent role model for a department committed to the highest standards.
202. Business education in the sixth form was not reported on in the previous inspection but there is obvious evidence of good year-on-year improvement.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Student attitudes to the subject are good and contribute to effective learning.
- Learning is enhanced by competent and appropriate use of modern technology by students.
- Induction arrangements are underdeveloped and the limited key skills support has a negative effect on standards achieved by students
- Assessment is satisfactory and students are appropriately monitored, but the use of assessment for teaching and learning has yet to impact on the quality of provision.

Commentary

203. Results at both intermediate and advanced level were below average in 2002 and remained below average in 2003. Overall, students work at or near their capacity. At intermediate level, students generally perform in line with their other subjects. Performance data indicates that there is significant value added to the achievement of many students undertaking the advanced level.
204. The relatively small numbers of students within this programme do not allow for meaningful comparisons of the performance of minorities and different ethnic groups.
205. Retention rates are generally good, although there is some drop out, particularly relating to the intermediate course where retention is only satisfactory. Students have clear career goals,

which are appropriately focused on employment as well as further and higher education. There is good progression to both employment in the caring services and into higher education.

206. Students understand the criteria that teachers use to assess their work and tutors help the students with coursework requirements as the course progresses. Students make satisfactory progress in Year 12 in acquiring knowledge and understanding of genetic disease. Similarly, they are making good progress in learning how to communicate effectively with other care workers and clients, albeit from below average attainment on entry to the course. Students' literacy skill levels are a barrier to their understanding of some key terms and concepts. In lessons observed, some students were unable to ascribe accurate meanings to terms such as 'indigenous' and 'traits'. Some of these literacy problems diminish as a result of good one-to-one support in specific lessons by the time students are pursuing the advanced course, but this is sometimes in the context of a third year of post-16 study.
207. The planning of teaching is good, particularly in the advanced course and course content is well matched to accreditation requirements. As a result, students learn well and are making good progress, for example in gaining insight into the principal features of theory associated with early years educators, for example Froebel, Steiner and MacMillan. There is a good range of extra-curricular enhancement, appropriate links with work experience and input from professionals associated with caring services. This enables students to formulate sound career plans for progression on leaving school.
208. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teaching arrangements have been strengthened during the past year or so and there is a good match of teacher knowledge to the modules of study offered to students. The courses match the career aspirations of students well and a number progress directly into employment on completion of their studies. The department is not yet using performance data to influence approaches to teaching and learning in a coherent way and as a result standards are improving only modestly. The department has not had significant influence on gender balance and the student cohort is predominantly female.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	4	4
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).