

INSPECTION REPORT

**HAYDON BRIDGE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL AND
SPORTS COLLEGE**

Haydon Bridge, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122328

Headteacher: Mr D Thompson

Lead inspector: Mr R B Higgs

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 7th November 2003

Inspection number: 259393

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	13 – 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	735
School address:	North Bank Haydon Bridge Hexham
Postcode:	NE 47 6LR
Telephone number:	01434 684422
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Jane Jarvis
Date of previous inspection:	15 th September 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Haydon Bridge Community High School and Sports College has been a specialist sports college for four years. It is the base for an extensive community education programme and holds numerous awards that mark its achievements, particularly in sports and the arts. As an extended school it offers outreach courses and services to the wider community. It is smaller overall than other secondary schools though its sixth form is of average size. It takes pupils from a very large geographical area in rural West Northumberland and provides accommodation for 55 weekly boarders. Pupils are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds and their attainment on entry is broadly average. Almost all pupils are from white UK heritage backgrounds and use English as their first language. The proportion having special educational needs is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1608	Mr R Higgs	Lead inspector	
11358	Mrs V Lamb	Lay inspector	
31550	Mrs S Fall	Team inspector	Mathematics
32342	Mrs J Cave	Team inspector	English
22083	Mrs K Hinton	Team inspector	Science Biology
32333	Mr R Lilley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
18955	Mrs C Earlam	Team inspector	Art and design
8751	Mr J Chidgey	Team inspector	Design and technology
1576	Mr G Stephenson	Team inspector	Geography
32340	Mr P McKay	Team inspector	History
17765	Mr J McElwee	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages French in the sixth form
8009	Mr J Forsythe	Team inspector	Music Citizenship
32087	Mr J Mitcheson	Team inspector	Physical education
16359	Mr J Farrow	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language
16890	Mrs M Potter	Team inspector	Religious education
1622	Mrs L Aers	Team inspector	English in the sixth form
20825	Mr B Ogden	Team inspector	Leisure subjects

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school with important strengths**. Pupils and students achieve well and are given many diverse opportunities to develop personally. The school serves its wider community very well. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- Teaching is good overall, with much that is very good.
- The promotion of participation in sports, arts and other activities is very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Links with parents and the community are very good.
- In some lessons, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to show their full potential.
- Religious education in Years 10 and 11 and design and technology in Year 9 do not meet statutory requirements.
- Cross-curricular information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 is not co-ordinated sufficiently and pupils do not receive their full entitlement.
- The provision of careers education is not adequate and, as with vocational education and work-place learning, lacks overall co-ordination.

The school **has improved well** since the last inspection. Standards are higher, school improvement planning has strengthened and curricular opportunities are wider, particularly with the achievement of specialist sports college status. The school has a bigger role in the creative life of its community. The key issues have been largely rectified, though the lack of provision of religious education and further improvement to cross-curricular information and communication technology remain issues.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

In the most recently published comparisons, standards at 14 are **above average** in English, mathematics and science. Standards at 16 and at the end of the sixth form are **average**. Results in national tests in Year 9 and examinations in Year 11 and Year 13 in 2003 were higher than in 2002. In comparison with similar schools in 2003, pupils' achievement was **very good** by Year 11.

In work seen, pupils and students, including those with special educational needs, **achieve well** overall. Achievement is satisfactory by Year 9, taking account of standards in all subjects, though in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, it is good. Boys' achievement, though below that of girls by Year 11, is similar to that of boys nationally. Standards in most subjects are average or higher with the exception of modern foreign languages in Year 9, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) leisure and recreation in Year 12 and mathematics in Year 13. In the first two subjects, this is due to underachievement whereas in mathematics students are achieving in line with their prior attainment.

Attitudes and behaviour are **very good** in lessons and around school. Attendance is improving and currently is **good**; punctuality is **good**. Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** and **frequently very good** in the main school and the sixth form. Lessons are generally well planned and taught with high expectations for pupils' response and involvement. Many lessons are varied and interesting. Pupils and students generally **learn well** as a result, working hard and taking an active part.

The breadth and richness of the **curriculum are good** reflecting the needs of this rural community. The opportunity to study vocational subjects is growing partly due to the influence of specialist sports college status but their position in the curriculum is insecure due to lack of co-ordination. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities particularly for sports and arts. However, provision for religious education in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory and several required aspects of design and technology are not covered in Year 9. Care, guidance and support are **generally very good** though careers education is unsatisfactory. Partnerships with parents and the community are **very good**. Boarding provision is **good** with many positive features.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management overall are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The governors know the school **very well** and take an active role in shaping its direction and monitoring improvement. However, they have not ensured that the school fully meets statutory requirements for religious education, design and technology and careers education. In this respect, governance is **unsatisfactory**. Cross-curricular information and communication technology, vocational education and work-place learning are insufficiently co-ordinated.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are strongly supportive of the school and **very satisfied** with its management and provision. **Pupils strongly approve** of what the school offers. They enjoy coming to school and agree that they are taught well and expected to do their best.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve teaching that is only satisfactory by identifying and sharing good practice and helping teachers make more effective use of the good information held on pupils' progress.
- Ensure that all pupils and students receive their full entitlement to information and communication technology, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve the co-ordination of vocational education and work place learning in the main school and the sixth form.
- Improve access to computers for sixth form students to support their independent learning.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that provision for religious education in Key Stage 4 fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Ensure that design and technology in Year 9 covers all aspects of the National Curriculum.
- Establish careers education and guidance (CEG) programmes in the main school and the sixth form and ensure that these are effectively co-ordinated.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** sixth form. Standards are broadly average but results are improving and the pass rate amongst students in Year 13 is high. Students achieve well in most courses from their attainment on entry. Expenditure on the sixth form matches income.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good in most courses.
- Students have very positive attitudes and are very well motivated.
- Teaching and learning are mainly good or very good.
- There are very good opportunities to take part in sports, arts and other activities.
- There is no planned programme of careers education and guidance though students receive good support in preparing applications for higher education.
- The co-ordination of vocational courses is insufficient.
- There is limited access to computers for independent study and for use in some subject areas.

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	Good in English. Teaching is consistently good and often very good. Students take part well in discussions. Achievement is good. Satisfactory in French. Although attainment is below average, achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is always satisfactory but needs more variety. Learning is satisfactory in Year 13 and good in Year 12.
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Teaching is good but the lack of marking of students' work is a significant weakness. Achievement is satisfactory.
Science	Good in biology. Teaching is good with much very good. Consequently achievement is good by Year 13 though some lower attaining pupils achieve less than they should in the AS course in Year 12.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Teachers plan well for students' learning. The achievement of students new to examination work is good and satisfactory amongst those on the second year of this new course.
Humanities	Good in geography. Teaching is good with many strengths, resulting in students achieving well. The subject is very well led. Teaching in history, religious education and sociology was sampled and seen to be good with students learning well.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Good in design and technology. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Students receive good individual support and achieve well.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art and design. Teaching is very good and well suited to individual needs. There is some outstanding practice. Achievement is good.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel

Good in physical education. Teaching and subject leadership are very good and promote high quality student involvement in sports and leadership awards.

Satisfactory overall in leisure subjects. There is good achievement in GNVQ leisure and tourism but very poor achievement in AVCE leisure and recreation as no students got a pass grade in 2003. The co-ordination of vocational courses is weak.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Overall, advice, guidance and support are good on entry to the sixth form, on the choice of courses, the monitoring of progress and on entry to higher education. For students not studying vocational courses there is no planned programme of broad careers education. Students are regularly consulted about their views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are **good**. Two senior tutors and their team of tutors provide effective support based on a good understanding of students' needs. However, there needs to be more clarity about the role that an expanding vocational curriculum can play and better co-ordination so that students experience courses of consistent high quality.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very positive about their sixth form experience. A very high proportion think that the teaching they receive is demanding and that the sixth form is well run; only around half think they have good careers advice.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Year 9 and pupils achieve well. Standards are mainly average in all other subjects and pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory. Standards by Year 11 are above average and pupils are achieving well on the whole. In the sixth form, taking account of work seen in Year 12 and Year 13, standards are average overall and improving. At A2 level standards are above average reflecting the high pass rate in Year 13 examinations in 2003. This represents good achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and rising.
- Standards are above average and achievement good in English, science, design and technology, geography, history, art and the ASDAN (Award scheme development and accreditation network) scheme by Year 11.
- Attainment in English, mathematics, science and art by Year 9 is above average and achievement is good.
- The pass rate at A-level is high and achievement on most sixth form courses is good.
- Attainment is below average and achievement unsatisfactory by Year 9 in modern foreign languages; boys' achievement in French and German is inconsistent by Year 11.
- In some lessons pupils do not achieve as much as they are capable of doing.
- Some higher attaining pupils in Year 11 mathematics are underachieving.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.0 (33.3)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	36.4 (35.2)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	34.2 (34.0)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 173 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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	55.0 (46.0)	52.0 (50.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	89.0 (90.30)	91.0 (91.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96.0 (97.0)	96.0 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.0 (34.7)	34.7 (33.2)

There were 184 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above average in all three core subjects, English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in English was average, and in mathematics and science was above average. Results in 2003 rose in all three subjects with an even larger increase in the number of pupils reaching the highest levels.

Pupils enter Year 9 from middle schools with broadly average attainment and make good progress in the three core subjects, resulting in good achievement.

2. Standards in other subjects of the curriculum are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall by Year 9. Standards are mainly average because pupils enter from middle schools with varying degrees of subject knowledge and skills and teachers work hard to ensure that attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. Standards are above average in art and achievement good. In religious education, standards are average but pupils are achieving well from their attainment on entry. They are below average in modern foreign languages and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards of literacy are good across the school. In numeracy and information and communication technology, standards are satisfactory.
3. Standards at GCSE have fluctuated between average and above average for the last five years. In 2002, 45 per cent of pupils gained five A*-C grades which was in line with the national average. Based on prior attainment, pupils achieved well. In 2003 the percentage of five A*-C grades rose to 55, the highest ever reached by the school, and pupils' achievement was very good.
4. Boys' results have been improving by Year 9 and 11 and although they remain below those of girls' they are in line with boys' nationally. In particular, in Year 9 national tests in English in 2003 the gap between the performance of boys and girls was significantly reduced. However, boys' achievement in French and German lags behind this general improvement.
5. In work seen by Year 11, standards are above average in most subjects and pupils achieve well. They are above average in English (and English literature), science, design and technology, geography, history and art. Pupils studying GCSE religious education in Year 10 are achieving very well. Lower attaining pupils achieve well on the ASDAN youth award scheme. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress overall. In all other subjects, standards are average apart from in modern foreign languages (French and German) where they are below average but improving. There is some underachievement among higher attaining pupils in mathematics. In several vocational subjects, newly introduced into Year 10, pupils' achievement is good. On the basis of these standards, the school is on course to reverse the pattern of attainment of recent years that has varied between above average and below average from one year to the next.
6. The overall good achievement is due to mainly good and very good specialist teaching and the very good relationships within the school. A very positive ethos for learning has been established and pupils enjoy considerable opportunities to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities. The improvement in standards is due to a number of strategies introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning, monitor pupils' progress more effectively, provide more support for pupils who are struggling and intervene in the small number of subject areas where standards have fallen below those of the school as a whole.

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	97.7	95.9
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	41.3	46.9
Average point score per pupil	80.6	82.2

There were 81 pupils in the year group.

7. The school's average point score improved from below average overall in 2001 to average in 2002. There was a further small increase in 2003. The subject pass rate at A-level increased from 90 per cent to 99 per cent during the same period and a larger proportion of students gained the highest grades. In 2002 and 2003, boys achieved a higher average points score than girls though the reverse was true in 2001. The AS pass rate in Year 12, in contrast, declined in 2003 but this was generally in line with the performance of this group of students at GCSE. Attainment in vocational subjects rose, though no candidate passed the new leisure and recreation AVCE in Year 12. However, students generally achieve well in vocational subjects.
8. In 2002, in individual subjects at A2 level, the average points score was well above national averages in biology, business studies, chemistry, mathematics and physics. At higher grades, results were particularly good in art and design, mathematics and physics. In 2003, high proportions of students gained A and B grades in art and design, geography, mathematics, physical education and sociology.
9. The school measures its performance from entry to sixth form courses to AS and A2 results using a well-known commercial system. This shows that many students attain above expectations on entry so that achievement overall is good.
10. In work seen in subjects that were inspected in detail, standards are above average in almost all cases in A2 level in Year 13 and average in Year 12 at this point in AS courses though there is some underachievement in AS biology. Students are generally achieving well by Year 13, the exceptions being mathematics and French, in which standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory taking account of the starting point of students. In the intermediate vocational course in leisure and tourism, standards are high and student achievement is good. No students who had taken the AVCE in leisure and recreation in Year 12 continued onto the second year, due to poor attainment.
11. Rising standards in the sixth form are due to teaching that is mainly good and often very good and the very good degree of monitoring and support for individual students.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **good**. Punctuality is **good**. Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and consequently they **behave** very well. Personal development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well and students have mature attitudes.
- Relationships are very good.
- Attendance has improved and is now good.
- The breadth of social and cultural opportunities in such a rural area is outstanding and both pupils' and students' personal development is very good.

Commentary

12. The school has developed very effective procedures to promote and monitor attendance. In particular, the school ensures that pupils understand the link between attendance and good academic progress and requires pupils to make up lost work after absence. This, and close links between school, home and the police, are very effective in reducing truancy. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection.
13. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school, even when not directly supervised. Teachers and pupils generally get along together very well and this encourages the development of mature attitudes and raises self-esteem. These friendly and respectful relationships help pupils' confidence to take on challenges, willingness to accept responsibility

and ability to learn how to develop constructive relationships with others. Despite the lack of space in the dining rooms and hall, pupils use the area very sensibly during breaks and lunchtime. They naturally form an orderly queue and maintain this without close direction from staff. Pupils work sensibly in shared areas of the school, such as the UK On-line centre. During assemblies, they show respect for the occasion and are polite and courteous towards adults. About a third of pupils who completed a questionnaire indicated that some do not behave well in the school but very few instances of unsatisfactory behaviour were seen, and these were minor breaches. Pupils and parents say that bullying is not an issue and any instances that occur are quickly and effectively dealt with.

14. A significant feature of the school is that staff are outward looking and provide a wealth of experiences locally, regionally and internationally that extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of people and places, so widening their horizons and raising aspirations. This provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The quality of display around the school is impressive and contributes to the very positive ethos by celebrating pupils' happy and enjoyable experiences in a variety of locations. Staff take many opportunities in lessons, assemblies and out-of-school activities to help pupils learn teamwork, to understand and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others and to distinguish right from wrong. Discussions in lessons, such as history, science, religious education and English, help pupils develop their own beliefs about moral issues. The school does not provide daily collective worship for all pupils and is therefore in breach of statutory requirements. However, the overall quality of provision for promoting pupils' spiritual development is very good.

Sixth form

15. Students have very positive attitudes towards their studies, staff and each other. Relationships are very good. They are satisfied that they are challenged to do their best and generally treated as responsible adults. Students behave in a mature way and act as very good role models for younger pupils. Students value the experiences offered to them and enjoy life in the sixth form. In particular, they are keen to take responsibility for their own learning and to enhance the experiences of others. For instance, several students have received training to enable them to support younger pupils by listening to their problems, giving advice and guidance where appropriate. Sixth form students run a large charity event for the rest of the school and the local community. Good attendance is expected and the mature attitude of students ensures that they attend regularly and on time.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	0.1
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	731	7	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	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

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge is a strength in the main school and sixth form.
- Teachers provide a good variety of learning activities.
- Relationships are very good and contribute positively to learning.
- Teachers use strategies to develop pupils' independent thinking skills.
- In some lessons, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to show their full potential.
- The use of ICT is a strength in some subject areas, and a weakness in others.
- There is some inconsistency in marking and assessment.

Commentary

18. The quality of teaching is good across the school, with almost a third very good or excellent. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and many convey their enthusiasm to their pupils. In a few instances, where the teacher is a non-specialist, subject knowledge is more limited. In some areas, outstanding lessons were observed, in particular English, chemistry, Russian and art. Teaching in art is consistently very good.
19. Teachers plan carefully. Lessons are well structured with a clear learning focus in the majority of examples. Teachers set up a variety of approaches to fulfil their objectives, which result in good learning. For example in physical education, staff use demonstration, questioning, and activities in a range of groupings to maximise pupils' enjoyment as well as ensuring gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Some subjects, for example mathematics and music, make good use of information and communication technology as a teaching tool. This is less good in some areas.
20. A strong feature of teaching is the development of pupils' independent thinking skills. Many teachers use discussion and questioning particularly well to help pupils express their own ideas. In religious education, importance is placed on listening to and valuing each other's opinions. In citizenship, pupils enjoy debating significant current issues. Pupils work very well collaboratively. Relationships are very good. A good atmosphere for learning is created. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because teachers and teaching assistants meet their needs well through a variety of approaches.
21. Teaching is rarely unsatisfactory but in some lessons that are otherwise satisfactory there are weaknesses that constrain learning and pupils do not achieve as much as they are capable of

doing. In most subject areas, teachers expect the most of all pupils, and challenge them at the appropriate level. Occasionally challenge for more able pupils is not quite high enough, such as in mathematics in Year 11, in some lessons in information and communication technology and music. In French, Year 9 pupils have been mostly repeating work they had done before and teaching is unsatisfactory overall.

22. In some areas, for example design and technology, resources are limited and teachers have to work creatively within these constraints. In some subjects, particularly geography and art, staff develop their own resources, showing flair and originality.
23. Homework is used effectively. The quality of assessment is generally good, though teacher assessments of standards in design and technology and physical education in Year 9 are inflated. In several subjects, for example English and geography, assessment makes it clear to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. However, more consistent use could be made by teachers of the good assessment information that is kept on pupils' attainment and progress to set lesson and individual learning objectives. Some areas use self-, or peer, assessment well. In a few subjects, there is inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking.

Sixth form

24. In the sixth form, teaching is of a high and often very high standard. Staff continue to encourage independent learning and students respond well to the high expectations to think for themselves and participate in lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and of examination requirements so that learning is often good and individual students receive good specific support related to their needs. Assessment procedures are effective though marking practice in mathematics is unsatisfactory and inconsistent in physical education. Within courses, staff work well together to ensure a consistency of style. Teachers use a range of resources and approaches. In some subject areas, information and communication technology could be used more thoroughly and access to computers increased.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 163 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6 (4%)	42 (26%)	64(39%)	45(28%)	6(4%)	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.

The curriculum

Main school

Curricular provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunities to take part in a very wide range of extra activities are very good.
- The breadth of the curriculum is good.
- There is a strong emphasis on utilising sports college status for curriculum development.
- The curriculum does not meet certain statutory requirements.
- The emphasis on independent learning in the sixth form is good.
- There is insufficient co-ordination of vocational courses.

Commentary

25. The school has a well-developed, broad curriculum that caters for the interests and needs of most pupils, including those with special needs and disabilities, enabling them to achieve well. The range is extended by the provision of health education in Year 9 and the opportunity to study agriculture and two modern foreign languages. However, curriculum provision for religious education at Key Stage 4, aspects of design and technology in Year 9 and careers education and guidance, does not meet statutory requirements.
26. The school has responded promptly to the national 14-19 curriculum review. In developments that are clearly communicated in the school improvement plan, three new vocational courses were introduced at Key Stage 4 this year in business studies, health and social care and sport. Although these add positively to the flexibility and the overall balance of curriculum choice and opportunity for pupils, their co-ordination needs improving to ensure they become firmly established.
27. A modular ASDAN youth award scheme also operates successfully as an alternative curriculum for some pupils in Key Stage 4. Its emphasis on personal development and key skills, including information and communication technology, in preparation for the world of work encourages the involvement of all groups of pupils in extending their learning. Good opportunities to develop skills of literacy across the curriculum are generally well established while progress in developing numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Although the overall provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory, the experience that pupils receive outside of information and communication technology lessons in Key Stage 4 is variable and access is sometimes difficult for whole classes, in design and technology, geography and music for example.
28. Sports college status has developed into a strong ethos in the school. It has a positive effect on pupils' learning and has also led to a very good range of opportunities in sports-related activities outside the normal school curriculum. This enriched curriculum also extends to the arts, where the school has gained national support to develop a local partnership scheme similar to the sports co-ordination programme, and to build on the strong links with parents and the wider community.
29. The school is also aware of the need to address the allocation of time for some humanities subject areas for pupils in Year 9, where, in history for example, limited curriculum time is a barrier to further improvement. While the accommodation for sports and physical education is very good, it is generally adequate across the school and well managed to ensure coverage of the planned curriculum.

Sixth form

30. The sixth form curriculum contains a good range of opportunities that caters well for students' needs and interests and enables them to achieve well. The addition of two vocational A-level courses in business and leisure and recreation to the existing GNVQ in leisure and tourism has improved the breadth and flexibility of the curriculum and progression in learning. However, this vocational dimension, as yet, has insufficient co-ordination to ensure cohesion across courses. There is a good range of A2 and AS-level courses available and take-up generally is satisfactory or better. Where small numbers of students exist, as on some courses like technology, music and history for example, classes are merged to make a more viable sixth form group. Although this can sometimes be accommodated with the present curriculum model, it reduces some of the flexibility needed for future curriculum planning.
31. A new child care course (CACHE) was recently introduced into the curriculum for students in Year 12 who wished to continue their schooling in the sixth form mainly to prepare them for work. Although the current retention rate from Year 11 to the sixth form is good, the school is aware that there are few other opportunities to encourage some students to continue their

schooling at a suitable level and to provide wider choice. The school is well on the way to meeting the entitlement of the students to continue to explore and study matters of a religious and moral nature. They also have time planned for them to continue with their development of personal, social and health education.

32. Sports college status also has a positive influence on the sixth form curriculum. It has also led to a very good range of opportunities in sports related activities outside the normal school curriculum in which students participate positively. Drama and theatre studies also contribute well to the richness of opportunity available to students.
33. An optional, ASDAN university award scheme also operates successfully for some students to give further opportunity for personal and key skill development, including information and communication technology, and experience of the world of work. Sixth form students enjoy good provision overall to continue to extend their independent learning skills which includes the use of a 'drop in (UK On-line) centre', though access to computers is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships and the level of care for pupils and students are very good.
- The strong pastoral system provides very good personal support for pupils and students.
- Provision for careers education and guidance is unsatisfactory overall though sixth form students receive good advice for entry to higher education.
- Some safety issues need action.

Commentary

34. The school has effective procedures for child protection. The very well devised pastoral system provides access for pupils to a range of trusted adults if they are experiencing difficulties and the comprehensive guidance provided for staff ensures that they are able to respond appropriately.
35. The school actively promotes pupils' welfare by helping them learn how to keep safe. The school has identified traffic movements on site as a serious hazard and is managing the movements of buses very effectively but some large goods vehicles continue to reverse in the drive amongst pupils. The steep path to the 'Park' building needs resurfacing.
36. Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are clearly structured, well co-ordinated and appropriately focused. The pastoral system effectively promotes the concept of everyone working and learning together. A good, comprehensive and well-managed system of target setting and monitoring of progress exists. Procedures are well understood and used by senior tutors, heads of curriculum areas and form tutors to provide advice and guidance on personal targets, and pupils are generally aware of their grades. The data is used effectively to provide additional support for pupils who are not achieving as expected. The information needs to be adopted more consistently by classroom teachers so that they all use information about pupils' progress when they are teaching, and to guide pupils on what they need to do next.
37. Provision for careers education and guidance is unsatisfactory. A new personal, social and health education co-ordinator has been in post for half a term only and has taken some responsibility for careers education and guidance, but overall co-ordination is unclear. There are no planned programmes for any year group, teaching resources are limited and teachers have not been trained. There is no monitoring or assessment of work to check on quality and

standards. There is, however, a well-organised programme of work experience for Year 11 pupils. Support from the local Connexions service is just satisfactory.

38. Pupils are listened to and their views taken into account. Very good relationships between staff and pupils allow friendly exchange of views. Surveys are carried out to canvass pupils' views and the school council is run with established links between the representatives and their form and year groups so that all pupils can express ideas about school life.

Sixth form

39. The very good level of care and the very good relationships that are characteristic of the main school are fully extended to the sixth form. Support, advice and guidance specifically for sixth form begins in Year 11 with advice on options, and continues across Years 12 and 13, managed by an upper school team of tutors. There is a good level of contact between students and key staff and this, combined with the very good relationships, means that a good range of information, support and guidance is available. Students receive good quality guidance on how well they are doing and how to improve. They are aware of their own progress and know their targets. The school has employed learning mentors to support individual students, and revision and resit classes are provided. A very good feature of sixth form guidance is a seminar on study skills aimed at helping students focus on personal learning styles and learning ways of independently managing the volume and complexity of sixth form work. Students are provided with a base where they can meet each other informally between lessons and have access to areas for private study but need more access to the on-line centre.
40. The school provides good guidance and support for students in preparing applications to higher education. For the small number of students studying vocational subjects, careers education and guidance is an integral part of their course, but for others there is no planned programme of broad careers education and guidance. Students recognise this weakness and confirmed it in a questionnaire completed before the inspection; fewer than half of them think that they are well advised on what to do after leaving school.
41. Students are well involved in the life of the school and there are many opportunities for them to enhance and develop their individual skills and interests. For instance, volunteers train as peer mentors, learn counselling skills, develop constructive relationships with younger pupils and work as a team with staff. Student views are canvassed through the sixth form council, for instance on the timing of exams, and students complete questionnaires to show what they think about a range of school issues.
42. Most students are glad that they joined the sixth form and are satisfied that teachers are willing and able to provide support for academic and personal difficulties. They are aware of their own roles and responsibilities and feel valued and respected. Students would like a wider choice of A and AS-level courses but accept that the staff work hard to provide a wide range of opportunities and experiences for them despite the limitations of a relatively small rural school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works **very well** with parents, other schools and colleges to help pupils and students develop academically and personally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very effectively with parents.
- Links with the local and wider community are extensive.
- There are very well established links with other schools and colleges, particularly to help pupils transfer smoothly and support students' access to further and higher education.

Commentary

43. The school provides a very wide range of opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's education and works very effectively with them to support children's learning.
44. Partnership between home and school begins in middle school when parents and pupils are invited to view the school in action and to meet staff and share information about their child's specific needs. The links established with parents during this induction process make a valuable contribution to the well-being of their children during their early weeks in the school.
45. The school provides parents with a comprehensive range of information about what is provided and makes the school's aims clear to parents, as well as the procedures in place to support pupils who do not meet the high standards expected of them. The level of commitment by staff to working closely with parents is clear. Parents are given ideas on how they can help their child and how they can take an active part in school life. In general, parents appreciate the straightforward written reports on their child's progress and the opportunities to clarify information and share their views during meetings with staff. Questionnaires issued by the school and meetings of the Parent Teacher Association are additional means for parents to express their views and influence new developments.
46. Arrangements for transferring pupils from middle schools and into the sixth form are clearly structured and very well co-ordinated. Partnerships with middle schools enable pupils to transfer smoothly. Links with other high schools are well established and those with colleges enable students to gain first-hand experiences to help them decide where to move after leaving school.
47. The school recognises the importance of good advice and guidance for young people and the need to build high quality relationships with other organisations to give pupils a wealth of experiences and broad horizons. It has established a very good range of links within the immediate neighbourhood that are further enhanced by work with a very broad range of individuals and groups based in the wider local region, countrywide and internationally. Parents also take part in many activities within school that offer them the opportunity to meet new people and share and develop their own skills. The school is very highly regarded by those it works with and acts as a very good resource for the community by sharing the specialist expertise and facilities that are available to pupils. This enables the local and surrounding communities to have access to many activities that rural communities do not easily encounter and enables pupils to meet and work with other young people and adults who share similar interests.

Sixth form

48. Students value the positive relationships with staff and each other. Most are confident that there are adults in school who they could and would turn to for support and guidance. They feel that they are treated as responsible adults and that they progress to a greater level of personal responsibility and autonomy during the sixth form that helps them prepare for further education or employment.
49. Students are satisfied with the facilities and quality of their experiences in general but they would like more choice of courses and greater access to the UK On-line centre to use the computers. An extensive range of formal and informal links with the local and wider community helps students prepare for life after school. Those intending to go on to university, for example, are given the opportunity of visiting a selection to sample the facilities and learn about courses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. Though there are some very good features of governance, in respect of ensuring full compliance with statutory requirements it is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- The culture of self-review is very good.
- Governors know their school very well but have not ensured that certain aspects of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.
- The management team aims to improve teaching and learning through a creative approach to staff development.
- The co-ordination of vocational and work-related learning needs to be strengthened.

Commentary

50. The governors play an active role in the life of the school. They communicate very well with each other, and with key staff within the school. They contribute to the sense of community that is evident throughout the school. They strongly support the vision and direction of the headteacher. They play a valuable part in the self-evaluation procedures of the school and have close links with departments. Through these, they are very well aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the school, and they make a positive contribution to school improvement. They have good knowledge of the school's policies and are involved in planning procedures. In these respects governance is good, but must be judged to be unsatisfactory because some specific statutory duties are unfulfilled.
51. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, and leadership across all other areas of the school is good. The headteacher has a strong vision and commitment to give all pupils the sense of belonging to a community. The combination of a strong identity within the school, whilst also looking beyond to widen pupils' and students' horizons and expectations, creates a vibrant atmosphere. The spirit of inclusion is very good and pupils respond very well, with very good attitudes and behaviour.
52. The senior management team is keen to raise standards and in particular to maintain results at a higher level. They are working to achieve this through judicious intervention and through a creative programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning in school. Senior staff form a strong team and have clear links with departments.
53. Management of the school is good. Self-review is a particular strength, with close analysis of data. All departments carry out self-evaluation, which informs the school improvement plan. School development planning was an issue at the time of the last inspection and is now secure, although some success criteria need to be more precise and costed more fully.
54. The policy for performance management is well implemented. Spending on professional development is aligned with subject development plans and individual targets. The school has recently increased its investment in staff development by introducing a dedicated period each week for the purpose and this is influencing developments in teaching methods and techniques. The team of support staff at Haydon Bridge is a valuable asset that has been built up carefully to complement the work of teachers and enable them to concentrate on their main tasks.

55. Areas of the curriculum are managed well and in the case of some, particularly art, science and physical education, they are managed very well across the main school and the sixth form. The special educational needs co-ordinator and her team provide effective management of the school's special educational needs provision. Their work links well with the pastoral systems that support the school's inclusive provision. However, the co-ordination of vocational and work-related learning needs to be strengthened to consolidate their place in the curriculum.
56. Financial administration of the school is generally good. The school manages a lower than average budget well and additional sources of funding are energetically pursued to maintain and expand provision. Subject areas generally make good provision often with limited resources due to the hard work and creativity of teachers in developing their own materials. The school seeks to provide best value in financial tendering and compares its performance rigorously with that of other schools to formulate action.

Sixth form

57. The sixth form is well led and managed by a team of upper school tutors, who have the advantage of working across Years 11, 12 and 13. This gives them very good knowledge of individual students' needs. Data is well analysed and targets well used. Oversight of the sixth form is provided within the senior management team. There is good leadership and management of individual sixth form courses overall though the expansion of vocational education needs to be better co-ordinated. Sixth form provision is managed effectively from within the funding allocated.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,135,629
Total expenditure	2,047,342
Expenditure per pupil	2,912

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,790
Balance carried forward to the next	129,077

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of community provision?

Overall, the quality of links with the community is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good multi-agency working with a range of different organisations.
- The new extended school services build well on existing community initiatives.
- There is a very effective school sport co-ordinator programme and community arts programme.
- Outreach services and school-based community services are of high quality.
- Leadership and management of the community team are very good.

Commentary

58. The school works very well in partnership with a wide range of local agencies, organisations and businesses to offer the local and wider community an impressive range of services for people of all ages. It has established itself as the hub site in the district for community sports programmes, arts development, family learning and community health initiatives. In addition it

provides a wide range of outreach services in surrounding villages as part of the Tynedale learning partnership.

59. The community team has a very good knowledge of local communities and the issues arising from an area with many small rural villages with limited services and major problems of access. They work effectively with community transport agencies to transport people to other parts of the district where services and programmes are delivered, and provide late buses for young people wishing to participate in after-school activities. This has a significant impact on breaking down the barriers to access faced by rural communities and promoting participation and inclusion.
60. Leadership and management of the developing programmes are very good and clearly directed towards the impact on raising achievement. The school has a well-established tradition of community involvement based on very clear understanding and commitment to the benefits to learning and achievement. Community programmes are matched well with the overall aims of the sports college. Community sports facilities are available on site and a well-coordinated school sport co-ordinator programme provides sports development opportunities across the whole community. The school works in partnership with a wide range of health organisations to tackle issues such as sedentary lifestyle, medical screening, smoking cessation and teenage pregnancy, based on a very good understanding of local needs.

What is the effectiveness of work-place learning?

Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students achieve well on most courses.
- Vocational courses and work-related experiences promote inclusion well.
- Work placements are often strong points of vocational provision.
- There are well-established links with local employers.
- The AVCE leisure and recreation course in Year 12 led to very poor achievement.
- The variety of courses and experiences on offer are not sufficiently co-ordinated to ensure quality of provision and coherence.

Commentary

61. The school offers a small but growing range of vocational courses in business, leisure, physical education, health and social care and childcare. The ASDAN youth award scheme, which includes work placements, is also provided for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 and the ASDAN university award scheme is available as an option to sixth form students to follow in their independent time. Three new courses were also introduced this year for pupils in Year 10 and one for Year 12 students. The development of these courses complements the school's positive approach to inclusion and is beginning to establish alternative routes for pupils and students for whom vocational learning is very appropriate. The sixth form award scheme provides valuable additional enrichment to key skill development and some students opt to undertake work placements as part of their portfolio.
62. Although individual subject departments have worked hard to prepare for the new vocational courses, overall co-ordination and monitoring of these courses and their place in the curriculum are unclear. Recruitment to some courses tends to be from pupils with weak prior attainment. However, pupils and students on most courses achieve well due to teaching that is satisfactory or better. The work experience that takes place each week as part of the intermediate GNVQ course is a strength of the provision. However, there have been some problems of retention and completion in the sixth form of the AVCE leisure and recreation course that led to very poor achievement.

63. There are good links with employers, and teachers work hard to find work placements in this large rural area. Due to other teaching commitments, teachers are not able to visit all students in their work placements, making it very difficult to link classroom and world of work experiences, and to maintain good relationships with employers and placement providers. Separate from vocational courses, there is a well-organised and monitored programme of work experience for Year 10 pupils. Access to, and therefore use of, information and communication technology is an issue to be addressed. The school has not yet begun preparation for work-place learning for all pupils, which becomes a statutory requirement next year.

What is the effectiveness of boarding provision?

The boarding provision at Ridley Hall is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The boarding provision supports pupils' learning well and makes an effective contribution to their personal development.
- Leadership and management at Ridley Hall are very good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and are also very good among boarders.
- Ridley Hall provides good accommodation and a wide range of stimulating activities.
- The warden and his team are making good progress with aligning arrangements at Ridley Hall with the Boarding Schools national minimum standards.

Commentary

64. Due to excessive distances often involved in home to school journeys, approximately ten per cent of pupils and students opt to reside at the school's boarding provision at Ridley Hall for four days a week each school term. The warden and his care staff have established a safe, high-quality and vibrant residential community that provides boarders with good opportunities to enhance their learning and develop impressive social skills. Links with parents are good and the boarding provision complements parental support for their children's learning and personal development.
65. The leadership and management of Ridley Hall are very effective. Staff strive to provide and refine a wide range of leisure and recreational activities developed in consultation with the young people and their parents. Participation in organised activities such as canoeing and skiing is strongly encouraged but is also supplemented by daily periods of supervised private study, usually used for school homework. Pupils receive good support and guidance during these 'prep' sessions from care staff that know them and their needs very well. Consequently, their progress is effectively tracked in partnership with their teachers and parents, and they learn well.
66. The care offered by house staff is of a high and consistent quality. Excellent relationships have been established. Staff and pupils are familiar with the established rules and well prepared for the boarding regime by an induction process and the Ridley Hall charter for living together. Feedback from the boarding student council and parents is used to maintain a rigorous approach to protecting pupils' welfare and the promotion of healthy living. Sensitive and relevant information is effectively shared via well-established recording systems that are now being aligned to the expectations set out in the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards. The warden or a senior member of staff is in attendance during morning and evening routines to ensure the guiding principles set out in boarding charter are consistently applied.
67. Pupils and students cope well with shared bedroom space. While staff and students do what they can to arrange furniture to maximise privacy, this is inevitably limited; however, boarders do not regard this as a problem. Instead, they demonstrate a mature appreciation of the

benefits of communal living. They recognise the balance that has been achieved at Ridley Hall between their desire for independence and the need to accept limits in the interests of the boarding community.

68. Staff are fully aware of health and safety issues and operate sound procedures. Senior staff ensure they are kept well informed and take effective action quickly when issues need resolving. The need for communal safety is also well understood by the pupils and students. However, because pupils' behaviour in and around Ridley Hall is usually very good, some potential risks are still not fully appreciated.
69. Pupils are generally well supervised. Supervision is balanced and takes account of the need to ensure pupils' welfare while also promoting and encouraging their independence. Consequently, all pupils quickly develop the ability to make informed choices, for example when opting to participate in organised activities or spending time informally with their peers. Relationships between boarders are very good. Pupils use their free time particularly well. This helps them to grow in self-confidence and prepares them well for the next stage of their education or the move into training or employment.
70. The school has only just been subject to its first National Care Standards Commission inspection and was judged to have only minor shortfalls in some standards and no shortfalls in others. The areas identified as shortfalls have been used to draw up an appropriate post-inspection action plan, and most of these minor shortfalls have already been dealt with effectively or are scheduled to be addressed in the near future.

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 for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average, which represents good achievement.
- Speaking and listening are very good.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The excellent relationships with pupils are demonstrated by good responses in lessons.
- Implementation of the Key Stage 3 English strategy is good.
- Teachers and pupils have high expectations.
- Fuller use could be made of assessment information to set targets for learning.

Commentary

71. Standards by Year 9 and Year 11 are above what is typically seen. In Key Stage 3 tests, pupils made good progress with 77 per cent gaining at least a Level 5. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment has reduced from 18 per cent to 11 per cent. This is good achievement. Pupils continue to build on these standards throughout Key Stage 4. Results in GCSE English at A*-C in 2003 were above the previous national average. The majority of pupils also take English literature and results were also above the previous average. Standards in current work are also above average, representing good achievement. Written work is well presented. Many pupils clearly enjoy writing. Response to literature is very good with perceptive comments. Spoken language is excellent with pupils able to listen and respond effectively. They can evaluate and justify their views clearly at both key stages. The excellent drama provision offers pupils of all abilities the means of widening their skills and understanding of English.
72. The quality of teaching is consistently good, sometimes excellent. Teachers plan carefully. Texts chosen are often challenging and varied. The teachers themselves have a love of language and literature, which is compelling. They use good questioning, which helps pupils develop their own ideas and thinking. Group discussions are very effective with pupils able to listen and respond to others' views and opinions. Homework is regularly set. Pupils produce a very good range of writing for different purposes and audiences. Marking is excellent with evaluative comments, suggestions for improvement and clear criteria. Pupils are clear as to what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve but more use could be made of pupil-tracking information to set curriculum targets. Preparation for Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations is well organised, with good advice. Pupils respond well to their lessons and this results in good learning. In a few excellent lessons, teaching is inspirational and pupils are able to effectively challenge, question and clarify their thoughts.
73. Leadership of the area is satisfactory. The newly appointed head of English is developing his strategic vision. However, management of the area is good. He leads a team of good, committed teachers. He has put some very good systems in place to promote assessment for learning. There is good challenge and support for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum provides very good opportunities to develop the subject through use of information and communication technology. Progress since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

74. Standards in literacy in the school are above average. Development of reading, writing, speaking and listening is good. The work across the curriculum, led by the English department, is making good progress. There is a focus in all subjects on key words. Science, humanities, design and technology and citizenship all use writing frames to support pupils of all abilities. The technique of 'mind mapping' to help structure thinking and to aid memory is particularly well developed across all subjects. However, the whole-school approach to marking, especially in correcting basic spelling and grammar, needs further development.

Modern foreign languages – French, German and Russian

The provision for modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers three languages and significant numbers of pupils study two.
- Provision for Russian is very good.
- The programme of study for Year 9 is insufficiently challenging and pupils underachieve due to unsatisfactory teaching, particularly in French.
- Boys are making uncertain but improving progress by Year 11 in French and German.
- The range of teaching methods is restricted.
- Insufficient attention is paid to reading.
- Pupils are involved in the assessment of their own progress

Commentary

75. By the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are below the national average in French. Standards by Year 11 are consequently affected and results at GCSE have declined over the last three years, particularly in French and German. Boys' achievement in both French and German has been below that expected from entry to the courses. Standards in Russian are above average, and this subject is a strength of the learning area. Pupils who drop French and continue with their second language perform just as well.
76. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory overall, particularly in French where teaching does not build on the attainment of the pupils when they arrive. The quality of learning in Year 9 is unsatisfactory because teachers have inconsistent expectations. Many pupils feel that they are not being stretched and that they are repeating much of what they have already done. Consequently, pupils underachieve. However, attitudes are generally very positive, especially where the teaching is challenging and varied. Relationships with teachers are good. In some classes the attitude of pupils who find language learning challenging is nevertheless very positive: they remain enthusiastic and involved.
77. In Key Stage 4 nearly all teaching is satisfactory or better, with several lessons good or very good. Teachers in Year 11 work hard to bring the pupils up to the standards required. These are now broadly average and most pupils are achieving in line with their prior attainment though some boys make uncertain progress. In the best lessons, teachers insist on high levels of accuracy and involvement. Pupils in these classes appreciate the effort and commitment of the teacher. In one excellent lesson, the teacher skilfully got the class to use their prior knowledge to predict the correct inflexion of words and then drew their conclusions together to help them consolidate their skills and understanding. The subject knowledge of most teachers is excellent, though in some cases insecure knowledge of the subject and methodology leads to an inequitable experience for pupils.

78. The area is now well led and managed. Key priorities have been identified and are being addressed by all teachers. There is a consistent approach to implementing procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, although these procedures need refining, particularly in offering learners advice on how to improve. Teachers plan together and discuss good practice.
79. There is limited use of information and communication technology for whole-class teaching. The overhead projector is used by most teachers but its potential has not been realised. Reading is an underdeveloped skill. There is little work on more challenging and interesting texts, which would also help to improve speaking and writing skills.
80. There are significant differences between the quality and standards of work reported in the last inspection and those observed this time. In particular, the proportion of grades A*-C at GCSE has fallen below the national average in French and German. By contrast, the performance in Russian is good, particularly since numbers entered for this language are relatively high and the classes contain a wide spread of ability. However, determined leadership of the area is taking steps to ensure a consistently rigorous approach to teaching and assessment and the subject area is, therefore, improving.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 9 are above average and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; they work with concentration and behave very well.
- The subject area is well led.
- Some higher attaining pupils in Year 11 do not achieve as well as they could due to lack of challenge.
- There is insufficient marking of pupils' work and the quality of marking is inconsistent.
- Pupils in Year 9 do not know their target levels or how to improve.

Commentary

81. Standards attained in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above those found nationally. Results in 2003 again rose, particularly at the higher levels. Standards attained by pupils in lessons in Year 9 and as seen in the sample of work are above average and achievement is good. All pupils are challenged and respond well.
82. By Year 11 in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C is average and achievement is satisfactory and improving. The work of some higher attaining pupils in Year 11 shows that these pupils do not yet achieve as well as they could as they have not been sufficiently challenged by topics at the highest levels, neither do they produce coursework in line with their prior attainment. The head of mathematics is aware of this shortfall and action is being taken to remedy it.
83. The teaching of mathematics is good and has a number of strengths that support pupils' learning and achievement in lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to plan effectively, choosing a variety of teaching strategies to meet the learning objectives and the needs of the pupils. This includes the use of information and communication technology, practical and paired work and the opportunity for pupils to make presentations to demonstrate their understanding. Teachers encourage participation in lessons and pupils respond well. Pupils behave very well in class; they work with concentration, making good use of their time. Homework is used effectively to consolidate and extend learning and is usually followed up by discussion in the next lesson. There is inconsistency in the quality of marking. In the best

practice, all work is marked by a mix of teacher and pupil marking. In these cases, teachers deal with misconceptions and demonstrate how questions could be answered. Other pupils' work is marked infrequently or superficially and the marking does not address omissions such as graphs left with unlabelled axes.

84. Leadership of mathematics is good and management satisfactory. The head of subject area is supported well by another colleague and there is a commitment to improvement by all members of the team. Good strategic decisions have been made about the curriculum and there is improved monitoring of performance data. A system allowing pupils to reflect on their mastery of topics in lessons has been established and is working well with older pupils, but pupils in Year 9 are not aware of what their targets are and do not know what to do to improve. There is good liaison with middle schools who are involved in setting targets for Year 9. There have been good improvements since the last inspection with regard to standards in Year 9, behaviour management, and with opportunities for teachers to observe each other. Standards by Year 11 remain average. Although marking has improved it does not support all pupils consistently. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

85. Progress has been made with the whole-school focus on the use of mathematics across the curriculum and, consequently, standards of numeracy are average. An appropriate action plan has been drawn up which looks at improving consistency between subject areas. Opportunities for pupils to develop mathematics across the curriculum such as the calculation of averages and use of calculators were seen in business education, science and technology.

SCIENCE

Overall provision for science is **good**.

The school also offers agriculture as a separate course. The teaching and learning that was sampled in this area was good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Year 9 and Year 11 and pupils achieve well.
- All pupils behave and work well and almost all are well motivated.
- Overall teaching is good and has many significant strengths.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The percentage of pupils reaching Level 6 by Year 9 is not high enough.
- Good practice in teaching is not sufficiently shared to improve consistency further.

Commentary

86. Standards are above average by Year 9 and compare well with results in similar schools. The percentage reaching higher levels is close to the national average but is below that of similar schools. The majority of pupils make good progress from their middle school work so that achievement is good overall. At Key Stage 4 all pupils take a double award science and almost all achieve a graded result. In 2002 results were lower than the national average but increased to above the unconfirmed national average in 2003. Standards in work seen in Year 9 and Year 11 reflect standards in recent examinations and pupils are achieving well. Each year, one group of pupils also studies agriculture and results have similarly improved, to be in line with national averages.
87. Overall teaching is good. Nearly two thirds is good or very good and there is some outstanding practice. Although no teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, there are some significant weaknesses in satisfactory lessons, especially in Year 9 classes taught by non-specialists. In

the best lessons, teachers and pupils are very clear about the main scientific ideas being learnt. Teachers plan a variety of activities, often including practical work, making the science relevant, interesting and challenging. Teachers' explanations and questioning get underneath the surface information to the underlying ideas, and misunderstandings are addressed. Expectations are high, pupils keep up a good pace of work and well-prepared materials avoid time being wasted on copying. Relationships are friendly and pupils regularly praised and encouraged. For example, in a Year 9 lesson about speed, pupils' discussion enabled them to suggest their own ideas and traffic speed and marathons were used as contexts. Calculations were challenging, using real data, and practical work was well used to extend understanding of investigational processes. However, in the barely satisfactory lessons, teachers' explanations are unclear or too brief, pupils do not always pay attention to the teacher or their work, and time is wasted. Errors and underlying misunderstandings are not dealt with so some pupils remain confused. In a few lessons with lower attaining pupils, there was little to interest them and they lacked motivation.

88. The relatively recently promoted head of department is already providing very good leadership and management. He has a very clear view of quality teaching, is an outstanding teacher himself and is developing the skills of his staff. He is making very good use of his analysis of assessment information to improve teaching and learning. There has been good improvement in these aspects since the last inspection. He knows his department well and has an appropriate departmental development plan. There now needs to be fuller dissemination of good practice to further improve teaching and to raise standards and achievement.

Example of outstanding practice

In two lessons with the same teacher, exceptional progress was made by pupils in understanding and applying the concepts of reactivity and concentration in chemistry.

In both cases, the teacher had carefully prepared activities and questions to focus pupils' attention and challenge their thinking. Pupils had not only to come up with answers but with well-explained reasons. Further questions from the teacher checked that their understanding was really sound. Pupils had to think hard, and finally, with no clues from the teacher, they had to have the confidence to stand by their answers.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils.
- Resources are well organised and support the work of non-specialist teachers.
- The teaching of cross-curricular information and communication technology lacks structure and co-ordination at Key Stage 4.
- The structure of lessons helps lower and middle attaining pupils work independently.
- In a minority of lessons, higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could.
- The Year 9 scheme of work needs improving in line with the National Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Commentary

89. By Year 9 the standards observed in information and communication technology are in line with standards in most schools. This represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils overall, though a minority of higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well. The scheme of work does not provide a clear enough route for these pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment. Pupils apply good levels of effort to their work in most lessons. They receive a broad experience of the information and communication technology programme of study. They are able to produce effective presentations with an increasing awareness of suitability for audience and are beginning to improve the quality of their work by editing, amending and refining it.

90. A GCSE information and communication technology course was introduced as an option in September 2002 and there are no results as pupils have yet to take an examination in the subject. However, by Year 11 pupils are working close to the national average and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' folders are well organised, work displays care and effort, and marking provides good feedback to enable them to improve the quality of their work. They understand the sequence of the 'system lifecycle' and are able to produce effective information and communication technology solutions to problems, then improve them by amendments and critically analyse the finished product in their coursework. They are confident and competent users of the school network and the various applications provided.
91. The information and communication technology provision for pupils who do not follow the GCSE course in Key Stage 4 is not as well planned or organised. These pupils receive no discrete information and communication technology lessons and are not accredited for their work in the subject. Their learning across subjects is inconsistent though in some subjects, such as mathematics and English, use of information and communication technology is good. This leads to standards similar to most schools, representing satisfactory achievement overall.
92. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Most of the teaching is sound but one unsatisfactory and one good lesson were seen. Lessons are nearly all well planned and prepared with appropriate learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. Most lessons are highly structured with much use of worksheets to support pupils in their independent work. This works well for lower and middle attaining pupils, but learning activities sometimes lack challenge for higher attaining pupils.
93. The ratio of computers to pupils is 1:5.4. This is close to the 2004 national target though there are reliability issues with the equipment. For example, in one lesson pupils' progress was limited due to network failures. Neither of the central information and communication technology suites has digital projectors or interactive whiteboards, and this causes some difficulty for teachers in demonstrating skills and techniques. Access to information and communication technology resources is limited for some subject departments.
94. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and manages the courses and staff well but non-specialists do much of the information and communication technology teaching. Although these teachers have undergone professional development, the lack of specialist knowledge contributes to the problem of lack of challenge for some of the higher attaining pupils. Improvement has been satisfactory overall since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. Standards overall are average. Most subject areas have information and communication technology activities built into the schemes of work and pupils are confident users of the school network and the software applications that they have been provided with. Pupils are able to select appropriate applications and technology to improve work in most subject areas. In a minority of subjects, lack of information and communication technology resources is an issue and there is inconsistency in the opportunities provided. Access for subject departments is also a problem as most of the computers are located in the heavily-booked computer suites.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good by Year 11.

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- There is good assessment, monitoring of pupils' progress and target setting.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology.
- Teaching time in Year 9 is low.

Commentary

96. Standards in Year 9 are average. Results for 2002, based on teacher assessments, were in line with the national average, but boys' results were well below girls'. For 2003, standards were higher and boys' results were much closer to girls'. At this early stage of the course, current Year 9 standards are average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with variable experiences in geography, so in the early stages of the course, teachers correctly concentrate on improving their basic knowledge and skills. For example, pupils learn about locations on the world map and how to use longitude and latitude.
97. Standards by Year 11 are above average, which represents good achievement. A high number of pupils take the GCSE examination. Results in 2002 were below the national average, with a quarter of pupils gaining only a D grade, but 2003 results were much higher. From careful assessment and monitoring of pupils, the department is confident that GCSE results this academic year will be above average. Examination coursework is good, contributing considerably to final results. Teachers are rigorous in ensuring that this work is completed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
98. Teaching is good with many strengths. This results in good learning. Teachers have very good detailed plans for their lessons and are always well prepared. They produce many of their own good quality learning resources. Lesson plans focus on what pupils will learn, which is displayed and often shared with them, so that they are aware of what is expected of them. Teachers have good, positive, supportive relationships with their pupils. Sometimes they are too quick in giving pupils answers to questions instead of allowing 'thinking time' and insisting on responses. There are insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology. The department has identified some activities in their learning programmes, but access to computers is a problem. The amount of practical fieldwork is limited. Assessment is good, with a good system for monitoring pupils' progress, regular reviews and target setting. When marking pupils' work, teachers give useful supportive comments and information on how to improve.
99. Leadership of the subject is very good and management is good. The subject leader provides a clear vision, has high expectations and leads the team well. She enthusiastically embraces new initiatives to improve teaching and learning. 'Thinking Skills' strategies and the literacy initiative have been well integrated into the department, but numeracy less so. The department is well organised with a strong team ethos. Management could be further enhanced with increased monitoring of teaching and regular, detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. Departmental resources are satisfactory overall, but information and communication technology facilities for pupils and teachers are poor. Progress since the last inspection is good. Low teaching time in Year 9 and limited opportunities to use information and communication technology are barriers to further improvement.

History

Overall the provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and in some lessons it is very good.
- Pupils work hard and productively and behave very well.
- The number of pupils gaining the very highest GCSE grades is well below average.

- The curriculum is well planned.
- There is a lack of opportunity for off-site work for pupils in Year 9.

Commentary

100. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, though not all have a sound grounding in historical skills. During Year 9 most develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the events and changes studied, a secure grasp of chronology and the ability to analyse written and pictorial sources. By the end of Year 9 both boys and girls are working close to national averages and achievement overall is satisfactory.
101. In Years 10 and 11 pupils develop skills in interpreting historical evidence and can offer more sophisticated explanations of the causes and consequences of events. The 2002 GCSE results were above average, though the number of pupils attaining grades A*-B was well below average. Girls performed better than boys, though boys' results matched those of boys nationally. Unconfirmed results in 2003 were below average, though all pupils entered gained a grade. This drop in results is probably attributable to the unfamiliarity of a new examination specification. Work seen by Year 11 represents standards that are above average overall and good achievement.
102. All teaching is at least good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and are linked clearly to previous learning, so pupils understand what they are doing. Classroom management is strength and lessons take place at a good pace with pupils rarely passive. Teachers know the capabilities of pupils and set challenging but manageable tasks well matched to their needs. They give good support to individual pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Materials to support literacy are a feature of most lessons and the provision of information sheets reduces the amount of routine writing. Very good subject knowledge is used to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly through historical enquiry, though only the higher attaining pupils analyse sources systematically and critically. Pupils work productively and co-operatively and behave very well. They are set clear targets and the results of standardised tasks and tests keep them informed of progress. However, some marking of work in Year 9 lacks helpful guidance on improvement.
103. The subject is well led and managed. Planning is good and underpinned by effective procedures for monitoring and review. Areas for planned development are clear though there is a need for more precision in establishing time scales and costs. Curriculum planning is a particular strength though the opportunity for off-site work is not yet established for Year 9. Staff training has had an impact on improvements in literacy and lesson planning. The potential underachievement of boys has been addressed with some success. The subject has made the best use of very limited information and communication technology resources. Effective assessment procedures are in place, though there is a need to establish a baseline on entry to Year 9.
104. Since the previous inspection standards of attainment and achievement have been maintained, teaching has improved and all pupils now have access to information and communication technology. However, the low time allocated to the subject in Year 9 remains a barrier to achievement, given the amount of work needed to develop basic historical skills. Overall progress has been satisfactory, due largely to the hard work of a capable and motivated leader. However, in a small subject area he already carries a heavy workload and a lack of support may constrain further improvement.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's planning is inadequate to secure the statutory entitlement to study religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupils with access to religious education achieve well especially pupils in Year 10 who are doing very well.

Commentary

105. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are average. Pupils enter the school with standards that are a little below average and with an uncertain grounding in skills. Teaching is good and most pupils achieve well. The broadening of the curriculum since the previous inspection enables pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of other faiths as well as Christianity. The opportunities to use speaking and writing skills can be seen in the pupils' well-structured, personal responses. They make rapid strides in developing skills of enquiry and argument. In teaching, there is an emphasis on what can be learned from religion prompting higher attaining pupils especially to produce some promising reflective writing.
106. Pupils in Year 11 have very limited access to religious education, which seriously impairs their capacity to achieve as expected. The standards of a small minority of pupils in Year 10 following a GCSE option are above average for this stage of the course. They are achieving very well overall. Teaching of the examination course is thorough. Discussion features prominently in most lessons. Pupils make significant contributions, buoyed by their growing confidence with the spoken word. Constructive homework assignments provide a firm basis for the pupils to build critical skills and make use of appropriate vocabulary and sources.
107. Good relationships underpin the pupils' confidence and eagerness to learn. They show a good deal of interest in their work and respond positively to the pace and challenge of learning. In Year 10 especially pupils enjoy responding to demanding, open-ended questions, giving them scope to think and reason independently.
108. The teacher provides a supportive framework for learning. Pupils' work is monitored and assessed systematically. Marking is often accompanied by useful comments. Pupils in Year 9 understand the grading system but are less sure on how it relates to their level of attainment. In contrast, Year 10 pupils know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Lower ability pupils are well supported. The teacher knows how well they are doing and they make satisfactory progress.
109. Teaching methods and the curriculum content provide a rich basis for pupils' development in citizenship as well as in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions. Equally, pupils' personal development is actively encouraged through the emphasis on free expression and the insistence that the opinions of others as well as their own should be valued.
110. The provision of religious education does not meet statutory requirements in Key Stage 4 despite the introduction of several conference days for all Year 10 and Year 11 pupils. However, religious education is in a much better position than at the previous inspection as the new head of area has a clear view about improvement and is managing the introduction of new courses well.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good by Year 11.
- Effective use is made of resources despite being very limited in systems and control and the restrictions of a low budget.
- Teacher demonstrations are good.
- Pupils in Year 9 are not receiving their full entitlement to the programmes of study and the scheme of work is out of date.
- Enrichment activities for pupils are good.

Commentary

111. By Year 9 standards in designing and making are in line with national averages, not 'well above' as the school assessment data shows. Pupils are good at completing a flow chart as a method for planning to make a recipe and are in the early stages of using annotations to explain features of a scone pizza and making evaluative judgements on their products. Pupils can also draw in isometric and perspective, although line work and the rendering of cylinders needs improving. They can measure and mark out on wood and use hand and machine tools correctly, following good demonstrations by their teachers.
112. Standards by Year 11 are above average overall, reflecting recent results at GCSE between grades A*-C and in each of the four areas, textiles and food technology, resistant materials and graphics products. The latter two courses having improved their results since the previous inspection. All the features of designing a product are demonstrated well in pupils' portfolios across the range of courses although this information could be better shared between teachers. Some presentation work of pupils' portfolios using information and communication technology is very good, although in others it detracts from the process of designing and the content. Portfolios are also usually thorough and well detailed although the knowledge section needs to be better integrated into the 'story' of the design and more freehand work should be encouraged.
113. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 9 and good by Year 11. Project tasks are mainly practical skills based in Year 9 and designed to meet the interests of all pupils based on information provided by feeder middle schools. Opportunities for pupils to improve their design skills are, however, missed in resistant materials. Pupils are also not receiving their full entitlement to the programme of study in systems and control, and computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM).
114. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good overall at Key Stage 4. In the better lessons teachers are good at explaining, and giving instructions and demonstrations to pupils, supported by well-prepared, although limited, resources. Teaching is not as good where lengthy demonstrations do not provide pupils with enough time in the lesson to practise. Teachers also plan their lessons well but do not share the main information points with the pupils. They are good at challenging pupils with practical work but have not yet agreed strategies for developing design skills, in particular the skills of 'product analysis'.
115. Leadership is satisfactory and management good. The area development plan is a good strategic planning tool and is well aligned to the school plan. The head of department has used the school data on pupils effectively to analyse future grades for pupils and has started to

identify curriculum targets to improve their assessment levels. Pupils enter and are successful in many of the outside competitions made available to them.

116. The scheme of work for Year 9 pupils needs reviewing and bringing up to date to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to all the current programmes of study, especially the information and communication technology elements, and a broader curriculum experience. The resistant material area is spacious but some of the machines, furniture and hand tools are worn, which detracts from providing an appropriate image and environment for pupils to complete quality work. The floor in this area should be all on one level. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Overall provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently very good.
- Standards are above average and achievement is good throughout.
- The broad curriculum provides good learning opportunities.
- The use of information and communication technology is restricted.

Commentary

117. By Year 9, the majority of pupils attain above average standards of work and there are examples of high attainment. Drawing and painting are good and colour is used effectively. Pupils research and develop ideas in their sketchbooks using a wide range of media and techniques with confidence and control. Knowledge and understanding are generally good and pupils express and justify opinions with confidence. In their work on portraits, pupils study Picasso's *Weeping Woman* and can describe and comment on the characteristics of Cubism. They take digital photographs of each other in poses inspired by the painting and transform these enlarged images to make collages, adding colour, line, tone and pattern with mixed media to make an effective personal response. Pupils achieve well in three-dimensional work, experimenting with clay to model and join different features in preparation for making masks.
118. By Year 11, standards are above average and achievement is good. Boys' attainment has improved as a result of changes to the curriculum and is now well above average. However, the number of boys taking art continues to be low. The GCSE course gets off to good start at the end of Year 9 and this ensures that progress in the first half term of Year 10 is very good for most pupils. The quality and quantity of work in many sketchbooks are impressive and many pupils take their own photographs to use as source material. They annotate and evaluate their ideas using correct subject terminology. Observational drawing is generally good, using a range of media and approaches. Studies are developed into confident paintings, many students enjoying the opportunity to work on large canvases. Students are confident in working in three dimensions and build up forms in clay or mod-roc on wire and card armatures. Designs are developed for three colour reduction prints and screen prints and the more able students move on to design and print interlocking repeat patterns. These interesting learning opportunities motivate pupils across the ability range to achieve well. The study of other artists and designers work is integrated well into the curriculum.
119. Teaching is consistently very good. Staff have high expectations and pupils respond well to the challenging yet positive ethos. Teachers are highly committed and motivate pupils well through their own enthusiasm. Effective assessment ensures that pupils know how they are doing and how to improve. Marking of sketchbooks is usually good, often with detailed comments,

although spellings are rarely corrected. There is some use of information and communication technology, but this is mainly limited to Internet research and use of the digital camera. Pupils do not have opportunities to explore image manipulation software.

120. Leadership and management are very good and the strong team of teachers work well together. They regularly work over lunchtimes and after school with pupils who want to improve and also offer a life drawing class with a clothed model for younger pupils. A particular strength is the emphasis on placing art and design in context through good links with local artists and visits to galleries. Efficient use is made of a limited budget and resources and teachers extend these by making their own additional reference material. The support of the part-time technician is invaluable in helping to maintain the broad curriculum. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good.

Music

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from a low starting point on entry.
- Good teaching promotes good learning and achievement.
- The acting head of department provides good leadership and very good management.
- A wide range of opportunities is provided in and out of school.
- Community involvement is very strong thereby extending access and opportunity.
- Knowledge and understanding are less well promoted than performing and composing.
- More able pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve as well as they could

Commentary

121. Overall, standards of attainment are average by Year 9 and 11. Pupils' standards on entry are well below average for a high school but due to good teaching and very good management pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout. The attainment of average and below average pupils is very good as is clearly shown in the 2003 examination results, where just under 100 per cent gained A*-G grades and approximately 70 per cent gained B-C grades. However, there were no A* and A grades. Improving the attainment of more able pupils is an important priority for the department. Pupils are using notation, exploring a range of sound sources and using practical performance and composing opportunities. Keyboard skills and composition techniques need to be given more prominence in lesson planning to raise attainment.
122. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers encourage pupils by using good practical activities. Consequently, attitudes are very good. Teachers are proficient and the acting head of department is a particularly skilled musician. Lessons have strong cultural and spiritual dimensions and in each there are clear gains in learning. The use of appropriate terminology in response to recorded music, using notation to perform a simple two-part piece, and using a computer to support learning, are all effective. However, time is not always used well. In particular, the final plenary session is not given enough focus to allow pupils to reflect on what they have learned.
123. The management of music is very good and a clear direction for future development is emerging. The new head of department is part-time but is effective in her role. She provides good support to the inexperienced part-time teacher and has developed a successful team of teachers. She has also made an impressive start in promoting a number of initiatives to tackle outstanding issues: restructuring schemes of work and formulating a coherent assessment policy. Close liaison with the community arts officer has already led to a number of extra-curricular opportunities such as the African drumming.

124. The accommodation of the department has improved since the last inspection but the small rise in numbers of instrumental pupils is disappointing and requires attention. Resources are generally very good; information and communication technology is well used but there is insufficient hardware in the department, especially for the very large GCSE groups. There is a strong community programme with ensembles that include a steel band and community band giving regular concerts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Overall, the provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning promote a high level of activity and encourage independent learning.
- Access to accredited courses and awards in Key Stage 4 is good.
- Pupils enjoy physical education and participation rates are high.
- An extensive extra-curricular programme generates high standards in school sport.
- No schedule is used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and improve consistency.
- Greater priority should be given to developing information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy in physical education.

Commentary

125. Standards by Year 9 are average and achievement is satisfactory. On entry in Year 9, standards differ depending on which middle school pupils attended and, in general, boys perform better than girls in games. In football, boys show well-developed dribbling, passing and shooting skills and can explain to others what they need to do to improve. Girls' netball skills are rudimentary and lack fluency. A successful school sport co-ordinator programme is working in local feeder schools to help overcome these differences and raise standards. In 2003, teacher assessments show that 95 per cent of pupils reached the expected standard. These judgements are too high.

126. By Year 11, standards range from well above to below average as a direct result of the varying quality of teaching and learning in lessons, but are average overall and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in different areas of activity, particularly games and athletics. Pupils lead warm-ups, design their own practice drills and work effectively in groups and teams to improve movement, handling and decision-making skills. An extensive extra-curricular programme provides further opportunities to participate and improve personal performance.

127. Teaching is never less than satisfactory but is inconsistent across the subject. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to prepare well-planned lessons with clear introductions. Learning outcomes are shared at the start of lessons so pupils know exactly what they are trying to achieve. The best lessons promote high activity levels, provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and make learning fun. Time to practise skills over sustained periods of time leads to high achievement. Effective use of questioning and demonstration clarifies and reinforces learning and builds strong relationships. Pupils enjoy physical education, and participation in lessons and school sport is very high. Learning is less effective when opportunities to evaluate performance are not planned for, and pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The use of a schedule to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and sharing of good practice across the subject would help to raise standards.

128. Standards in GCSE physical education are improving. In 2003, 75 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C grades; in contrast, a significant number entered for the GCSE games examination did not. Steps have already been taken to address this by introducing the BTEC first diploma in sport.
129. The department is very well led. The new subject leader has made a significant impact in the school and produced a high quality development plan that builds on the existing strong sporting ethos and aims to raise standards throughout the school. The school maintains its reputation for sport and has enjoyed success at district and county level, with several pupils achieving national honours in recent years. Improvement of the sports hall entrance and changing rooms would benefit pupils and community users. Literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology should be given higher priority in the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

130. In this curriculum area, the school offers a growing range of vocational subjects. In addition to GCSE business education and childcare in Year 11 and the ASDAN youth award scheme, there are new courses in health and social care, business and sports in Year 10. The BTEC sports diploma course was inspected in detail and the other subjects were sampled. Teaching and learning is generally good in the subjects sampled and pupils' achievement is mainly good.

Sports subjects

Overall, the provision for BTEC first diploma in sport is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Teachers promote high levels of activity and encourage independent learning.
- The course provides enhanced opportunities for pupils of all abilities to gain accreditation.
- Intensive monitoring of pupil progress throughout the course is required to ensure its success and sustainability.

Commentary

131. The BTEC first diploma in sport is a modular course, continually assessed with no final examination, and requires a two-week work placement in a sports setting. It provides an ideal opportunity for all pupils, particularly those not suited to the GCSE physical education course, to attain a qualification in sport. The course is completed over five terms, leaving additional time for pupils to concentrate on examinations in other subjects. It is the equivalent to four GCSE passes, therefore an important means of raising whole-school achievement in this specialist sports college.
132. Three groups of boys and girls currently follow the course, indicating its initial popularity. Theory lessons, coursework and pupil evidence files suggest standards are average at this early stage in the course and achievement is generally good taking account of pupils' previous attainment. Pupils use information and communication technology well to present work for their evidence files and the work displayed in the teaching base on health and safety issues in sport is also of a good standard.
133. Teaching and learning are very good. The course is well planned and teachers use a range of suitable methods to make learning interesting and fun. They provide good examples of current issues and recognisable personalities in sport that pupils can relate to. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have a firm understanding of the BTEC award. Consequently achievement in lessons is good and the majority of pupils make good progress. Teachers

combine theoretical and practical aspects of learning well and make good use of classrooms, the gymnasium and sports hall to make lessons active by demonstrating techniques and types of sporting equipment. Learning is designed to stimulate and enthuse pupils; they are encouraged to work with others and find out information for themselves. Very good use is made of video footage to identify different activities in popular sports and analyse types of equipment used during play.

134. Leadership and management are very good. The director of sport has a clear vision for the development of the subject and the role of the BTEC award. It forms part of the sports college's aim to offer a wide range of accredited courses in physical education and sport that meets the needs of all young people. It is well resourced. Tracking the progress of this first group of pupils will require detailed monitoring by all staff to ensure the course is a success.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

A number of lessons in personal and social education were sampled in which pupils' learning ranged from satisfactory to good. The programme is taught by form tutors who are well supported by a new, well-organised and co-ordinated scheme of work that provides good guidance on expectations for learning. A new carousel system enables teachers to specialise more but further training for teachers would strengthen the impact of these lessons on pupils' personal development.

Citizenship

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- The curriculum is well planned, involving contributions by other subjects.
- Monitoring arrangements are very good with regular feedback from most subject areas.
- There is an effective school council that pupils believe is listened to and valued.
- Links with the sports college curriculum and arts subjects are not as strong as other areas.
- The range of teaching styles is too narrow.
- Assessment procedures require further development.

Commentary

135. Overall, standards in citizenship are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 9 and Year 11. There are examples of good teaching and one example of outstanding practice. Where standards are above average, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, express opinions and refine their ideas through relevant discussion and research. It is difficult for the co-ordinator to gain a full picture of standards because assessment procedures are not fully in place.

136. **An example of outstanding practice** occurred in a Year 10 science lesson that had citizenship as a focus.

Example of outstanding practice

The lesson in question consisted of teams of pupils debating the issues surrounding the social, moral and ecological implications of the use of different energy sources. This included Hydro-Electric Power versus Nuclear Power and Fossil Fuel versus Tidal/Wave Power.

The teacher was unobtrusive but motivated the pupils by empowering them to feel in control, to use reasoned argument supported by well-researched, factual information thereby making informed judgements. There was an 'electric' atmosphere in the classroom, and pupils were passionate and totally absorbed. The quality of their knowledge, understanding and consequent debate of the issues was of a very high order. One boy, in

particular, did not require notes as an *aide memoire* but had a wide range of facts and statistics at his fingertips. He was fluent, articulate and persuasive.

137. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a grasp of the issues. However, there are occasions where teachers might encourage pupils to be more independent and give them time to refine and express their ideas. A wider range of teaching styles would be beneficial which would suggest a more robust training programme is required. Pupils are able to express themselves and enjoy debating significant current issues. The school council offers pupils the opportunity to take responsibility on behalf of their peers and encourages a strong dialogue with the staff. There is no doubt that this is an important factor in helping to establish the high quality relationships that currently exist, and underpins the good progress made in implementing this new subject.
138. The citizenship curriculum is provided through the work of all subject areas as well as within the tutorial lesson and therefore many staff are involved. The co-ordinator leads and manages this large 'team' and complex process well. Subject areas build citizenship into their schemes of work and coverage is mapped and monitored effectively. However, coverage within the arts subjects and the sports college curriculum should be monitored more closely. Documentation is thorough and the regular feedback from departments via the co-ordinator to the senior management team allows the subject to develop well.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 10 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses 2003

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	2	100	91.5	100	42.2	60	36.7
Law	1	0	81.3	0	29.3	0	N/a
PE	1	100	87.5	0	29.5	30	32.4
Psychology	1	0	82.0	0	30.6	0	31.6

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses 2003

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	11	100	96.6	72	51.1	101.8	86.4
Biology	20	95	92.6	20	42.1	63	78.9
Business studies	7	100	96.4	57	35.8	100	78.7
Chemistry	11	100	95.1	18	52.7	78.2	86.6
Drama	8	100	98.6	13	41.3	70	84.0
Design Technology	8	100	95.9	38	36.7	80	78.0
English	20	100	98.4	35	44.5	84	84.5
French	4	100	97.7	25	57.8	70	90.5
Geography	24	100	97.9	75	49.5	100.8	86.1
German	1	100	97.4	100	55.5	100	88.8
History	18	94.4	97.7	0	49.6	53.3	86.2
Law	2	100	92.1	0	37.6	60	82.0
Mathematics	4	100	94.9	75	59.4	85	90.5
Music	5	100	96.6	20	44.8	76	82.6
PE	6	100	95.0	88	30.7	103.3	74.3
Physics	8	100	93.6	50	47.9	85	82.9
Psychology	3	100	94.0	33	39.2	80	79.1
Russian	2	100	97.1	50	72.7	90	N/a
Sociology	8	100	95.7	76	42.7	92.5	82.0
Business AVCE (double award)	2	100	80.6	50	17.1	200 (i.e. double points per student)	N/a

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Intermediated GNVQ leisure and tourism	15	93.3	76.9	26.6	26.7	6.6	3.3
Intermediate GNVQ health and social care	13	100	77.3	23.1	24.5	0	2.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The school offers courses to A2 and AS-level in English literature, French, German and Russian. English literature and French were inspected in detail.

English

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subject and of examination requirements is very good.
- Students' independence of thought is developed well.
- Standards have been in line with national averages, and are now above.
- Most students are keen to participate in discussion: a few are less so.

Commentary

139. Results in English literature AS and A2 were below national averages in 2002. Results improved in 2003 especially at AS-level, where the number of A and B grades was above the national average and the majority of students achieved their predicted grade or better. Students in the current Year 12 have come onto the course with a wide range of predictions and are at present performing in line with national averages. They are making good progress from their starting point at the beginning of term. Students in Year 13 are continuing to build well on their prior attainment and their standards are above average. Their achievement since entering the sixth form is good.
140. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and of examination requirements. Lesson objectives are carefully set relating to examination assessment criteria. New terminology and concepts are introduced clearly and students are reminded to refer to these. Staff use some very good active approaches to engage all students, for example card-sorting and highlighting exercises to provoke discussion in small groups. Staff also prepare short questions for students to discuss in groups. These are put on grids that will become a useful resource for revision later on. Teachers use skilful questioning to develop students' independence of thought. Students are willing to speculate and express their own opinions and engage in good quality debate. Boys often contribute more fully than girls. A few students tend to remain quiet. Written work is carefully marked and teachers give detailed advice on how to improve.
141. Leadership of the course is good, with a commitment to high standards. The course is very well managed, especially in creating successful teamwork among staff who are teaching it. Students are given a clear overview of the course and have a full understanding of examination requirements and assessment criteria. The course is enhanced by regular theatre visits to see live performance where possible. The department also uses a range of resources to heighten interest and enjoyment, such as video and music.
142. At the time of the last inspection, girls in general made better progress than boys. Currently English literature is a popular course for both boys and girls at Haydon Bridge, and boys are making good progress. This is a significant factor in the good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

143. Language and literacy skills in the sixth form are good, especially shown in the confident way most students express their views. Students are able to develop their research skills across subjects through the provision of independent learning time. The opportunity is offered to follow a qualification in key skills, which include communication skills.

Modern foreign languages – French

The provision for French in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and teaching is satisfactory.
- Students' attitudes and relationships with teachers are very good.
- Attainment is below average but achievement is satisfactory.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- Planning is good.
- The range of teaching styles is restricted.

Commentary

144. Results in AS and A2 examinations reflect the prior attainment of students embarking on the course. Results have been average overall although attainment in the higher grades is below the national average. There is evidence that the decision to proceed directly to the A2 course is helping to maintain the commitment and motivation of the students. Standards in Year 12 are higher than in Year 13.
145. Learning and achievement by Year 13 are satisfactory, given the standards on entry to the course. Students respond well to the challenge of presenting the work they have prepared at home without reading the text, and their presentations are fluent and accurate, although accent and intonation are poor. Some students are able to write cogently on a variety of topics such as cruelty to animals and are beginning to appreciate stylistic functions and construct more sophisticated and complex sentences. However, although students understand the functions of tenses in the passages they are studying, they are still unable to use them confidently and accurately.
146. Learning and achievement in Year 12 are good as the students are more confident. They are willing to engage with the teacher in French, and some, both girls and boys, are quite fluent, although at the expense of accuracy. Students enter the lesson smiling and address the teacher in French. They are not afraid to make mistakes and correct themselves as they speak. They are making good progress, even though the standards are lower than would be expected for this level. Some students are potentially very good, and should overcome difficulties by the end of the year.
147. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is always satisfactory though there is a limited repertoire of activities in order to help weaker students to work more successfully with challenging reading matter and to develop their confidence and understanding of the grammar. Teachers already collect useful texts from the Internet but a wider range of texts, specially chosen for interesting content and accessible structures, would help students to make secure connections. Much of the explanation done in English could, with appropriate visual aids and better use of ICT, have been done in French.
148. There is a lot of insecurity because students now have to juggle many grammatical and syntactic notions at one time without having a secure mastery of them singly. This makes teaching a challenge. Some of the topics, which deal with politics and current affairs, are challenging for some students whose general experience and knowledge are limited in these respects.
149. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and know the specifications of the course and are thus able to show students how they can gain good marks in course and examination work. Planning is very good, and takes the students in ever more demanding steps through the lesson. Where a class is shared, teachers work well together to ensure consistency of

approach and expectations. Marking and reporting are good. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students and pitch their expectations accordingly. Leadership and management of the course are good and leading to improvement.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

The inspection focused on the AS and A2 courses in mathematics. The recently initiated GCSE course for students who did not gain grade C in Year 11 was also sampled.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning and they participate well in lessons.
- Standards in Year 13 are below average.
- Much student work remains unmarked. This is unsatisfactory.
- Relationships are very good.
- The subject area is well led.

Commentary

150. Standards attained at A2 in 2003 are likely to be close to the national average but with a higher percentage of students achieving grades A or B. This represents satisfactory achievement. Results at AS in 2003 are likely to be well below the national average although achievement for this weaker year group is satisfactory. Standards of work seen in Year 13 lessons are below average reflecting the prior attainment of these students who nonetheless make satisfactory progress. Standards at AS in Year 12 are average and achievement is satisfactory.
151. The teaching of mathematics in all sixth form courses is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons effectively using a variety of teaching strategies. In particular they encourage students to participate in the lessons by demonstrating their solutions to the whole class. Students have very good attitudes to learning and readily respond to these challenges. Relationships are very good and students work well on paired activities. Teachers support students' learning by giving good quality notes.
152. There is very little teacher marking of students' work in Year 13. A much more mixed picture of marking exists in Year 12, where there is some very good teacher marking of students' work from independent learning time, but little other marking. This is unsatisfactory. Students rarely record questions although they write full solutions to the problems. A consequence of incomplete recording and lack of marking is that revision for students is made more difficult.
153. The subject area is well led. There has been a positive response to the weaker AS results in 2003 by the introduction of formal independent learning activities in Year 12 for which good quality feedback is given to students. Standards remain in line with the national average although, since the last inspection, there have been two years in which A-level results were well above average. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

154. Numeracy skills are satisfactory overall. Students use mathematics effectively in the study of other subjects in the sixth form, for example when representing or interpreting data in graphical form in the sciences.

SCIENCE

The school offers courses in A2 and AS biology, chemistry and physics. Biology was inspected in detail.

Biology

Overall provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in A2 are above average and compare well with national averages.
- Standards at AS have been below average with some underachievement. They are only just improving.
- Students greatly appreciate the quality of relationships and teaching.
- Overall teaching is good and with some very good practice.
- Biology is a popular subject taken by a good mix of boys and girls.
- Students have insufficient access to computers, especially for independent study.

Commentary

155. Over the past two years, AS results have been disappointing, with the percentage of high grades well below the national average and a significant number of students ungraded. A few dropped out of the course altogether. This is partly explained by the fact that some students were accepted onto the course with low GCSE grades. Some made good progress but a significant proportion, around a quarter, did not make expected progress. Tracking of student progress and individual support are now both improved. There is little underachievement in work seen and standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. Results at A2 are much better. Over the past two years the percentage of high grades has been above average with only one ungraded result. Most students make the progress expected of them, although a number do less well in biology than in other subjects taken. Nonetheless, standards are above average by Year 13 and achievement is good. Most students work hard and are interested in the subject. Quite a number continue with biologically based courses at university.
156. Overall, teaching is never less than satisfactory, with much that is good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare well for their lessons. Explanations and instructions are nearly always clear and a good variety of activities is used. Practical work is well chosen to directly illustrate the theoretical aspects of the subject. In some lessons, such as one with a Year 12 class about cell membranes, very good use is made of large physical models to represent microscopic structures. Questioning of students is often good, requiring reasoned explanations. Some lessons make good use of students' research. Pace is usually kept up, although in one lesson too much time was spent copying notes and diagrams. Interaction between teachers and students is usually good but is sometimes adversely affected by large or small group size. Students have plenty of practice answering past examination questions, which are thoroughly marked with advice given for improvement. Very good use is also made of independent learning tasks about a broad range of topics beyond the syllabus. Student progress in relation to their target grades is now carefully monitored. Teachers generously provide effective individual tutoring and students highly value these respectful and supportive relationships. A sixth form study room has just been established but needs improvement. Access to computers for independent study is insufficient.
157. Leadership and management of the course are satisfactory. The recently promoted head of subject has just started to influence the developments, such as the increased use of practical and field work, and is addressing the issues of underachievement at AS-level. This is now the priority along with the issue of recruitment and the imbalanced group sizes. Improvement is satisfactory overall since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning activities are well planned, prepared and delivered, resulting in sound achievement overall.
- Students apply considerable intellectual effort to their work.
- Access to information and communication technology resources in the sixth form is limited.
- Worksheets are well used in lessons to support students' learning.

Commentary

158. Standards seen in the current Year 12 are around the national average and, as most of the students in this group have not studied information and communication technology at examination level previously, this represents good achievement. Students' work is well presented and folders show clearly progression in quality through amendment and refinement. Students use 'top down planning' techniques to analyse and organise the content of a *PowerPoint* presentation on communications and the finished work is of sound quality.
159. The AS course in information and communication technology started in September 2002 so there are no A2 examination results yet. Current standards by Year 13 are in line with national standards and this represents satisfactory achievement. Eight out of ten students in this group passed the AS exam in 2003 with E grade or better. Two failed the examination and a further seven withdrew from the course for various reasons. Students demonstrate in one lesson the ability to analyse logically complex methods for security and backing up of data, taking into account issues of time, space and cost.
160. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan most lessons well and activities are carefully structured to support students' learning. Much use is made of textbooks and worksheets, and, although appropriate, the use of textbook exercises as a basis for learning activities lacks sparkle. Despite this, students respond well in lessons and apply good levels of effort. Good use is made of supporting resources on the network. In one lesson, the teacher provided students with raw data for creating two spreadsheet files and gave them data to enter themselves into a third whilst making useful teaching points about methods of sequential data entry.
161. The departmental documentation contains clear schemes of work for the AS and A2 level courses. The department is aware of the high drop-out rate from the first year of the AS course and is planning to reduce this by introducing more appropriate vocational courses for some students.
162. Although the subject leader has sufficient subject specialist knowledge to deliver the courses, there is a staffing issue as an unqualified teacher and a non-specialist teach one lesson each per week. Sixth form pupils expressed concern over the access that they have to computers and this is a matter that needs to be addressed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

163. Information and communication technology skills in the sixth form are generally good. Students use information and communication technology effectively to support work across the subjects. They are confident and competent users of the school network and the various applications that they have been provided with. Access to computers for sixth form students' private study needs to be improved.

HUMANITIES

The school offers a number of courses in this curriculum area. Ethics and philosophy, history and sociology were sampled and in each case teaching and learning were good and students were achieving well.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of AS and A2 students is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- There is good assessment, monitoring of pupils' progress and target setting.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology.
- There is a need to increase the opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

164. Standards for A-level students are average and for AS are above average. Achievement of A-level and AS students is good. Results in A-level examination in 2002 were below the national average and boys performed well below the national average. However, 2003 results were higher and although no national comparators are available, standards are likely to be above or well above average. All students gained A to E pass grades, with over 80 per cent of girls and over 60 per cent of boys gaining A or B grades. Examination results at AS in 2002 were above average, but 2003 results are likely to be below or well below average. Although all AS students gained an A to E pass grade, there were no A or B grades for girls and only one B grade for a boy. However, the current Year 12 AS students are working at an above average level. Their work files show good, ordered notes that include some useful resources prepared by their teachers.
165. Teaching is good with many strengths. Lessons are very well planned and teachers are always well prepared, with resources readily available. Teachers themselves produce many good resources to increase interest, for example good case studies which are relevant to students' own experiences of recent or current events. Useful 'Thinking Skills' activities have also been introduced. Teachers' knowledge of the subject and examination requirements is good. They prepare students well for the examinations through support materials and revision programmes. Good, well-presented coursework is also evident. Teachers know their students well and have good supportive relationships with them. They have high expectations and often present good challenge in activities, but in some lessons students are over directed. There should be more opportunities for students to structure their own studies through independent learning and to research topics using information and communication technology.
166. The department has a good system for assessment. Work is regularly checked, students' performance is monitored and reviewed. Students are fully involved in the process of target setting, and are aware of their current position and of what is expected of them. In marking students' work, teachers give good evaluative feedback indicating how they can improve their grades.
167. Subject leadership is very good and management is good. The subject leader has clear vision, is enthusiastic and demonstrates commitment to high standards. She carries out good, detailed data analysis, and is aware of standards and improvements made by the department and strengths and weaknesses in examination performance. Good management creates a

strong team ethos and successful teamwork. Geography resources are satisfactory, but information and communication technology facilities in the department are poor.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

The provision for design and technology in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good by Year 13.
- Students generate creative solutions to real problems.
- Effective use is made of information and communication technology by students to assist their market research.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good.
- Teachers give good demonstrations using specialist equipment.
- The management of time in lessons needs improving.
- The teaching strategies used to analyse products are limited.

Commentary

168. Standards are above average and achievement is good by Year 13 in both resistant materials and graphic products. In Year 12 standards are average at AS-level and achievement is satisfactory. Students make better progress in Year 13 than in the first year because they generate creative solutions to genuine design problems and utilise information and communication technology effectively to complete in-depth market research and analysis. One student, for example, is compiling a spreadsheet examining different 'bonnet locks' on cars and working closely with the local fire service to gain access to isolate a car's battery when the vehicle has been 'torched'. Another student is using digital photography to assist with the development of a fence post remover. Students have access to a good range of exemplar materials that they utilise effectively to assist their progress. They also employ effective use of mood boards to assist with creativity although knowledge sections in their portfolios, particularly on materials and components, are not fully integrated with the generation of the design solutions.
169. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. It is generally better in Year 13 than in Year 12. In an AS lesson on graphics, for example, the teacher gave a comprehensive insight and demonstration on air-brush rendering and using markers but failed to provide enough time for the students to practise the skills. Relationships between teachers and students are good and students receive good individual technical support and advice on their design work, and on preparation for examinations. Students listen respectfully to teachers' instructions and contributions to their designs, but few strategies are used by teachers which challenge the students to develop and broaden their design thinking by working in groups and critically examining existing products and their relationships with society at large.
170. The department is well led and managed, with specialist teachers deployed effectively to support students in both resistant materials and graphics products. There is good range of resources and exemplar materials in graphics to assist with the development of ideas. Sixth form students also benefit from having a discrete area of accommodation, but this has no information and communication technology facilities or CAD/CAM for example, and is underused by the small groups of students studying the courses.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The school offers theatre studies, music and music technology, as well as art and design in this area. These other subjects were sampled and students found to be learning well, due to good specialist subject teaching.

Art and design

The school offers AS and A2 courses in fine art and textiles.

Overall, provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently very good.
- Standards of work are above average and achievement is good.
- The emphasis on first hand experience and close links with regional artists and designers enhance learning opportunities.

Commentary

171. Standards in AS and A2 examinations are high and the number of students attaining the highest grades is above average. Students were working at these standards during the inspection. During the courses, students develop confidence in their individual styles and make a personal response, often on a large scale. Their own research is often reflective and perceptive and they are keen to experiment with different media and approaches. They develop ideas that show thoughtful consideration of the work of other artists. Their good knowledge of contemporary practice is a result of many opportunities to participate in artist-led workshops, attend life-drawing classes, visit galleries and make personal contacts. In the textiles course, students develop a good technical understanding and produce experimental work that informs their innovative and expressive designs. The breadth of curricular opportunities means that students of all abilities can achieve success. Achievement overall is good. Although students use the Internet well to research their ideas, other uses of information and communication technology are limited and this is an area for development.
172. Teaching is very good and well tailored to the needs of individuals. One-to-one guidance is challenging yet positive and supportive. Good assessment and tracking procedures ensure that progress is monitored well and students understand the examination requirements. Students are encouraged to evaluate each other's work and the 'group crit' provides a valuable learning experience for all. Courses are well designed and clearly referenced to a real context. The teachers' own good subject knowledge and personal contacts through the regional artists' network enhance the curriculum and prepare students well for examination and further study.
173. Leadership and management of the area are very good and the strong team of teachers works well together. Good communication ensures that students in shared classes make good progress and that they benefit from the different strengths of staff. Although the limited budget is well managed, inadequate resources sometimes affect standards of work. For example, a student experimenting with coloured ink on poor quality paper could not achieve the desired effects. The amount and quality of books and reference materials in the library are poor.

Example of outstanding practice

The art and design area has a 'foreign policy' which ensures that wide-ranging links are made with regional artists and galleries to provide opportunities for first hand experience of art and artists.

In one of many such examples, all GCSE and A-level students and teachers took part in a day's workshop with three artist printmakers. Older and younger students worked together in mixed groups. Teachers as well as students were inspired by the experience, which provided valuable staff development as well as enhancing the curriculum. It was so successful that a similar day with digital artists is planned to stimulate the extended use of digital technology in art and design.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The school offers a number of subjects in this area. Physical education and leisure subjects were inspected in detail.

Physical education

Overall, the provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- The quality of both teaching and learning is very good.
- Students work independently and think for themselves.
- Opportunities for participation, leadership and coaching in sport are very good.
- There is limited use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.

Commentary

174. Standards by Year 13 are above average, which represents good achievement. An enrichment programme of sport on Wednesday afternoons provides opportunities for students to participate in inter-school sport or recreational activities or gain leadership or coaching awards. The standard of competition in an under 19 rugby match observed during the inspection was particularly impressive and involved many sixth form students. Some students use their sports leadership awards to support teachers in organised physical education and sports competitions in primary feeder schools.

175. Whilst the numbers of students opting for the AS and A2 physical education course is small, results are consistently high; 100 per cent pass rates have been achieved over the past three years and over half of students have attained A or B grades. This is a direct result of well-planned, high quality teaching and learning that encourages students to find out for themselves and share their findings with others. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students worked in pairs to research aerobic capacity and 'VO2 max', and then shared their findings in a short presentation to others using their own selected visual aids. This was particularly effective in reinforcing learning and creating resources for revision at a later stage.

176. Homework is set regularly and students are provided with good reference materials and study aids such as revision guides and workbooks. Whilst a few examples of information and communication technology-generated work appear in coursework files there are insufficient opportunities to enhance learning using information and communication technology. Further opportunities to analyse performance and to access software and Internet websites relating to the study of sport need to be provided. In one Year 13 lesson, the use of video footage of sports events in different countries proved a particularly effective way of making comparisons in sports provision and helped to stimulate student interest and debate.

177. Subject leadership and management are very good. The AS and A2 courses are very well prepared. Students are provided with a detailed overview of what they need to learn and are encouraged to do their own independent research into sporting issues. Teachers have very good working relationships with students and this helps to create a positive working atmosphere in lessons. Marking of coursework and homework tasks is not done on a regular or systematic basis and does not always give quality advice on how to improve. Standardised marking procedures would help to monitor and further improve the standard of work of all students.

Leisure subjects

Overall, the provision for leisure subjects is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high and achievement good in GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism.
- Very poor examination results and retention rate in the leisure and recreation course make its future uncertain.
- Good relationships between students and teachers encourage a desire to succeed.
- The integrated weekly work experience programme for leisure and tourism students extends their commercial experience.
- There is a need to improve pace, challenge and expectations in lessons so that students are consistently pushed on to achieve more and at higher levels.
- There is a need to refocus on the function of the vocational curriculum and the place of leisure subjects within it, in order to deliver a consistent, quality menu for post-16 students.

Commentary

178. Two courses are now offered in leisure subjects with markedly different outcomes. The intermediate leisure and tourism course has a rising record of results so that in 2003 there was a 100 per cent success rate with five of the 14 students achieving a merit or distinction grade – well above the national average. By contrast, all the students remaining on the AVCE leisure and recreation course failed to complete coursework assignments or the end of unit examinations. Therefore, none gained a pass grade. This is well below the national average and represents very poor achievement.

179. Most students in leisure subjects start with lower GCSE grades. Those taking the successful intermediate leisure and tourism course make good progress, though it can be erratic. However, students learn to work independently and in groups and are beginning to use information and communication technology to develop their work in new ways that represents good achievement. Those undertaking the leisure and recreation course found greater difficulty with the work and many dropped out of the course during the year. Accordingly, there was little work to see. Their achievement was very poor. No candidates continued to the second year of the AVCE course.

180. No lessons were available to be seen in leisure and recreation during the inspection. In leisure and tourism teaching and learning are both satisfactory. Relationships are good, amiable and encouraging. Teachers are good at supporting students through targeted questions designed to make progress, but consistent expectations of what can be achieved are too low. The pace and challenge in lessons need to be raised so that more work is done. Assessment is organised to suit the unit requirements but letting students know the level they are working at and what they must do to reach the next grade is only in the planning stage. It needs rapid implementation so that students make even better progress. Similarly, plans for accrediting information and communication technology as a key skill within leisure subjects exist but outcomes for students have yet to be seen often enough in their work. Work experience has been organised to take

place one day per week. It is monitored weekly, is a strength of the course and helps in raising student achievement.

181. The subject is within the vocational studies area that is dominated by business education, the leadership and management of which is satisfactory. Course expansion is recent and well intentioned. However, given the varied outcomes between the leisure subjects, management needs to consolidate the place of vocational education and the courses within it in order to maximise achievement, promote the role and function of them in the post-16 curriculum, permit progression and avoid having groups so small that they are considered to be non-viable.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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