

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ARMTHORPE SCHOOL

Armthorpe, Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106782

Headteacher: Nigel Pattinson

Reporting inspector: Ted Wheatley
10013

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 7th February 2003

Inspection number: 249660

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 – 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mere Lane
Armthorpe
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
Postcode: DN3 2DA

Telephone number: 01302 831582

Fax number: 01302 300757

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Shearman

Date of previous inspection: 21st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10013	Ted Wheatley	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13786	Susan Walsh	Lay inspector		Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19214	Geoff Price	Team inspector	English, drama Post 16: English	
2919	Phillip Armitage	Team inspector	Mathematics Post 16: mathematics	
27503	Marie Foulds	Team inspector	Science Post 16: biology	
30901	Susan Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design	
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology Post 16: information and communication technology	
31191	David Sylph	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
12118	Allan Paver	Team inspector	Geography Post 16: geography	
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
1340	David Wigley	Team inspector	Music Citizenship	

22042	John Challands	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
18673	Richard Wilkins	Team inspector	Religious education	
27803	Joe Clark	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

3 Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

7

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

15

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

22

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

30

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

31

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

38

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

45

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

73

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Armthorpe School has 940 pupils and students and is broadly average in size compared with other 11–18 schools. The sixth form has 88 students and is smaller than average. Pupils and students are of predominantly white United Kingdom background. There are small numbers of pupils from black Caribbean, black African, Pakistani and other backgrounds. Two pupils have English as an additional language and one is in the early stages of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average and has fallen in recent years. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average and the proportion on the school's register for special educational needs is well above average. The school is in an area of high levels of social deprivation and the level of government aid is high. Attainment on entry to the school is below average and many pupils have poor literacy skills. The proportion of higher attaining pupils entering the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

While the majority of pupils receive a satisfactory and often good standard of education, some pupils do not and they underachieve. The highest attaining pupils often perform well and obtain good examination results. The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is unsatisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall although the percentage of very good teaching has increased since the last inspection. The headteacher provides sound direction for improvement though procedures to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the school are unsatisfactory. Overall, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money. Although the weaknesses in management, teaching and the achievement and behaviour of a minority of pupils are serious, the school is giving its pupils an acceptable standard of education overall.

What the school does well

- The highest attaining pupils achieve well. Pupils achieve well in history and art and very well in drama.
- The proportion of very good teaching has increased since the last inspection.
- The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- The local community makes a significant contribution to the education of pupils.
- Sixth form provision is good.

What could be improved

- The achievement of some pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall; temporary and inexperienced teachers in particular have difficulties maintaining good discipline.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils are poor; they are rude and some are aggressive towards other pupils. The level of fixed term exclusion is high.
- The school has staffing problems. There is a high proportion of temporary staff and some posts have not been filled.
- Management is unsatisfactory overall because some policies that support the smooth running of the school are not effectively implemented.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

This is a school with serious weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since it was last inspected in April 1997. The attainment of boys has improved and a literacy policy has been implemented. The performance of sixth form students has improved. There are strategies to observe and evaluate teaching but they are not used consistently. There is more very good teaching but the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has increased. Assessment information is still not used effectively to guide curriculum planning or to set targets for pupils, and assessment of pupils' progress, particularly in Years 7 to 9, is inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate. Spiritual development has not improved and social development has deteriorated for some pupils. Whole-school policies have not been implemented effectively. Statutory requirements for appraisal of teachers are now met, there is sufficient time for religious education throughout the school, religious education is provided for sixth form students and religious education reports are produced for pupils in Year 11.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	D	C	E	E
A-levels/AS-levels	-	E	*	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

* National comparison data for AS/A-level results in 2002 are not yet available.

In the end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2002, attainment was below the national average overall and results were similar to 2000 and 2001, though lower than in 1999. Results were above the national average in English and well below the national average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, attainment was above average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Based on their prior attainment, pupils made unsatisfactory progress overall, though generally the highest attaining pupils made sound progress. Standards seen in the inspection are broadly average, showing that there has been some improvement. In English standards are broadly average, in mathematics they are below average and in science they are average. In other subjects, standards are broadly average in art and design, design and technology, history, physical education, religious education, drama and citizenship. Standards are below average in geography, modern foreign languages and music and well below average in information and communication technology (ICT). Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and for the highest attaining pupils achievement is often good. Achievement in ICT and music is unsatisfactory.

In the GCSE examinations in 2002, results were well below the national average overall, although the trend of improvement over recent years has been in line with the national trend. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades was well below average and well below the average of similar schools. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades was close to the national average and to the average for similar schools. The percentage obtaining at least one GCSE pass grade was close to the national average and above average for similar schools. The school did not achieve its targets. Compared with their end of Year 9 national tests taken in 2000, pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done. However, in English, mathematics, science, English literature, business studies, geography, history, drama and religious education the highest attaining pupils achieved well overall. In French, German, ICT and physical education the highest attaining pupils did not achieve as well as expected. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average overall and while higher attaining pupils

generally achieve well many other pupils do not. This is mainly because the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and disrupts the learning of others.

Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are broadly average, though speaking and listening skills are less developed than their writing skills. ICT skills are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and is frequently good for those pupils who receive support. However, some pupils receive too little support and their progress is unsatisfactory. The small numbers of pupils from ethnic minorities make similar progress to other pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Unsatisfactory. Most pupils have positive attitudes and want to do well, but too many pupils are casual and do not appreciate what the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory. Many pupils behave well in and out of lessons. However, a significant minority of pupils in some lessons cause disruption and make it difficult for other pupils to learn. The rate of fixed term exclusion of pupils is very high.
Personal development and relationships	Unsatisfactory. Pupils have very few opportunities to develop responsible attitudes. There are some good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers, but some pupils have no respect for other pupils or teachers.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The number of unexplained absences is reducing but a significant proportion of pupils continue to have too much time off school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. In Years 7 to 11 teaching is very good in about one in ten lessons, in just under half of lessons it is good and in about one in three lessons it is satisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory in one in seven lessons. In the sixth form teaching is very good in over one in five lessons and good in the rest.

In the main school, teaching is good in science in Years 7 to 9, in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 and in English. It is also good in art and design, citizenship and history. It is unsatisfactory in music and modern foreign languages and generally satisfactory elsewhere. However, there is some unsatisfactory teaching in most other subjects too. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally satisfactory, though there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to use ICT to enhance their learning.

Where teaching is effective and leads to good learning, teachers' subject knowledge is good, lessons are well planned and teachers establish effective relationships where there are high expectations of

behaviour and what pupils should achieve. In these lessons, teachers handle pupils' behaviour firmly. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, and this is mainly among temporary and less experienced teachers, teachers do not have the skills needed to manage the disruptive behaviour of some pupils and the school's procedures to support teachers do not work effectively. In these lessons also, undemanding tasks tend to contribute to some pupils losing interest and becoming disruptive.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, though there are too few support assistants to meet the needs of all pupils. Learning mentors are not always used effectively to support pupils who have behaviour problems.

In the sixth form, teachers show good subject knowledge and their teaching of key skills is very good. They plan lessons well and use effective teaching methods. They assess students' work well and provide good advice on what students need to do to achieve well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broad and balanced. In Years 10 and 11 statutory requirements are not met for ICT taught in other subjects. Provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. Careers education is good and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory overall. Although pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress and those withdrawn from lesson make good progress, there are many other pupils with special educational needs who are not supported in lessons, some of whom have not yet been formally identified as having special needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The small numbers of pupils who have English as an additional language receive satisfactory support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. However, provision for spiritual, moral and social development is unsatisfactory and has little impact on the personal development of a significant minority of pupils. Statutory requirements for collective worship are not met.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Unsatisfactory. Individual teachers, tutors and heads of year have caring attitudes and support pupils well. However, the policies and procedures to promote good behaviour, high achievement and personal development are not strong enough.

Parents have positive views of the school overall. However, the school's links with parents do not contribute enough to improving pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes to school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory overall. The headteacher and senior staff have a sound view of how the school should improve and the development plan has clear priorities for improvement. However, day-to-day procedures are not well managed and do not assist the school to operate as effectively as it

	might, particularly where there are so many temporary teachers and new staff. There is determination to improve and staff morale is high.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall the governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are helping to plan how the school should improve. They are supportive but their understanding of the deficiencies in the school is unsatisfactory overall though some do recognise the school's problems.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. There are good or satisfactory procedures to observe and evaluate teaching in many subjects but these are not consistent throughout the school, though there has been some improvement in teaching. Procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of whole-school policies are unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. The school has sound financial controls, uses funds for special educational needs appropriately and has satisfactory procedures to ensure it obtains best value for available funds. However, learning mentors, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, are not deployed effectively though there are plans to do so.

Staffing is unsatisfactory because there are too many temporary teachers and not enough support staff for pupils with special educational needs. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school. They make good progress. Behaviour is mostly good. Most parents think teaching is good. The school deals with questions and problems well. The school has high expectations of children. It is well managed and led. The school helps children become mature and responsible. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some concern at the amount of homework. Parents feel they are not well enough informed about progress. The school does not work closely enough with parents.

Inspectors agree with some of the strengths recognised by parents. Children like school and the behaviour of most of them is good. The school deals with the concerns of most parents well and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Overall, inspectors judged that provision of homework is generally satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory information about how well pupils make progress. However, the school does not work closely enough with parents, particularly to reduce pupils' absence and to improve the behaviour of the significant minority of pupils who misbehave.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this school is smaller than other sixth forms, currently having 61 students in Year 12, and 27 students in Year 13. The students come from an area in which the vast majority of parents did not study in higher education. Forty-nine per cent of the 2000 Year 11 cohort stayed on into the sixth form in 2001, and this included the retention of more higher attaining pupils than in previous years. Students are attracted to the sixth form from other institutions. Sixty-three per cent of the 2002 Year 13 continued education beyond the age of 18. Nineteen A-level courses are offered, and a range of vocational courses. The sixth form is recognised as a Centre of Excellence for its GNVQ provision. Attainment on entry to the sixth is below average overall and the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below average. The retention rate between Year 12 and Year 13 is 93 per cent.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a good sixth form that serves the local community well, and is cost effective. Examination results have improved since the last inspection, and have significantly improved in the most recent Advanced level and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) results. 2002 Advanced Subsidiary (AS) results were good. The sixth form is well led and managed and staff monitor and support students' academic progress and personal development rigorously. In the five subjects focused upon during the inspection, teaching is uniformly good. Students achieve well and gain broadly average standards. They have very good attitudes to their studies. The sixth form is a strong feature of the school.

Strengths

- The sixth form is well led and managed.
- Students are mature and confident, and enjoy a very good working relationship with staff.
- Teaching is good, and students make good progress.
- The school offers a wide range of courses, which meet the needs of the students.
- Students are given very good academic and pastoral support and guidance.

What could be improved

- There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop independent research with computers.
- There are too few links with institutes of higher education.
- Toilet facilities are unsatisfactory.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements 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	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Standards of work seen in lessons were close to the national average. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and good relations with students. Weaknesses in numerical and algebraic manipulation adversely affect progress.
Biology	Good. Teachers prepare students well for examinations, and are very supportive. They have good relations with students who demonstrate very positive attitudes. With the exception of the most recent A-level results, students usually achieve better than predicted.
Information and	Good. Teaching is good, and this contributes to students achieving good

communication technology	standards. Lessons are well planned. Teachers and students have high expectations of what should be achieved. Courses are well matched to students' needs and examination results are improving.
Geography	Good. Standards are improving, and students have been performing consistently better than in other subjects in the school. Teaching and learning are good, and often very good. Students have a clear idea of their own attainment, and make a strong contribution to dialogue.
English	Good. Good teaching and positive attitudes of the students result in students achieving well. English language is a popular subject, and students enjoy their lessons.

Work was sampled in other subjects. Two English literature lessons and two business studies lessons were observed. Single lessons were seen in chemistry, physics, history, modern foreign languages (German), art, psychology, performing arts, media studies, physical education, travel and tourism, leisure and tourism, and health and social care. In addition, Year 12 and Year 13 general studies lessons were observed in which key skills were studied. In these lessons, the teaching is very good overall, notably in general studies, chemistry, business studies, media studies and history. Teaching is sometimes excellent in performing arts. Students have very good attitudes to their work overall, achieve very well and gain average standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are very well inducted into the sixth form, and receive good quality support and guidance across Years 12 and 13. Information about course options in the sixth form is detailed and comprehensive. Each student has an action plan and a review record that is completed once each half term. Students' action plans are used effectively to monitor, evaluate and set targets.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management are good. A newly appointed head of sixth form has a firm grasp of the demands of the job, and has some innovative new ideas for further developing sixth form provision and opportunities. He works effectively with an assistant headteacher, who is very experienced. Together with mentors from Years 12 and 13 they form a very successful management team.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The positive working atmosphere. Very good student/teacher relationships. Information about subjects and courses. Good teaching. A very good choice of courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers advice. The range of enrichment provision. They are not treated as adults.

Students are very positive about the sixth form. The strengths they have identified exactly match the targets that the sixth form management team has recently been focusing upon. Students are a credit to the school: they contribute to a positive working ethos, and respond well to the relationships established by the teachers. Careers advice is thorough, is given by the sixth form management team, mentors and the careers officer and is supported from Internet sources. Year 12 students are treated more rigorously than Year 13 students, as the sixth form management team is seeking to establish a better working ethos with many of them. The enrichment provision across both years is very good.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, 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'.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is below average and has been for several years. Literacy skills are well below average.
2. Difficulties in appointing staff have beset the school for several years and although the situation has improved, there is still a large number of temporary teachers and many new appointments to the school, including several heads of department. This disruption to staffing has had, and is still having, a detrimental effect on the standards pupils achieve.
3. In the National Curriculum tests taken by 14 year olds at the end of Year 9 in 2002 attainment was well below average overall. The proportion of pupils obtaining the average level 5 in English was in line with the national average and in mathematics and science was well below the national average. The percentage obtaining level 6 or higher was above average in English and well below the national average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were above average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Based on their prior attainment, pupils make unsatisfactory progress from when they enter the school. However, the highest attaining pupils in English make good progress and in mathematics and science make sound progress. Over recent years the overall trend in attainment has been downwards though attainment has risen in English after a steady decline in recent years and fallen in mathematics and science after gradual improvement over the same period. In other subjects, attainment as measured by teachers' assessments in 2002 was below average. However, it was average in art and well above average in music. Attainment was below average in geography, ICT, and physical education and well below average in design and technology, history and modern foreign languages.
4. Inspection evidence shows that standards are broadly average by Year 9 – an improvement on the well below average standards indicated by the 2002 National Curriculum tests. In English and science standards are broadly average and in mathematics they are below average. The highest attaining pupils often perform at higher than average levels. In art and design, design and technology, history, physical education, religious education and drama standards are broadly average. In geography, modern foreign languages and music they are below average and in ICT they are well below average. Standards are broadly as expected in citizenship. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and it is good in English, science, art and design, history, drama and citizenship. It is satisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. It is unsatisfactory in ICT and music.
5. In the GCSE examinations taken by 16 year olds in 2002, results were well below the national average. The average points scored by pupils and the percentage of pupils who obtained five or more A*-C grades were well below average. The percentages of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades and at least a GCSE pass were broadly average. Compared with similar schools, the average points score and the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades were well below average. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades was average and the percentages of pupils obtaining at least one GCSE pass grade was above average compared with similar

schools. The school did not achieve its targets for average point score or the percentage of five or more A*-C grades, though it achieved the target for pupils passing at least one GCSE. Results in 2002 were significantly lower than in 2001, though over the last five years the trend was broadly in line with the national trend.

6. The school generally did well by its highest attainers. Based on how pupils performed in the end of Year 9 national tests in 2000, the highest attaining pupils performed well in English, mathematics, English literature, science, textiles, business studies, geography, history, drama and religious education. In French, German, ICT and physical education the highest attainers did not do as well as expected. Nevertheless, overall, pupils did not do as well as expected based on their prior attainment.
7. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average overall. They are below average in English, mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. They are average in art and design, design and technology, citizenship, history and physical education. They are well below average in ICT, mainly because there is insufficient cross-curricular ICT to fully develop pupils' skills. Standards are above average in drama. In English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and physical education pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It is good in art and design and history and very good in drama. Achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. While the highest attaining pupils frequently achieve well, a minority of other pupils often achieve unsatisfactorily because they are not challenged sufficiently or because poor behaviour by some pupils disrupts their achievement. However, overall, pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.
8. Pupils' standards of literacy across all subjects are average. Pupils read competently and can meet the demands in all subjects. Writing is generally well presented and organised by pupils of all attainment levels. In the work of many pupils spelling is below average. Appropriate use of ICT skills helps pupils to prepare and present their written work.
9. Overall standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Within this, progress in developing numeracy skills in ICT, for example, is hampered by pupils' below average data-handling skills. Other subjects such as geography use graphs well and find pupils cope easily with population pyramids. In science and design and technology, pupils effectively use their own measurements to calculate various parameters. Art makes effective use of ratios and perspective.
10. Standards in the use of ICT are well below average in most subjects, for example music where staffing difficulties have prevented pupils developing skills in composition. In science pupils' data logging skills are below average. In English, pupils have average word processing and desktop publishing skills. Overall, however, pupils' ICT skills are underdeveloped and well below average.
11. Many of the pupils identified as having special educational needs experience difficulties with literacy skills. Others have difficulties related to behaviour and some have specific learning difficulties related to either visual or hearing impairment. The majority of these pupils tend to perform below the level of other pupils in their year group with regard to basic skills and in particular speaking, listening, reading and writing. Their difficulties also affect their ability to progress in other areas of the curriculum. However, when many of these pupils are withdrawn from lessons and are provided with specific support for literacy and, to some extent, numeracy, their progress is good.

12. The ten pupils who have statements of special educational needs relating to emotional and behavioural difficulties display a wide range of abilities and problems but make satisfactory progress when provided with support by learning support assistants. When support for these pupils and others who have emotional and behavioural problems is not available many of these pupils do not make satisfactory progress and learning of other pupils in the group is seriously restricted. Learning mentors, recently appointed to work with pupils with behavioural problems particularly, are not deployed effectively to the pupils who would most benefit from their help. Nevertheless, pupils they work with make sound progress. Several pupils with special educational needs, especially emotional and behavioural problems, have not been identified as needing support.
13. The previous inspection report noted that support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs who do not have a statement was variable and that the level of experience of staff and resources was insufficient. Although the number of support assistants has improved and they often provide good support, an unacceptable number of these pupils do not receive appropriate support in lessons.
14. The small numbers of pupils from different ethnic minority groups make similar progress to other pupils.

Sixth form

15. There has been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection, and an outstanding one between the 2001 and 2002 academic and vocational results. The average points score and percentage of 'A' grades have increased significantly from 2000 to 2002. In the most recent examinations, high quality results were obtained in media studies, performing arts, English, history, geography, psychology and GNVQ health and social care and ICT. Outstanding results were gained in law. Good AS results in 2002 augur well for matching results in A-level and AVCE examinations in 2003.
16. In work observed in the five focus subjects during the inspection, students generally had good levels of knowledge and understanding, and good powers of analysis. They all have well-developed key skills, as observed in Year 12 and Year 13 general studies lessons. They are able to apply themselves at an appropriate intellectual level. Attainment on entry to sixth form courses is below average overall – students achieve well in the sixth form.
17. Key skills are successfully taught to all sixth form students as a discrete, accredited subject with the general studies programme. All students take level 2 at the end of Year 12, and level 3 at the end of Year 13. In two lessons observed, students demonstrated excellent attitudes, particularly in Year 13, achieved very well, and gained good results. This was largely due to very good teaching. In the five focused subjects during the inspection, the application of number was observed to be good in biology, and good use was made of graphs and charts in ICT and geography. Students have difficulty relating prior knowledge in pure mathematics. Communication skills are very good in biology and ICT, with effective written and oral presentations. ICT competence in biology is an area for development. Satisfactory use is made of it in English and mathematics. Students across all five subjects have good study and research skills. Problem solving skills are good in biology and geography. Sixth form students in this school receive very good quality key skills education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils' attitudes to school are unsatisfactory overall. The majority of pupils are hard working and want to do well. For example, high attaining pupils in Year 11 work hard in their English lessons, they concentrate well, ask challenging questions and listen to one another. Pupils of high ability often work hard and succeed. However, there is a significant minority of pupils who have very casual attitudes to school. Some pupils saunter into school in the morning, there is little sense of urgency as pupils move between lessons and lateness to lessons is very common. This interrupts the beginning of lessons and wastes valuable teaching time. Pupils have satisfactory interest and involvement in activities outside lessons; there is average involvement in sport and good involvement in drama productions but recent staffing difficulties have limited pupil's involvement in music.
19. A significant minority of pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes in lessons. Some of these pupils come ill equipped and teachers often supply equipment. In a lesson about areas, pupils often could not be bothered to use a ruler when drawing shapes, even when it was lying on the desk in front of them. Occasionally, the work is too easy for pupils, such as in some music lessons and then pupils lack motivation because they do not feel challenged. In a significant small number of lessons pupils are restless and very slow to settle. They prefer to gossip about their social lives rather than getting on with their work. For example, in modern foreign languages pupils did not actively misbehave but they took little notice of the teacher. In some lessons dedicated pupils still manage to get on with their work despite the noise level or disruption. In a small minority of lessons blatant, shocking behaviour damages the learning of others and there is insufficient support for teachers to help them deal with these situations. Nevertheless, in most lessons pupils have at least satisfactory attitudes and many have good attitudes. They are well prepared for work and respond well when challenged.
20. Behaviour around the school is unsatisfactory overall. Most pupils behave sensibly as they move around school though very boisterous behaviour is common. Behaviour in the dining hall is acceptable and pupils usually behave well in assemblies. However, a minority of pupils often use offensive language to each other and there are incidents of aggressive behaviour. Most pupils respect property but a minority do not. Vandalism in areas such as the toilets affects the quality of life for all pupils. Although many pupils are able to reflect on how they behave and understand how their actions impact on others a significant small number of pupils have insufficient regard for teachers and other pupils.
21. The number of fixed term exclusions is extremely high and has increased since the last inspection, though numbers do reflect repeat exclusions. The school has received some difficult pupils from other schools and some of these pupils have been excluded. However, there is still a very large number of exclusions that involve pupils that have always attended Armthorpe School. Reasons for exclusion are appropriate but often the length of exclusion is not sufficiently related to the severity of the offence. The numbers of permanent exclusions is low – the lowest in the authority.
22. Pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop initiative. Older pupils do not have responsibility for their own work; books are collected in at the end of each lesson and kept in school. However, when opportunities for responsibility are presented to them, pupils often react well. For example, younger pupils are interested in the lower school council and want to contribute. However, the teacher dominates the proceedings and pupils do not have the opportunity to lead the debate. In drama lessons pupils were encouraged to make decisions about their own learning; this resulted in pupils being very enthusiastic about

these lessons. Their involvement in evaluating their own work and the work of others increases their knowledge and understanding.

23. Relationships are satisfactory overall. There are some good relationships between teachers and pupils. However, the relationship between some pupils and teachers can become strained when pupils feel that they are given unfair punishments. Relationships in physical education are good because pupils are able to work well in groups. Relationships between most pupils are appropriate but there are too many pupils who do not have enough regard for others.
24. Respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is unsatisfactory overall and there is a small amount of aggressive and racist behaviour. Nevertheless, the great majority of pupils show respect and tolerance for others and while acknowledging there is some bullying, also report that it is often well dealt with, particularly by the headteacher. Year 7 pupils empathise with children from different cultures and their problems, as do many older pupils, but a small minority of Year 10 pupils openly express racist views during life skills classes and there is some intolerance of difference by a small number of pupils, especially in the appearance of others. The school is aware of some bigotry and while life skills lessons are intended to allow pupils to express their views and then to deal with them, the impact has been limited so far in helping these pupils to be more understanding of those with different appearances, backgrounds and cultures from their own. Incidents of bullying are relatively common and while most are dealt with effectively, some are not.
25. Attendance is unsatisfactory and patterns of attendance are similar to those identified during the previous inspection. Rates of attendance are well below the national average but unexplained absences are relatively low. Most pupils in Years 7 and 8 attend school regularly and this helps them to achieve satisfactorily. Absence increases in Years 9, 10 and 11. Most are authorised, absences on Monday and Friday are common and a significant small number of pupils go on holiday during term time. Unsatisfactory attendance is a significant contributory factor to unsatisfactory achievement in GCSE examinations.
26. Pupils with special educational needs usually have a very positive attitude to lessons when withdrawn from lessons to receive extra support. This is also the case in most lessons when learning support assistants provide support. Here they are confident they will succeed because they have appropriate support and because learning support staff are very aware of pupils' specific needs. Pupils' attitudes to work here is enthusiastic and they have good relationships with other pupils and with members of staff. In lessons where appropriate support was not provided by learning support assistants, there were incidents of unacceptable and disruptive behaviour.

Sixth form

27. Students are mature and self-confident. As a body, they present a first-class model to pupils in the rest of the school. In the questionnaire, which almost all students returned, they express trust in the school, and enjoy the subjects they are studying. All Year 13 students are prefects, extremely well led by a head boy and girl, and deputy head boy and girl. All share patrol duties during breaks, they marshal on sports days, and help with the organisation on Prize Day. Some help younger pupils in the learning support unit, and one female student teaches in a local primary school once a week. In Years 12 and 13, students enjoy a mutually respectful relationship with their teachers. They demonstrate very good attitudes in lessons, and work industriously and purposefully in any free time they may have.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

28. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11. In about one in ten lessons teaching is very good, but never excellent. Teaching is good in a little less than half of lessons and satisfactory in about one third of lessons. It is unsatisfactory and occasionally worse in one in seven lessons. While there is more very good teaching than at the last inspection, there is also much more unsatisfactory teaching.
29. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge and the methods they use and the challenge of the work they set benefits pupils. In the best lessons, too, teachers are enthusiastic, and establish and maintain good relationships that lead to good management of pupils' behaviour. High expectations of what pupils can achieve and how well they should behave are contributory factors to pupils' good learning. For example, in a very good English lesson, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm and the challenging tasks based on war poetry led to good learning. Where teachers question pupils skilfully, as in some science lessons, pupils become involved, contribute to their own learning and design their own investigations. Generally, teachers plan lessons well with suitable activities to interest and motivate pupils and these play a large part in maintaining good behaviour and pupils' concentration. For example, in mathematics lessons, the use of the three-part lesson structure from the Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) Strategy gives a particular focus to pupils' learning and although the plenary sessions are sometimes too short and rushed, pupils often learn well. Teachers' encouragement of pupils and building up their self-esteem have a positive effect on pupils' learning and are a significant factor in art lessons in helping pupils to learn confidently.
30. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the main weakness is some teachers' inability to manage the poor behaviour of a small but significant proportion of pupils. Unsatisfactory and sometimes poor behaviour is evident in about one fifth of lessons. In some of these lessons, teachers deal with the poor behaviour well. However, some other teachers, mainly temporary teachers and those new to the school, do not have the strategies to deal with poor behaviour and some pupils take advantage of this situation. This is made worse by the school's ineffective support for teachers having difficulties maintaining discipline. Failure to do so leads to unsatisfactory learning not only of these pupils themselves but also of other pupils when lessons are disrupted. Unsatisfactory teaching is most common in modern foreign languages, music and religious education, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching in other subjects too.
31. Overall, teachers' expectations are unsatisfactory but, in spite of this, in most lessons teachers present challenging work and provide sensitive and useful support. In a

significant small proportion of lessons, work is not challenging enough. In some modern foreign languages lessons, for example, there is too little oral work to challenge pupils to think and learn and teachers infrequently conduct the lesson in the target language, which would challenge pupils. In other lessons, for example, occasionally in geography, there are also too few opportunities for pupils to speak and discuss their work and this limits how well their understanding develops. Tasks are sometimes too easy in response to poor behaviour by a small number of pupils, but where teachers provide challenging work pupils achieve well, and in many instances behave well.

32. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall, though in some subjects there are inconsistencies. Some teachers give detailed oral feedback and written comments so that pupils are sure of what they need to do to improve the work they do. Other teachers do not, so pupils are unsure of what improvements they need to make. This is true of history, ICT and physical education lessons. Provision for homework is satisfactory overall and sometimes good.
33. Teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall and there is some effective teaching in design and technology. In science, geography, history and religious education teachers regularly encourage and help pupils with their writing. They use important terminology and reinforce its use with pupils. Practice is less consistent in other subjects.
34. Despite few departments having a numeracy policy, teachers of subjects such as science make good use of a range of numeracy skills including work with graphs, tables and transposing algebraic equations. In geography, teachers have a good awareness of numeracy and its use. In design and technology, teachers regularly use tables of figures or graphs from which pupils must extract information. In art, work on a worm's eye view of skyscrapers made good use of perspective and scale.
35. Teaching of the use of ICT across subjects is unsatisfactory because not enough of it goes on, particularly in Years 10 and 11. There are examples of good teaching in geography where teachers are confident and capable but overall teachers do not use ICT enough to help pupils learn more effectively.
36. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory in several subjects in Years 10 and 11, particularly music and modern foreign languages. It is also unsatisfactory in ICT in Year 7. This is most often because there is no support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs or these pupils have not been appropriately identified. It is good though where pupils are withdrawn from lessons to receive support through computer-assisted literacy and numeracy support programmes. In many lessons, inconsistent use is made of individual education plans. Where they are used, pupils' needs are well known by teaching staff but subject specific targets are only rarely set. In a mathematics lesson where there were many pupils with special educational needs their needs were well known and teaching was good, resulting in good progress. However, in a Year 7 English lesson where all pupils were on the special needs register, pupils with emotional and behavioural problems were disruptive and progress for other pupils was restricted. In most subjects support from learning support assistants in lessons is providing pupils with special educational needs with appropriate guidance but in several lessons observed support for these pupils was not provided and progress for these pupils was then unsatisfactory. In some instances, when pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties did not receive support from learning support assistants, there was disruption to the lesson and the progress of other pupils in the group was restricted. Good classroom teaching involving an appropriate range of teaching strategies and resources is compensating to some extent in some lessons but in many cases the progress of those pupils with special educational needs is restricted because of this lack of support.

Sixth form

37. Teaching and learning are good. In one fifth of lessons teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. It is good in seven out of ten lessons and satisfactory elsewhere. The quality of teaching in the five focus subjects is good, and this leads to a good quality of learning. Students have very good attitudes to their studies, and this, together with good teaching, contributes to the good progress they make.
38. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and answer students' specialist questions confidently and accurately. Teachers apply intellectual rigour and challenge and work is pitched at exactly the right level. Adult and business-like relationships are firmly established. Brainstorming is used to good effect, and good marking and assessment of work contribute strongly to the quality of students' learning. In subjects such as biology and ICT, which have a strong practical element, teachers demonstrate clearly and effectively. However, lessons are sometimes too teacher-led, for example, in biology and ICT, and can be over-organised, as in geography. Productive discussions facilitate good learning in all subjects.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

39. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. In Years 7, 8 and 9 the school meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum offers satisfactory breadth and balance in these years. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection with one ICT lesson per week and now meets National Curriculum requirements. This ICT course leads to certification in Year 9; a small number of gifted and talented pupils begin this course in Year 8. The school offers two modern languages from Year 7. Drama is provided in Years 8 and 9. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) begins in Year 9.
40. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is satisfactory in breadth and balance and religious education meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. In science, courses are offered in single, double and three separate sciences to meet the needs of different abilities and interests. Three modern languages are offered at GCSE level. In physical education the time allocation is insufficient to deliver the National Curriculum in enough depth. The school allows only a very limited number of pupils to disapply from core subjects, mainly to meet individual strengths in languages or technology. Statutory requirements for ICT are not met; pupils who do not follow the GCSE course in ICT do not receive their entitlement through the school's provision across other subjects of the curriculum.
41. There is a sound range of academic and vocational options for pupils. Currently, the school provides vocational courses in health and social care and leisure and tourism at foundation and intermediate levels. In addition, a small number of pupils go to the local college following a programme for disaffected pupils, leading to NVQ certification, but this opportunity is not offered to enough pupils. The school recognises that the range of vocational courses is at present rather limited. They are well organised but the range currently on offer at GCSE level is narrow, though increasing slowly. Some pupils at GCSE, unable to follow courses they would prefer, are obliged to study other subjects which they dislike least of those on offer. The school has realistic plans to begin a vocational GCSE course in business from September 2003 and is looking to further provision in the longer term.

42. Careers education is good and parts of the course are very good. There is a good, well-prepared work experience programme for Year 10. The school suspends the timetable for pupils to take part in industry days and in addition to meet with local employers to discuss readiness for work, the preparation of curricula vitae and to take part in mock interviews. The contribution of the governors and of local industry in this programme is impressive. The vocational preparation programme starts in Years 7 and 8 and the 'technology challenge' associated with this reaches into Year 6 in the feeder primary schools. Pupils now in Year 7 talk excitedly about their part in this and about their own model making.
43. The school is committed to teaching its vocational guidance through the year heads and tutors and is well supported by a team of specialist external staff. Year 9 tutors are trained in school to use computer programs for careers guidance. Over recent years this has ensured that all tutors have received some training and this is good. However, the intention to train all tutors further to a high level in counselling is frustrated by the ability to train only two at a time. This in turn frustrates attempts to help pupils take responsibility for raising their own standards of work.
44. Provision for PSHE is unsatisfactory overall though the school makes satisfactory arrangements for drugs awareness training and for sex education. In Years 7 and 8 the timetable is suspended for days at a time to teach about crime issues and prevention, drugs awareness and sex education. The intention is to save time by teaching elements of the programme through other subjects but there has been no recent audit of other areas of PSHE to ensure coverage. Inspection evidence shows that the quality of coverage varies considerably between teachers. The co-ordinator works hard to establish the PSHE programme, but teaching materials are not yet ready for use. There is disagreement about how and when the programme should be delivered and no one has made a decision to resolve the situation.
45. Given that the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are unsatisfactory overall and that pupils lack many learning and social skills, the absence of a strong PSHE programme is a serious omission.
46. Across the curriculum the impact of the school literacy policy is satisfactory. Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is proceeding, although its impact upon teaching and learning is not consistent across all subjects. A literacy co-ordinator is helping to raise awareness of literacy issues. Literacy is a feature of most subjects; however, evidence of literacy strategies in lessons is patchy. English teachers are making good use of language starter activities in some lessons but this is not consistent across the department. Good practice is also evident in design and technology where opportunities for reading are good and where pupils' writing is well supported. Pupils write across a range of tasks in science, geography, history and religious education. Although key words are displayed in most teaching areas teachers do not always make reference to them in lessons.
47. The school has recently run a whole day of training to highlight numeracy across subjects. This initiative was not followed through so that even now many departments do not have a policy statement for numeracy. Despite this some subjects, for example design and technology, plan well for the use of numeracy in their work. Across the school, however, much material is unco-ordinated and lacks overall direction.
48. Most departments plan to use ICT in their schemes of work but delivery is patchy. Although most teachers have received appropriate training, only in geography is ICT a constant feature in pupils' learning. In most other curriculum areas it is underdeveloped.

49. Provision for special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive good support although many others on the school register of pupils with special educational needs do not. Several pupils who would benefit from extra support have not been identified and are not on the register. Some teachers compensate for lack of support in lessons by providing extra work and support although in many lessons there is very little attempt to provide work that is specifically related to the special needs of pupils. However, all pupils receive their basic curriculum entitlement. Pupils aged 14 to 16 are provided with some opportunities to participate successfully in vocational or work-related courses although these are still developing and for many pupils with special educational needs these courses are not yet available.
50. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Drama is a strong feature, with theatre visits, an expressive arts course for gifted and talented pupils and regular part-school and whole-school productions. Science contributes a number of activities including a successful Science Week with outside speakers, various activities and pupil presentations. A group of more able pupils in Years 8 and 9 takes part in an after-school astronomy class which leads to GCSE and another group attends sculpture workshops run by the local authority. The modern languages department has organised residential visits to France and Germany. There is a Global Awareness Day and in Year 10 an Industry Day. Pupils benefit from work experience. Visits and fieldwork are organised to enrich the curriculum in history and geography and pupils visit the Beth Shalom centre. Revision classes are timetabled after school and a revision conference is organised for GCSE students. Pupils in the key skills groups organise a summer picnic and a Christmas party. Residential experiences at outdoor pursuits centres include team building exercises for groups of identified pupils. There is a good range of sporting activities, though the level of participation in teams is disappointing. There is an annual carol service with a band but the range of extra-curricular music is limited at present due to staffing problems.
51. The community makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. There are good links with the local business community through the industry steering group. Employers support pupils in work experience placements. Local employers provide good support for the careers programme in Year 10, helping pupils to develop their personal confidence and their presentation and job application skills. They sponsor the Year 6/7 Technology Challenge. Speakers from Sheffield University speak during Science Week. Pupils took part in a competition to design gates and visitor facilities for the planned new airport at RAF Finningley. The police give talks in school and run a 'Lifestyle' project in which a group of pupils last year identified and met a need in the local community, working under adult supervision to redecorate part of the school. Drama students were engaged in a joint production with adults from the Hayfield centre for learning difficulties.
52. Links with partner institutions are constructive. The school works closely with its three main feeder primary schools, organising induction for Year 6 pupils, taster lessons and bridging work, and deploying a link learning mentor. There are links with Doncaster College and the 'Harmony' group of college, local schools and training providers, which is working to develop joint provision for vocational courses in the longer term.
53. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory overall. It is satisfactory overall for sixth form students. The school has not effectively addressed a key issue of the previous inspection concerning its provision for pupils' and students' spiritual development, which is still unsatisfactory. There is no whole-school approach to promoting their spiritual development, whether through acts

of collective worship, or in lessons. The once-weekly year assemblies do not possess any of the characteristics of worship, and the great majority lack any Christian, religious or spiritual content. Tutor time on other days is used solely for pastoral and administrative purpose, and lacks any spiritual dimension. With a few exceptions, such as religious education, drama and art, opportunities are missed to promote spiritual development in lessons.

54. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is unsatisfactory overall. This is because, although it has clear values and policies, it lacks effective strategies for translating them into practice. It does not do enough to encourage pupils to recognise moral questions, to learn to take personal responsibility for their own choices and actions, to exercise self-discipline or to treat others with respect. This is evidenced in the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, the high incidence of bullying, and general lack of respect for the feelings, beliefs and values of others. Nevertheless, many pupils do respond well to the school's policies and show a high degree of responsibility. The PSHE programme challenges pupils with ethical issues, such as those surrounding substance abuse and relationships, but the programme lacks rigour, does not extend into Years 7 and 8, and is unsatisfactory overall. Some other subjects provide opportunities to explore moral questions. For example, Year 10 pupils address them in Science Week. In religious education, pupils encounter the issues surrounding the concept of the sanctity of life. In ICT, they have developed their own code of conduct. Elsewhere, opportunities are often missed to promote pupils' moral awareness in lessons. The school's provision for the moral development of sixth form students is, however, good.
55. The school's provision for pupils' social development is unsatisfactory overall. It publicly recognises pupils' achievements and raises their self-esteem through a well-planned merits system and Prize Day. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through a range of residential trips, field trips and visits. However, opportunities are not planned to ensure all pupils have a residential experience during their time in the school. A number of subjects, such as religious education, science and drama, provide pupils with good opportunities to develop skills of collaborative working. There is some provision for pupils to learn to take responsibility, through, for example, the school council, or working in the library. In general, however, there are not enough routine opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility in the daily life of the school, and particularly in Year 11. Provision for sixth form students' social development is, however, good overall. For example, students help younger pupils through paired reading, and take the lead in organising major events in the school's life, such as Prize Day. Prefects could, however, undertake a wider range of duties.
56. Provision for pupils' and students' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Provision for music is poor, but otherwise there are satisfactory opportunities for developing skills in the creative and expressive arts. Drama is strong, and there are regular school productions. Pupils' and students' appreciation of their own cultural heritage is strengthened through visits to theatres and museums. Their understanding of other European cultures is raised through modern language visits to France and Germany. The school does more than at the previous inspection to educate pupils and students about cultures other than the Western European, through, for example, its Global Awareness Day. History makes a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of Islamic culture, while religious education introduces them to the major world faiths. Pupils experience the music of India, Africa and the Caribbean. In general, however, more could still be done to raise pupils' and students' awareness of the contribution of cultures other than the Western European to the development of twenty-first century civilisation, and the multicultural richness and diversity of contemporary British society.

For example, opportunities are missed to enrich the learning environment through display, or to celebrate the festivals of the major world religions in assemblies.

Sixth form

57. The curriculum is very good. It is based on an analysis of the requirements of the local community, and is broad and balanced. It also caters for students who have previously experienced attendance and behaviour problems and students who have successfully completed intermediate GNVQ courses and who have gone on to advanced level courses. In addition to the traditional sixth form academic subjects, courses are offered in law, media studies and psychology. Vocational courses include AVCE in health and social care, ICT and travel and tourism. Foundation and intermediate courses are offered at levels 1 and 2 in GNVQ health and social care, ICT and leisure and tourism. Key skills courses in application of number, communication, and ICT are offered. At the end of Year 12, all students take a key skills level 2 accreditation, and a level 3 at the end of Year 13.
58. Other courses provided are GCSE re-sits in mathematics, English and English literature, and it is proposed that science will be added in future. Students have the opportunity to take a community sports leader award, and the driving certificate in motor vehicle and road user studies. Religious studies is delivered within the general studies course, which all students take twice a week.
59. Members of the sixth form have very good access to an enrichment programme. Foreign language students go on a European work experience. GNVQ students choose from a range of options, including driving and Spanish. There are opportunities to participate in the Young Enterprise Scheme, and to gain accreditation in key skills' first aid and sports coaching awards and to take part in work placements. Students are encouraged to attend courses offered by higher education institutions. There is an annual visit to an outdoor pursuits centre, open to all Year 12 students. Many students take a lead in extra-curricular activities. They coach sports teams and referee inter-school competitions. They take part in public science demonstrations. Many are involved in different roles in school productions. Prefects, under the leadership of the head boy and head girl and their deputies, organise the annual upper sixth form ball. They run charity collections. In addition, students have opportunities to take part in activities in the local community through Venture Scouts, the Army Training Corps, sports clubs, local dance schools, theatre groups, and political campaigns. All students keep a journal on participation in extra-curricular activities, which forms the basis of discussion with their mentors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

60. The school's pastoral system has been established for a long time. Year heads and form tutors often have good relationships with pupils and try to meet pupils' needs. However, they are not supported by effective policies and procedures and there are inconsistencies in practice between years. Pupils stay with the same form tutor during their time in school. This results in form tutors knowing pupils very well. Although there is no formal system of monitoring pupil's personal development apart from through the incisive comments that form tutors and year heads write on reports, this system ensures that the monitoring of personal development is satisfactory.
61. The promoting of personal development is unsatisfactory. The strengths of the form tutors' well-established relationship with form members are not exploited well enough. Form periods are often not used effectively. There is no formal programme for the use

of form time. The monitoring of planners is very variable and a significant number of pupils do not use them for recording homework and other important items. There are no discrete lessons of PSHE in Years 7 and 8 and personal development is not always well addressed through other subjects. Academic support is better. There was a well-attended Easter revision conference for last year's Year 11 pupils and another one is planned, and some subjects such as drama provide very good support for their pupils. In Year 11 there is a system of mentoring where form tutors encourage pupils to work towards their examinations and monitor their progress with coursework.

62. Overall, child protection procedures are unsatisfactory because no member of staff has had child protection training. However, there are satisfactory policies and procedures in place for child protection. Currently the needs of looked-after children are met but communication about the circumstances of pupils is not always effective. Arrangements to ensure the health safety and welfare of pupils need improving. Procedures for whole-school risk assessment are unsatisfactory and there are some minor health and safety issues identified during the inspection. This includes developing better procedures regarding storage and dispensing of medicine and ensuring that regular fire drills are properly recorded.
63. There is a general awareness of low aspirations and low self-esteem amongst many pupils. Some attempts are made to raise their self-esteem but these are very limited. The present arrangements for lunchtimes do not meet the pupils' needs. Pupils have to order cold lunches at registration and sometimes do not get what they have ordered. There is limited opportunity for choice. Many pupils go home at lunchtimes and some are often late back to school. Pupils are reluctant to use the toilets, which are in poor condition. They are unpleasant and often used for smoking; some pupils feel unsafe in the toilets. Pupils in Year 11 have no extra responsibilities or privileges that might make them feel like valued young adults, the majority of whom are just about to go out into the world.
64. The school's systems for managing behaviour and promoting high standards of behaviour are unsatisfactory. There are some experienced teachers who have developed their own strategies for promoting good behaviour and in their classes behaviour is good. The school does not have a clear hierarchy of sanctions that can be applied when pupils are being difficult and there are too few rewards for good behaviour. Pupils and parents report that some teachers use whole-class punishments and this unfairness makes pupils resentful. Although many teachers have good relationships with pupils there are some who treat well-behaved pupils with too little respect. There is a lack of support for teachers when they need help to maintain effective classroom discipline. This results in a significant number of pupils developing unsatisfactory attitudes and their behaviour in the classroom can prevent other pupils from learning. There is insufficient supervision of pupils as they move around the school. Pupils feel free to swear, squabble and be generally unpleasant.
65. The levels of exclusions are very high. The school has taken a significant number of pupils who have had problems with behaviour at their previous schools and this accounts for some exclusions. Nevertheless many exclusions involve pupils who have always attended Armthorpe School. The number of days given for exclusion does not directly relate to the offence – there have been prolonged exclusions for relatively minor offences and short exclusions for more serious offences. Letters to parents do not give sufficient detail about the offences that their children have committed. There is insufficient monitoring of exclusions and the school has not properly considered whether they have enough effect. At present, the school does not have enough alternatives to exclusion.

66. The school has recently established a learning support unit that tries to modify the behaviour of some of the most challenging younger pupils. The teaching within the unit is good and a pleasant safe haven is created for a small number of pupils who have very immature attitudes and need to develop their social skills. Whilst they are in the unit pupils are well taught. They enjoy their lessons and work hard. It is too early, however, to judge how successful the unit is in modifying behaviour and reducing exclusion.
67. The school does not have an anti-bullying policy or formal procedures to help teachers deal with bullying issues. The headteacher gives parents his personal guarantee that he will personally and effectively deal with all cases of bullying brought to his attention. Both pupils and parents report that this can be effective. However, there are significant cases of bullying that occur and are not resolved. The headteacher, despite his best endeavours, cannot solve all cases of bullying and at present is not sufficiently well supported by effective procedures that could be carried out by other members of staff. The lack of discrete PSHE lessons in Years 7 and 8 limits the opportunity for bullying issues to be fully explored and discussed in lessons.
68. The role of the learning mentor has not been sufficiently well developed. The school has three established posts for learning mentors but there have been significant staff changes. Two enthusiastic mentors have just been appointed and are trying hard to make a success of their role, and a senior learning mentor will arrive shortly. The school lacks a clear philosophy regarding the role of the learning mentor. There are insufficient procedures to ensure that the time of the learning mentor is used effectively to support appropriate pupils and promote achievement. Although the learning mentors have sufficient space to work, their accommodation is bleak and there is a lack of suitable furnishings.
69. The school's systems for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Record keeping is good and the attendance officer and year heads have worked hard, effectively reducing the number of unexplained absences. They have had some success but there are still pupils who take days off school without permission. In particular, some parents are not aware enough of the effect of erratic attendance on examination results. The education welfare officer has too little time visit all these pupils and there are too few rewards for good attendance. Some pupils are not punctual both to lessons and to the school in the morning and afternoon and some staff routinely accept erratic attendance and lax punctuality.
70. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using assessment information to guide development are satisfactory. In English, mathematics and science, particularly, the wealth of data available from national tests is being analysed carefully to provide a realistic and reliable picture of pupils' attainment. In most other subjects the collection and analysis of data are not so well advanced. The school acknowledges this and discussions are in hand to develop this area of assessment further. The recently appointed data manager has worked hard to set the present systems in place and has a clear view of what now needs to be done. The use of marking of pupils' work as a means of assessment is inconsistent across subjects and teachers. The use of this type of assessment for indicating to pupils what National Curriculum levels they are at, and what to do to improve, is underdeveloped. There is good practice in science and history, for example, which could well be shared with other subjects.

71. Arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. Procedures for identifying pupils are thorough. Although there are links between departments in the school and the learning support department, these are still developing and are not yet fully effective in ensuring that all staff have an appropriate understanding of the specific learning needs of those pupils with special educational needs. Liaison with primary schools is good and forms the foundation for initial assessment which is then developed through extensive testing of pupils on entry to the school, and in subsequent years. This provides relevant information which should assist the school in making decisions about the level of support necessary for all pupils. However, while this necessary support for pupils in lessons is provided for those pupils with statements of special educational needs, it is often not provided for other pupils with special educational needs. On the occasions when support is provided in lessons by learning support assistants and when pupils are withdrawn, progress is often good.
72. Individual education plans are satisfactory overall, and are improving. They are beginning to provide useful information for staff but are not yet being used consistently to set specific targets for pupils in lessons or to monitor progress. Although they are beginning to be reviewed at regular intervals, parental and pupil involvement is still developing and their impact on the progress of pupils is limited.

Sixth form

Assessment

73. Procedures for assessing students' attainment are very good. Students work with their mentors and the sixth form pastoral team, principally through individual interviews and tutorial lessons. Students' learning needs are identified early in September each year. Each student has a sixth form action plan and review record, which is completed once every half term. This record shows the predicted grade by the Advanced Level Information System (ALIS) analysis, and the level at which the student is currently working. Students and mentors write comments at each stage. Parents are informed of the progress of over-achieving and underachieving students after reviews each half term. The day-to-day contact of mentors and students informs identification of issues like poor punctuality, attendance and achievement, and this information is used to monitor those students who have an entitlement to the education maintenance allowance. The system for monitoring, evaluating and target setting is very effective.

Advice, support and guidance

74. There is a good structure for arranging smooth transition from Year 11 into the sixth form. In September of Year 11, pupils are encouraged to set themselves achievable goals for their life 16–19. Advice is given through PSHE lessons, through assemblies and through special events. There is a Sixth Form Opportunities Evening in November, and pupils are expected to clarify their intentions in January. There is an Induction Day in June for those intending to return to the sixth form. Members of staff, including the careers officer, are available for advice when GCSE results are announced in August.
75. All students have access to the school careers adviser, and make their own appointments. They are encouraged to visit careers fairs in Birmingham and Sheffield, and to visit institutions for activities including student shadowing and Open Days. However, links with institutes of higher education are underdeveloped so students do not feel fully secure in the information they receive about university opportunities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

76. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory overall. Parents are confident that they can approach the school with problems or questions. They feel that there are high expectations for their children and most think that teaching is good. Most parents think their children make good progress. However, inspectors found teaching to be unsatisfactory overall and that expectations are often not high enough. This results in older pupils making unsatisfactory progress. Some parents are concerned about a minority of pupils who misbehave and disrupt lessons and inspectors agree with this view. Parents feel that the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible but inspectors found that while this is true for most pupils, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and develop initiative. Many parents are unhappy with the school's arrangements for homework but inspectors found that homework is satisfactory overall. Planners are not effectively used to record homework or as a means of communication between home and school.
77. Links with parents are unsatisfactory overall and are reflected by a substantial minority of parents who feel that the school could improve the way it works with them. There is no policy or clear philosophy regarding how the school responds to parents. Ways to involve a greater number of parents with their children's education has not been fully considered. At present parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's education or the work of the school. The school does not run any courses for parents and invitations to school are limited. Parents are not sufficiently involved in the exclusion process which limits the effectiveness of excluding pupils.
78. There is a small but enthusiastic parents and friends association which is very active in raising funds for the school and arranging social activity. However, there is a missed opportunity to extend this involvement to include educational matters. The school has sought to identify parents' concerns but it is unclear how they have responded.
79. The school provides good information about the work of the school. The governors' report to parents is of good quality and in addition to fulfilling statutory requirements provides a very detailed picture of the life of the school. The prospectus provides good quality information about the day-to-day working of the school. There are also very full termly newsletters. This positive feature was identified in the previous inspection report.
80. A significant number of parents are concerned about the quality of information they receive about their children's progress. There are regular parents' evenings and two reports per year. Interim reports have been modified and now include National Curriculum levels for English, mathematics, science and ICT. Attainment in other subjects is reported by fairly arbitrary grades and this can be confusing for parents. Annual written reports are of satisfactory quality. However, there is sometimes insufficient information about what pupils know, understand and can do and the progress they have made. Reports about English, geography and French are sometimes of good quality with very clear advice about how to improve but this varies depending on who was the author. Reports in mathematics are unsatisfactory because they rarely mention a pupil's mathematical talent but concentrate on their attitude to the subject.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

81. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Nevertheless, the headteacher and senior team have a sound view of how the school should improve, and there is considerable support from other staff in key positions. The headteacher has brought

about several changes since the last inspection, most importantly some key appointments with specific responsibility to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation and subsequently improve teaching and raise standards. He is well aware of a view among staff, rapidly reducing, of low expectations and is working successfully to remove this. Overall, delegation of responsibilities is unsatisfactory, though within their individual roles staff carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily. Senior staff do not monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies sufficiently well because responsibilities are not delegated fairly; this means that some senior staff have too much to do. There are some areas of unsatisfactory management – ICT, modern foreign languages and music. Individually, heads of year carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily, but in Years 9, 10 and 11 there is no consistency of approach between years and this is a contributory factor to pupils behaving poorly. Staff morale is high, in spite of the difficulties the school is having in filling vacant posts – a situation common in the area. However, there are many new staff, including several heads of department, and, while they are generally enthusiastic and hardworking, they do not work in consistent ways. This is because systems and policies designed to ensure the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis are not implemented effectively and this has been exposed by the difficulties temporary and some new staff experience in the school. For example, the school's behaviour policy does not work effectively. When members of the senior team are sent for to support teachers, they frequently do not arrive because they are elsewhere – pupils and teachers report this to be the case and several incidents were seen during the inspection. Senior staff are not always aware of the problems. Some teachers experience difficulties in maintaining good behaviour in lessons and they do not receive the support they need.

82. The school's priorities for improvement are generally satisfactory and are reflected in the school improvement plan and departmental plans. All staff contribute in some measure to the development planning process. Priorities rightly focus on raising standards, and the necessity of improving teaching and learning to achieve those higher standards. Some work has been done to improve teaching and learning – much of this coming from the senior team. However, priorities do not include evaluating and sustaining those school policies that ensure the school functions as an ordered community during the particularly difficult time of rapid staff changes.
83. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is generally satisfactory and improving although there are inconsistencies in approaches between departments. While there is effective practice in some departments – English, mathematics, science and history – there is also unsatisfactory practice, in ICT, modern foreign languages and music, and no overall system is used by the school. This makes it difficult for a whole-school focus on one issue to be evaluated by classroom observation because different approaches are used. It also makes it difficult for new heads of department arriving in the school, having to evaluate the performance of their own subject and having to create their own system to do so. There are no established mechanisms by which teachers can benefit from good practice elsewhere and this leaves some teachers isolated, particularly where they have difficulty managing the difficult behaviour of some pupils. Nevertheless, there has been some improvement in the overall proportion of very good teaching since the last inspection, but the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has increased too.
84. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations and are appropriately involved in working with the school to plan its development. However, their effectiveness in doing this is limited because they do not have sufficient information about where the school has weaknesses, particularly in the difficulties caused by unsatisfactory implementation of those policies needed to help the school function smoothly.

85. The new learning support co-ordinator has made progress in several areas. There is a clear policy and a good and developing range of information for staff. Support staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities although their deployment continues to be an issue in the school and lack of support in many lessons is limiting the progress of many pupils. Collaboration between the co-ordinator and the learning support assistants is good though there is no consistent link between the special needs department and the learning mentors. A teacher is responsible for the organisation and teaching of the computer-assisted teaching programme and she works effectively to support many of those pupils who need help in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, her skills are not used effectively enough to teach other pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants all have access to a range of relevant training opportunities and most are taking advantage of these. Collaboration with departments is improving, though it has not yet resulted in a consistent approach to working with pupils with special educational needs across the school. Although teaching and learning are a priority in the school development plan, the development of learning support is not, and the opportunity to focus on the importance of special educational needs in this context has not yet been fully realised. Although there is a development plan for special educational needs which reflects school priorities and specific learning support priorities, it does not provide a time frame or identify specific responsibilities; nor does it provide any long-term aims. The governing body fulfils statutory requirements and a new link governor is beginning to provide appropriate support. Since the last inspection report accommodation has improved considerably and provides a secure and stimulating environment for those pupils withdrawn from lessons. An administrative assistant now provides very good support for the learning support co-ordinator.
86. Staffing is poor and is a continuing problem for the school. There are currently eight supply teachers filling temporary posts and only three departments, art, mathematics and ICT have full and stable staff groups. Recruitment of staff is difficult with advertisements for some middle management posts failing to yield a response after three attempts. Retention of staff is made more difficult by shortages in some nearby schools. Mentoring and support for staff new to the school are in place and are effective overall. For example, non-specialists receive good support in history and newly qualified teachers in geography benefit well from collaboration in the department. Performance management systems are good, the second cycle having been completed and new targets agreed. Technical and other support staff, such as learning support assistants and site management staff, are all highly valued and receive appropriate training.
87. Accommodation is satisfactory and places few restrictions on the range of activities that can be delivered in school. Pupils appreciate the efforts that have been made to improve the décor and generally make the buildings more attractive. There are still some areas of the school that would benefit from redecoration. The accommodation is spread across a large site and this can make it difficult for staff to supervise pupils closely. Accommodation for physical education is particularly good.
88. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. The library is an attractive and well-used facility with generous provision for ICT. A commendable clearance of inappropriate and out-of-date books has left the present stock depleted, but there are plans to restock when a security system has been installed. There is a good collection of periodicals and a good audio-visual collection is being developed. There is a small careers section, but no dedicated sixth form area. The librarian prepares comprehensive collections of resources for classroom use.

89. ICT provision across the school is satisfactory. The number of computers is broadly average for the size of school. Most are centrally arranged and access meets the needs of pupils in most subject areas. However, there are very few computers in subject departments and there is inadequate ICT provision for use in teaching.
90. In almost all departments there are sufficient books and reading materials for pupils to use, but provision is unsatisfactory in geography, where there is a shortage of textbooks for Year 9, and in art where the books are old. Other teaching resources are generally satisfactory and are good in modern foreign languages, design and technology, history and the special educational needs departments. They are unsatisfactory in geography and science, and in music many items are in need of repair.
91. The learning support room provides a pleasant working environment for small numbers of pupils. It is well resourced with computers and appropriate software and houses a range of books that effectively support the curriculum.
92. Financial management is satisfactory overall. The governors have satisfactory procedures of managing their financial resources and use computerised financial information to help them. However, there has been no independent audit for four years. The governors receive accurate, up-to-date financial information on which to base decisions. Governors' committees operate efficiently and governors are provided with papers in good time to make informed decisions. Governors make satisfactory arrangements to test value for money through their purchase of major items. They recently successfully negotiated a 50 per cent contribution to the extension of the dining hall with the current caterers and the purchases of closed-circuit television cameras and leasing deals are closely examined for good value.
93. Overall, funds are used efficiently, especially for special educational needs and the learning support unit. The school receives more money than three quarters of schools nationally. It employs more teachers per pupil than most schools nationally and these teachers spend less time on average in front of classes than in most schools. Teachers are supported by higher than usual numbers of classroom support assistants. The school also employs learning mentors employed through Excellence in Cities (EiC) funding, but the manner in which they are employed is inefficient, though individually their work is good. Plans are advanced to improve how effectively they are deployed.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

94. Leadership and management are good. The new head of sixth form, together with an assistant headteacher, has made a positive start to ensure a continuing clear educational direction for the sixth form. They are strongly supported by a team of mentors who are well respected by the students, and who have been carefully selected for their roles. A very thorough review has been made of existing practice in the sixth form, and members of the team have been realistic and honest. Teaching and learning, achievement, student attitudes, curricular and extra-curricular provision, pastoral care, equal opportunities and parent involvement have been scrutinised, and areas for improvement in sixth form provision have been identified.
95. Members of the sixth form have a designated area in the school comprising a pleasant common room, adjacent teaching/study rooms and two offices. The immediate vicinity

of the head of sixth form's base contributes positively to the very good teacher/student relationships, as he is invariably on hand most of the time. There are no separate toilet amenities for sixth form students. Students are able to use the computers in the library most of the time. No computers are available for use by students in their own sixth form area.

96. Staffing in the sixth form is very good. Sixth form teachers are carefully selected. All are well qualified and experienced, and they are highly regarded by the students. In lessons observed during the inspection, both in the focused and sampled subjects, teachers demonstrated themselves to have very good subject knowledge, so that they were able to answer complicated questions put to them. They are intellectually rigorous and challenging. They always make themselves available for consultation outside teaching hours, and students are confident that their queries will be thoroughly addressed.

Resources

97. Resources for the sixth form are unsatisfactory. While there are sufficient books and equipment for students to use in lessons and for their own research, there are not enough computers situated in suitable places for students to use for their individual and independent learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

98. The school has identified many of the issues it needs to deal with. It recognises that there is a need to improve pupils' attendance, to continue to develop assessment work and to set targets so that pupils know what is expected of them. It has plans to deploy the learning mentors to work with pupils whose behaviour is challenging. Work is continuing on strategies to improve teaching and raise teachers' expectations. The school also recognises the need to strengthen the effectiveness of the pastoral team and to continue to work to maintain a stable staff. The headteacher, staff and governors now need to:

I. Raise standards, particularly in Years 10 and 11 by:

- continuing to use existing strategies and explore further ways to improve pupils' attendance,
- improving pupils' punctuality to lessons,
- developing the use of assessment information to assist in identifying pupils' learning needs and to match work to these pupils' needs,
- thorough identification of pupils with special educational needs and provision of support to assist their learning,
- improving the use of assessment information to ensure all pupils know what their examination targets are and what they need to do to achieve them,
- providing further opportunities for independent learning,
- ensuring statutory requirements for ICT are fully met in Years 10 and 11,
- ensuring learning mentors are effectively deployed to support those pupils with behaviour difficulties.

(Paragraphs: 10, 12, 13, 18, 19, 25, 35, 36, 40, 49, 68 – 70, 76, 97)

II. Improve the quality of teaching by:

- establishing a consistent system of observing and evaluating teaching and learning,
- sharing the identified good teaching skills seen around the school in order that more of the teaching becomes very good,
- supporting teachers in developing strategies to deal with poorly behaved pupils,
- providing guidance and support for the large numbers of temporary teachers the school employs,
- ensuring that all lessons have activities that challenge and motivate pupils,
- marking work so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to raise their levels of attainment,
- ensuring that teachers' high expectations seen in some lessons are common to all.

(Paragraphs: 7, 30, 31, 32, 81, 83)

III. Improving the attitudes and behaviour of the significant minority of poorly behaved pupils by:

- establishing rigorous behaviour, anti-bullying and anti-racist policies with clear sanctions and rewards,
- ensuring that these policies are implemented consistently,
- ensuring that there are effective means of communication and support for teachers when they need help to maintain classroom discipline,
- implementing policies to improve pupils' spiritual, moral and social development,
- improving provision for PSHE to reinforce personal and social education,
- providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities,
- strengthening the pastoral system by ensuring consistent practice across all year groups,

- involving form tutors more strongly in a pastoral role, making better use of the time they spend with their tutor groups,
- strengthening links with parents to improve attendance, punctuality and behaviour. (Paragraphs: 18–25, 44, 53–55, 61–67, 77, 81)

IV. Improve staffing by:

- continuing to strive to appoint suitably qualified and experienced staff to vacant posts by working closely with the local education authority and providing incentives to attract staff to the school,
- improving management effectiveness to provide support and guidance for newly appointed staff. (Paragraphs: 2, 81, 86)

V. Improve management by:

- establishing a continual process of review and evaluation of policies and procedures to ensure their effectiveness,
- allocating responsibilities to senior team members so that no single person is overloaded and all managers can carry out their responsibilities effectively,
- strengthening line management procedures to ensure that staff in middle management positions carry out their responsibilities effectively. (Paragraphs: 60, 81–83)

Sixth form

VI. Provide more opportunities for students to use computers to develop their independent research skills.

VII. Increase the links with institutes of higher education to enhance the careers and higher education information given to students.

VIII. Improve the toilet facilities for sixth form students.

Minor issues the school should also consider are:

- i. meeting statutory requirements for collective worship,
- ii. improving the care and welfare of pupils by:
 - ensuring there is a trained member of staff to deal with child protection issues,
 - implementing risk assessment procedures,
 - improving procedures to store and dispense medicines,
 - recording the outcomes of fire drills,
 - resolving those health and safety issues identified during the inspection

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	131
	Sixth form	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		62

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	0	13	56	43	18	1	0
Percentage	0	10	43	33	14	1	0
Sixth form							
Number	1	8	26	3	0	0	0
Percentage	3	21	68	8	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages the sixth form as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	846	94
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	131	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	38	-
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	87	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	51
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.0
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	1.2

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	71	89	160

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	39	39
	Girls	67	50	44
	Total	106	89	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (57)	56 (65)	52 (56)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (25)	29 (36)	11 (18)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	23	42	37
	Girls	42	64	42
	Total	65	106	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	40 (68)	66 (59)	49 (82)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	12 (25)	21 (32)	11 (38)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	91	87	178

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	23	80	88
	Girls	25	79	86
	Total	48	159	174
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	27 (36)	89 (89)	98 (94)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	31.9 (36.0)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	n/a	n/a
	National		n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	30	44

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	14	30	44
	Average point score per candidate	7.1	10.2	9.2
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	14	27	41	0	5	5
	Average point score per candidate	7.1	9.8	8.9	n/a	8.4	8.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	n/a	n/a
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
901	315	3
1	0	0
1	0	0
8	0	0
9	1	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
10	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	64.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	563.25

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.9
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23.9
Key Stage 4	21.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	2,915,155
Total expenditure	2,874,205
Expenditure per pupil	3,047
Balance brought forward from previous year	– 8,600
Balance carried forward to next year	32,350

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	19.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	26.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.9
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	940
Number of questionnaires returned	306

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	55	9	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	30	60	6	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	54	13	4	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	49	21	9	3
The teaching is good.	17	63	11	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	45	25	9	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	48	9	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	16	44	26	7	7
The school is well led and managed.	25	54	6	3	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	57	9	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	47	12	5	15

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting for parents before the inspection parents expressed overall satisfaction with the school, the standards achieved by their children and the support provided by teachers. They feel that the school encourages positive attitudes and values although they are concerned that the poor behaviour of pupils in some lessons interferes with the learning of other pupils. Parents are concerned that there is too little homework, that it is inconsistently given and that too much of it is completion of work started in lessons. Inspectors agree with parents about the poor behaviour of some pupils disrupting learning and also that the quality and frequency of homework are unsatisfactory. Inspectors feel that the school's efforts to encourage positive attitudes of most pupils have not had a positive impact on a sizeable minority of pupils who exhibit unsatisfactory attitudes.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and enables pupils to learn effectively.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
- Attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 is above the national average.
- Good leadership and management are helping improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- The behaviour of some pupils in a small number of lessons is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers have low expectations for pupils' speaking and listening and do not provide the challenge and responsibility necessary for very good learning.

99. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment in English. In National Curriculum tests for 2002 pupils in Year 9 achieved results that were above the national average and well above those achieved by schools with similar backgrounds. Boys performed less well than girls, as they do nationally, but the gap was narrower. These results show a marked improvement on those for the previous year and indicate good progress for these pupils. Results were well above those achieved in mathematics and science. The pattern of results in recent years has been erratic but the overall trend is upward.
100. In the GCSE English examination in 2002 pupils obtained below average results. Comparing these results with their National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 shows that most pupils gained the grades expected of them. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well in achieving grades at or above those predicted. Results in English were considerably higher than those in mathematics and science. However, in recent years results have been consistently below national averages. Almost all pupils obtained grades A*-G, which indicates that the lowest attaining pupils are doing well. In English literature pupils attained above average results but the proportion of Year 11 pupils entered was lower than average. Boys obtained better results than girls in English and they were less far behind in English literature than they are nationally.
101. By the time they are in Year 9 pupils produce work that is generally at average levels. However, speaking and listening are less good than reading and writing. Pupils often contribute only the briefest of answers to teachers' direct questions. Where pupils work in small groups within classes, discussion is often general, not requiring answers to questions or a structured feedback to the rest of the group. As a result the quality of discussion and the development of ideas are often limited. Teachers often do most of the reading aloud. This reduces opportunities pupils have to develop their own oral skills and confidence. All pupils are able to extract meaning from their reading of a variety of texts. They can analyse plot and character very well, as seen in the detailed work on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The written work of higher attaining pupils is well organised and uses appropriate language. All pupils make very good use of drafting and re-drafting techniques to improve their writing but they produce fewer extended pieces of writing than is usual. Autobiographical writing and their own short stories are lively

and engaging. Levels of spelling are often below average. Many pupils have difficulty organising their longer pieces of writing in paragraphs. Lower attaining pupils cover quite a narrow range of topics but they get good support for their writing. In Year 7 their written work is often poorly presented but this usually improves noticeably as they move into Year 8. All pupils make appropriate use of ICT to prepare and present their work.

102. The work of pupils when they are in Year 11 is below national levels. Speaking and listening are generally worse than reading and writing. For example, in a good lesson on Dickens' *Great Expectations* Year 10 pupils showed very good knowledge and understanding of the text. They read aloud fluently and with good expression but their discussion in pairs was less impressive because they were given no specific questions to answer. Where clearly identified demands are made of pupils, as seen in a good debate by lower attaining Year 10 pupils on the case for opening a new local leisure centre, the quality of speaking and listening improves. Higher attaining pupils read texts such as Willy Russell's *Educating Rita* with good understanding and sensitivity to language. However, the quality of their first drafts of essays is lower than might be expected, especially in the accuracy of spelling and the handling of material. Pupils write with good understanding in their comparative studies of Dickens' *Hard Times* and Barry Hines' *Kes*. They respond equally well to media texts such as Baz Luhrmann's film *Romeo and Juliet*, showing sure grasp of filming techniques and terminology. When writing about George Orwell's *Animal Farm* lower attaining pupils show that they know the characters well but their analysis is often thin. Most pupils develop their ideas clearly when writing. Levels of accuracy in punctuation and grammar are generally average. They use ICT appropriately to present their work. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in lessons. Learning support assistants are often less effective in the classroom because their work is not planned with class teachers. Overall, achievement is satisfactory and for some pupils is good.
103. Pupils' literacy skills are broadly average. Their writing is usually well presented, though spelling is often inaccurate. Their reading skills are satisfactory. Most departments are addressing teaching of literacy though there is variation between subjects. Nevertheless, there is good practice in design and technology, science, geography, history and religious education. Pupils are usually positive about their work in English lessons. Most pupils behave well but a substantial minority in a small number of lessons are less well motivated and can be rowdy and disruptive, which affects the learning of others. Relationships with teachers are generally good.
104. Teaching and learning are generally good. Teachers know their subject well and this has a positive effect on how well lessons are planned and how well pupils learn. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 11 pupils on war poetry, the teacher's enthusiasm and knowledge helped all pupils to understand the poems and appreciate the context in which they were written. Teachers plan lessons carefully according to clear schemes of work. They choose materials and tasks to help pupils enjoy their learning, and classroom management is usually good. However, their expectations for pupils' speaking and listening are often low. Their management of pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and in many lessons is good. However, in a small proportion of lessons, there is some disruptive behaviour that teachers find difficult to deal with. Tasks are sometimes not structured and challenging enough to improve learning still further.
105. The newly appointed head of department provides strong leadership but has few opportunities for delegation of responsibilities. Determination to raise the standards of pupils' work is clear in the work of the department, particularly in monitoring and evaluating teaching and planning improvements. Schemes of work are in the process

of thorough revision to take account of changes to the National Curriculum and to GCSE examination specifications. Teachers assess the work of pupils carefully and give good additional help when required. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good. This is seen especially in improved teaching and learning and higher standards of work in Years 7 to 9.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Relationships with pupils are good overall.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and effort.
- The progress made by most pupils with special educational needs is good.

Areas for improvement

- The behaviour of some pupils in a small number of lessons is unsatisfactory.
- The use of ICT and literacy is underdeveloped.
- The poor punctuality and attendance of some pupils affect their achievement.
- The school's numeracy policy is not being fully implemented across the school.

106. Pupils' attainment in mathematics on entry to the school is below average. In the National Curriculum assessments taken by Year 9 pupils in 2002, attainment was well below average both in comparison with like schools and compared to the national picture. Overall, the trend in results is upwards, though results in 2002 were lower than in recent years. There was no significant variation between boys and girls. In broad terms the results were marginally better than those for science but much weaker than those for English. In the 2002 GCSE examinations taken by Year 11 pupils, results were below the national average in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C, and below average when compared to results from similar schools. In this examination boys performed better than girls. The results in mathematics were better than those for science but below those for English. The 2002 GCSE mathematics results fell markedly as a result of a mistaken examination entry policy, which allowed too many pupils to attempt higher tier examination papers. This has been rectified for the 2003 examinations.

107. Overall, standards of work seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of past work are below average by Year 9. The work of all years, but particularly that of some older pupils, is adversely affected by poor attendance and lessons that start late. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and often good. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils were able to estimate answers to a number of problems and so knew that their calculated answers were likely to be correct. They did, however, show hesitancy in dealing with simple mental calculations. Pupils of average attainment tackled work with algebraic brackets successfully but used calculators when confronted with simple multiplications. Lower attaining pupils recognised most prime numbers and, given time, could list the paired factors of numbers such as 56. In response to questions, many call out answers that are often wrong. Pupils with special educational needs, though concentrated in lower attaining sets, are present in most groups. They engage fully in lessons, work at the same rate, with the same level of interest as the rest of the class and most make good progress. Lessons employ the three-part lesson structure that is a feature of the National Numeracy Strategy and this helps many pupils. The initial warm-up session is mostly effective but few lessons employ the plenary session for the all-important

summary activity. Pupils' attitudes to work are broadly satisfactory – there are no differences between boys and girls.

108. By Year 11, standards are below average but pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory, considering their low starting point. Higher attaining pupils deal fluently with surds yet are unable to simplify examples of first order algebraic terms. Pupils of average attainment deal well with past GCSE questions involving the use of Pythagoras' theorem when dealing with simple triangles but find difficulty with its use in calculations on other shapes. Lower attaining pupils correctly determine probability of particular events happening. As with younger classes, pupils with special educational needs are present in many sets but most numerous in lower attaining classes. They play a full part in lesson and most make a genuine if sometimes noisy contribution to lessons. They make good progress, as do the few pupils of minority ethnic origin. No lessons were seen where there was a significant difference in attitude or work rate between boys or girls. Pupils of all ages and attainment demonstrate a degree of weakness with basic rules of number or of algebra.
109. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teaching judgement is depressed by weaknesses seen in the work scrutiny and other past work in which marking by teachers ignored misspelling of key words, did not use the agreed marking system and did not suggest ways in which pupils could improve. Standards of teaching and learning are good for older rather than younger pupils. The best teaching is characterised by good teacher-pupil interaction, high expectations of both behaviour and effort and the teachers' knowledge of the needs of each individual. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the teacher's effort to retain control of the lesson is at the expense of pace as they deal with disruptive pupils who have no respect for the learning needs of others. In the majority of lessons seen, pupils concentrate well and show a willingness to learn. Homework is set and marked. Reports to parents are unhelpful; they give no indication of what the pupil needs to do to improve and make no mention of specific features of the mathematics syllabus being followed.
110. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there are generally good procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the department. Analysis of test results is thorough. Individual pupil and group assessment information is used to plan improvements in the work of the department. For example, analysis of the 2002 GCSE results highlighted the dangers of entering pupils for an inappropriate tier of examination. As a result, the department has changed its policy in readiness for the 2003 tests. A useful whole-school INSET day on numeracy has not been followed through properly. Although other subjects mostly cope well with numeracy, it is unco-ordinated and is not a feature of the majority of subject policies. The National Literacy Strategy is impacting well on the work of the department but needs further development. Dissemination of the Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) National Numeracy Strategy is having a beneficial effect on many classes but the plenary session is currently undervalued. ICT is playing an increasingly significant role in the work of mathematics but needs to be used by all teachers.
111. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement; lessons are now taken by specialist staff. Monitoring of teachers' work and the use of information gained to improve teaching are now satisfactory. Marking of work remains unsatisfactory with different systems being used by staff. Teaching has generally improved; however, due mainly to staffing difficulties, standards, which had been rising, have dropped.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Lessons are well planned and include a variety of teaching methods.
- The department is well managed. Well thought out strategies are being put in place to raise standards.
- Progress of pupils is assessed and monitored very well.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in national examinations are well below average.
- Schemes of work require further development, and departmental policies require formalising.
- ICT is insufficiently used for measurement and data analysis
- There is a shortage of resources, especially larger items of equipment and computers.

112. Over the past three years, the science department has suffered from significant staffing problems. These problems have still not been fully resolved and standards and achievement, for a number of pupils, have been and still are being adversely affected.
113. In the 2002 national tests for Year 9, the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected level 5 was well below the average for all schools, as was the proportion achieving the higher level 6. When compared with similar schools, results were well below average. Results were also below those of English and mathematics. Results since 1999 have shown a rising trend, a little below that seen nationally, but they fell significantly in 2002. Boys have performed consistently better than the girls with the exception of 2001 when there was no gender disparity. In the 2002 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well below the national average, whilst the percentage gaining A*-G was broadly in line with the national average. Results were well below average when compared with similar schools and they were significantly poorer than in English and mathematics. The last three years' results show a falling trend. When compared with national figures, the boys performed a little better than the girls.
114. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are close to those seen nationally. By the end of Year 9, the highest attaining pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of a range of scientific topics. They recall past work confidently, grasp new work effectively and have sound numerical skills. Literacy skills range from satisfactory to good. Pupils with lower prior attainment have less detailed knowledge. Recall of previous work is much poorer, as is their use of scientific terminology. Literacy skills are often weak and many are easily distracted from their work. Pupils across the ability range have good investigative skills relative to their prior attainment. Overall, attainment on entry is below average but by Year 9 most pupils have made good progress, especially the higher attaining pupils. Improvements in the curriculum, in lesson planning and in teaching methods are having a positive impact and go some way to explaining the difference between standards seen and those achieved in national tests. For some pupils, progress has been affected by staffing difficulties.
115. Overall, standards seen in Year 11 are below average, but a little better than those seen in the national examinations. The attainment of the highest attaining pupils has been raised through the introduction of triple award science and is above average. They are able to extend their work in biology, physics and chemistry and have an in-depth knowledge of topics such as genetics and organic compounds. Staffing changes, however, appear to have affected their attitudes to work in some lessons; some pupils

are less positive than they should be and this impacts on their progress. Middle attaining pupils are not as advanced in their use of scientific terminology as they ought to be. They have less than average knowledge and understanding of their work and written expression is often not precise. However, they plan and carry out investigative work confidently and draw appropriate conclusions from experimental results. Some, but not all, of the pupils taking single award science have low prior attainment. They find the written work challenging but carry out practical science very effectively. Albeit unsophisticated, they plan investigations independently and are able to explain their methods. Most are able to make accurate conclusions from their results and relate them to their predictions. The good attitudes of this group help them make good progress. In other groups of Years 10 and 11, however, poor attitudes and behaviour, together with too many absences, result in unsatisfactory achievement for a significant number of pupils. For some, a series of temporary teachers has exacerbated the situation. Pupils with special needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9; teaching is adapted appropriately and extra support is available. In Years 10 to 11, they make satisfactory progress overall – they do well when extra, dedicated support is provided, but a number of pupils with special needs are not adequately identified.

116. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject material and this impacts positively on pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned and structured; time and resources are generally used well and the pace of learning is effective. Teachers begin lessons with clear aims and most conclude with a summary that is focused on learning. Most use questions skilfully, ensuring pupils think and contribute to the development of lessons. Almost all lessons include practical work that helps to keep pupils interested and motivated. Much of this work is investigative, and often has high expectations from pupils. A good example was seen in a lower set Year 11 lesson. Here, the skilful direction of the teacher enabled pupils to devise their own personal experiments to investigate the energy content of different fuels. They rose to the challenge, taking responsibility for their own plans and evaluating their work effectively. Often, teachers make learning fun, effectively transmitting their own enthusiasm for science to their classes. In one lower set Year 7 lesson, for example, a classroom activity with bricks, thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils, ensured a very secure understanding of the transmission of energy, by electrons, in an electric current. In a very small number of other lessons, however, where teachers apply discipline procedures inconsistently, poor behaviour is not fully controlled and learning suffers. Most teachers set homework regularly but often it is not sufficiently challenging and marking does not consistently tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Although there are no departmental policies on literacy and numeracy, basic skills of literacy are introduced effectively into most lessons and pupils have many opportunities to apply their numerical skills. ICT, however, is insufficiently used in the classroom because of a lack of the appropriate resources. Technical support is very good and much valued by teachers.
117. Leadership and management of the department are good overall. The head of department has a clear vision of the way forward and since taking over leading the department two years ago has implemented a number of strategies, focused on raising standards. The introduction of assessed activities in Year 7 and the organisation of a successful annual Science Week are raising the profile of the subject and are starting to lead to rising standards. The schemes of work are focused on an investigative approach to teaching but lack the inclusion of aspects of citizenship, as well as opportunities for spiritual, moral social and cultural issues. Policies for numeracy, literacy, homework and marking, to ensure consistency within teaching, are not yet in place but are part of the department's development plan. Teaching and pupils' work are monitored thoroughly, and good systems for tracking pupils' progress are developing

well. Formal assessment is good. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. There is a shortage of resources in science and this impacts on teaching and standards. Many of the larger items are outdated and there are no departmental computers for measurement and analysis of data. The laboratories provide pleasant working environments for pupils but, being spread over two sites, places even further strain on resources. Maintaining good communications between the buildings is time consuming, especially for the head of department and the technicians.

118. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. The monitoring of pupils progress, target setting and feedback of information to pupils have improved, and there is more detailed monitoring of teaching. There has been ongoing development and improvement of the curriculum; more extension work has been included in Year 9, and in Years 10 and 11 pupils have better opportunities to follow the most appropriate course. The use of ICT, for research and project work, has improved and four laboratories have been refurbished.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Strengths

- The percentage of pupils gaining the higher grades at GCSE has risen significantly since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good, which means that pupils learn well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes because teachers manage them well.
- Gifted and talented pupils achieve well. Working with practising artists has raised the standard of their work.

Areas for improvement

- There are too few deadlines in the examination course to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their work.
- Sketchbooks in Years 10 and 11 are underused to develop pupils' independent learning.
- Assessment is not used consistently enough to help pupils understand the level they are working at.

119. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 pupils' attainment was at the national average, as it was in 2001. However, it has improved since the last inspection. This reflects the standards of work seen during the inspection. In the GCSE examinations taken in 2001 the percentage of pupils obtaining A*-C grades rose to just above the national average and although the results fell slightly in 2002 they were still in line with the national average. All pupils entered gained a grade. The standards attained by pupils following the GCSE short course were below average for the higher grades but pupils' achievement was good in relation to their ability. They did much better in art and design than in their other subjects within the school.
120. By Year 9 standards are in line with the national average. Pupils are confident, pursuing activities and experimenting with materials within a range of topics. They apply technical skills reasonably competently and show a developing knowledge of art and artists. Pupils have a clear understanding of the use of scale and proportion and use perspective well to produce compositions in the style of Surrealism. Higher attaining pupils talk confidently about the ideas and feelings of artists such as Magritte, but there is less evidence of understanding amongst lower attaining pupils whose response is

mainly descriptive. The achievement of pupils is good across all abilities. Pupils arrive at the school with a wide range of experience and skills, many with below average level of skills and understanding. They learn quickly because the quality of teaching is mainly good. In Year 7 the structured course gives pupils a sound understanding of the formal elements such as line, tone and texture and they develop skills in a range of media. This is built on in Year 8 where pupils learn, for example, to simplify form in the style of Cubism. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress where lessons build on practical techniques. Boys and girls achieve at a similar level. Gifted and talented pupils' achievement was very good when working with a sculptor to produce sophisticated stone carvings.

121. By Year 11, standards overall are in line with the national average, although they vary between classes due to the variation in ability of the pupils following the long course and the short course. In the long course, pupils' work is in line with national standards. They demonstrate a growing ability to explore and investigate areas of a theme and most confidently use a range of materials and processes to express their creative ideas. Pupils are encouraged to research areas such as ethnic art to produce silk paintings and prints to gain a sound understanding of how art and design can be used to reflect and express spiritual and moral issues. Where work is below the expected standard, pupils fail to develop ideas, and produce work without sufficient investigation and planning. Working with practising artists raises standards. Gifted and talented pupils produced exciting and invigorating life size figures when they worked with the sculptor Phillip Cox. A higher proportion of lower attaining pupils follow the short course and they are working at a level below the national average, but they achieve well in relation to their ability. The progressive structure of the course builds on the pupils' technical skills, which gives pupils the confidence to develop work in their own preferred style. In Year 10, pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, improved their observational analysis when drawing natural form for a project based on the twisted and intertwined. This was further extended by the use of ICT to manipulate and distort the imagery. Many pupils do not use sketchbooks or research work in their own time and this restricts their capacity to learn independently. Overall, pupils of all capabilities achieve well.
122. Teaching and learning are good overall. The best lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress and achieve their best. Teachers display a good knowledge of their subject and regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order to raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness. This strongly supports learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Connections are also established in all lessons to the literacy strategy, particularly in the use of key words in discussion. Teachers manage pupils well, which results in good use being made of time and resources and creates a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. Most pupils respond well and behaviour is good. A minority find sustained concentration difficult and this is most common in classes with pupils with special educational needs and no learning support staff. The high quality of individual support and advice given to pupils plays an important role in raising standards and gives pupils clear direction on how to develop work to a higher level. Across all years, lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are given opportunities to respond confidently and channel their strengths into successful outcomes. Teachers put a lot of emphasis on personal encouragement and do much to raise pupils' self-esteem; however pupils often muddle effort with attainment. Homework arising from projects is set regularly and is used well to consolidate drawing skills but it is underused to develop pupils' research skills and understanding of artists. Expectations of standards are sometimes lower for this than for work completed in school. Projects are well planned but pupils in examination classes do not always finish

their final pieces before new ones are started. The lack of consistency in adhering to deadlines fails to build on the pupils' organisational skills and their ability to take responsibility for work.

123. The head of department has only recently been appointed but has a clear vision of the departments' aims, enthusiasm and an effective management style. She has identified the main areas of weakness in the department and has formulated clear plans and strategies to address these. New schemes of work have been developed and previous shortcomings have been corrected. Systems for the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are sound and are assisting the good current practice. The curriculum is being well supported by new initiatives such as bringing working artists into school and building in more visits to art galleries and places of interest. ICT is used well where art related projects can be taught in ICT lessons but the small number of computers in the department limits its use to extend and develop work in the art rooms. Sound procedures for monitoring assessment are in place but systems need to be refined, as pupils are not always clear of the level they are working at. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Major areas have been addressed and standards have risen; however, accommodation is still overcrowded when full classes use the rooms. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; GCSE results have improved and standards in lessons have been maintained.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in life skills lessons.
- Teaching is good in discrete life skills lessons and in other subject lessons where aspects of citizenship are included.
- A comprehensive trawl of existing provision has been made, and areas for further provision identified.
- Planning for further provision is good.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching is not observed and evaluated well enough in the five designated subject areas.
- The evaluation of the quality of provision within the five designated subjects is not detailed enough.
- Assessment procedures are inadequate.
- Links with local community contacts are not yet fully established.

124. Planning for citizenship started in 2001. A steering group led by members of the senior team studied the requirements of the subject, took appropriate advice and decided on provision through cross-curricular subjects in Years 7 and 8, and through life skills lessons in Years 9 to 11, together with other cross-curricular elements in Years 10 and 11. The subjects selected for inclusion of citizenship are history, geography, religious education, physical education and PSHE. The intention is to widen the range of subjects in future years. The school is planning for teaching citizenship in the sixth form, though elements of the subject are already included in general studies programmes. Discrete Year 9 and Year 10 life skills lessons were observed during the

inspection, and aspects of citizenship through religious education in another Year 10 lesson.

125. Standards are broadly average in Year 9, and are good in Year 10. Year 9 pupils have a good perception of what sort of monthly income they need to buy items, such as a house, car and holiday, when they are adults. They also have an awareness of the relative values of expensive luxury items such as sports cars and yachts. Year 10 life skills pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the difference between rich and poor African countries, and why there are these disparities. They know more about European asylum seekers than African refugees, and, in one lesson, had a spirited debate about whether or not European asylum seekers should be allowed into the United Kingdom. Year 10 pupils, in a religious education lesson, had a very good understanding of the implications of racism. They knew about problems in South Africa and made perceptive comments about the Stephen Lawrence case. Overall, pupils achieve well.
126. The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers lead effective brainstorming sessions, which enable pupils to share their views about controversial topical issues. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions honestly. There is always a high degree of challenge in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and have clearly made considerable efforts to keep up to date with current environmental, sociological and political issues. Lessons are very interesting, and this principally why the quality of pupils' learning is good. The pupils see the topics they cover as being relevant to them and to their way of life.
127. Attitudes are satisfactory in Year 9 and are good in Year 10. A significant number of pupils have entrenched views about matters such as political asylum, and have difficulty seeing other points of view, despite strong contrary arguments being presented. Teachers create comfortable atmospheres in life skills lessons, and this enables pupils to put forward their views confidently and honestly, knowing that they will be listened to, and probably challenged.
128. Management and leadership are satisfactory. Systems for assessment of citizenship are not fully in place. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating citizenship have not been established, particularly in the five focused subjects. There are already some effective links with local community bodies, but more need to be made. Citizenship is beginning to make an impact on the life of the school, and is already adding exciting new features to curricular subjects. Both teachers and pupils welcome the citizenship addition into schemes of work. This was exemplified, during the inspection, in a Year 8 geography lesson dealing with the geography of crime in this country, which very effectively raised the interest of the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- In most lessons teaching is good.
- The staff work hard to motivate and interest pupils.

Areas for improvement.

- In some lessons teaching is unsatisfactory because teachers do not manage the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils effectively.
- There is no head of department.
- ICT is not used enough to support learning

129. In the Year 9 teachers' assessments in 2002, the attainment of pupils was below the national average and showed a decline over previous years. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results at A*-C grades were well below the national average. The A*-G grades were above the national average. Results for 2002 show that GCSE grades have improved in some aspects of the subject. The department has suffered from some problems in staffing during the recent year and the difficulties in establishing a stable teaching team have adversely affected attainment.
130. Standards of work produced in Year 9 are average. Overall standards are no better than this because there has been a lack of experienced subject specialists in the department. This has some impact on standards, but overall achievement is satisfactory. The majority of pupils have a secure knowledge of the subject by the age of 14. They know how to use tools and equipment to a good standard. However, their understanding and application of processes and the use of electronic components are unsatisfactory elements of their work. Pupils learn about a range of materials and they use a range of small equipment competently and safely. For example, they use hand tools to cut and shape acrylic when making paper-weights in Year 7. Higher attainers demonstrate good analytical skills in Year 9 when using the computer to create a set of procedures to control traffic lights. Higher attaining pupils plan their work and evaluate it objectively against specific criteria. Lower attaining pupils have not developed design skills and the process of carefully evaluating how well they have worked.
131. Inspection evidence shows that standards achieved by 16 year olds are variable, but overall are in line with the national averages in all aspects of the subject. In lessons, pupils systematically work through activities using the information provided. They experiment with materials and research their properties as part of the process of developing designs. Pupils are confident and ask questions. The higher attaining pupils work well independently and are well motivated to succeed. Their work is thoughtfully and professionally presented. Pupils have limited opportunities to use ICT, particularly to present their work but also for their design work. In the graphics option, pupils' design work shows progression in development and a good level of craftsmanship. The higher attaining pupils critically analyse their work well. All pupils, regardless of capability, achieve satisfactorily. Standards of work are beginning to improve because pupils' progress and attainment are assessed on a regular basis and lessons are planned with clear learning objectives.
132. The overall quality of teaching and its impact on learning are satisfactory. The most effective teaching is imaginatively planned and well prepared. A strong feature is the quality and pace of individual help and tuition teachers give pupils. Two lessons were judged unsatisfactory, mainly on the grounds of teachers' inability to control poorly behaved pupils. Poor pupil behaviour was a feature of several lessons and while some teachers deal with this well and prevent it undermining other pupils' progress, it consumes time at the expense of practical work. In the most successful lessons, the

teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge engage and inspire pupils. Teachers' own expertise in handling materials and equipment enables pupils to be successful. All staff work hard to develop productive relationships with classes and these are generally good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The lessons are well structured and teachers' questioning is good. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and the good range of activities ensures that all pupils are actively involved in their learning. New knowledge is introduced as it is needed so that pupils can immediately use it to develop their understanding. In the best lessons pupils are encouraged to be curious and ask questions. There are sound links with previous work and teachers use technical vocabulary effectively to help pupils understand and extend their vocabulary. There is a good level of support for lower attaining pupils through the use of design frames that help pupils to become familiar with the design process. Teachers work well with pupils with special educational needs.

133. The display of pupils' work in and classrooms and the open areas around the department is good and contributes to pupils' interest and the development of their ideas. Teachers use homework well and this contributes markedly to pupils' learning. Classes are competently managed and pupils are attentive, co-operative and eager to learn. There are good examples of computers being used in textiles, although the use of ICT is not fully written into the schemes of work and there are too few opportunities to use computers to support teaching and learning. There are missed opportunities, particularly for lower achieving pupils who might benefit from the use of computers to enhance their work.
134. At present there is no head of department but the school's senior management team provides an effective level of support for the teachers and has a clear view of how the department should develop. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good delegation to ensure the effective contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities. Staff are committed to raising standards and they work well together. There is good support for pupils throughout the school in the form of monitoring and assessment of attainment and progress. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all, which are reflected in the work of the department. The accommodation is good and the department presents a good learning environment. The technician provides a good level of support and makes an effective contribution to the smooth running of the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Teaching has improved and standards overall have been maintained.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning lead to high quality work in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils in Year 11 achieve outstanding GCSE examination results that are well above the national average.
- School productions and other events provide very good opportunities for pupils to extend their dramatic activities beyond the classroom.

Area for improvement

- Written work is not currently included in programmes of study for pupils in Years 8 and 9.

135. There are no drama lessons for pupils in Year 7 but all pupils take drama once a fortnight in Years 8 and 9. Teacher assessments indicate that by the time they are in Year 9 pupils are producing practical work at expected levels. Drama is a popular choice for optional study in Years 10 and 11. GCSE examination results in 2002 were well above the national average. These were the best results achieved by any department in the school. Results have risen steeply in recent years.
136. In Years 8 to 9 pupils follow a structured programme of practical study in drama that is designed to develop a range of skills. In work seen pupils enjoyed their improvisations and worked together well in small groups. Characterisations were often well defined. Effective use of body language, gesture and facial expression indicated developing control and awareness in the work of higher attaining pupils. By the end of Year 9 they are working at levels that show good achievement over two years.
137. In Years 10 and 11 the standards of work are above average. In a very good Year 10 lesson, pupils worked on dramatising their own poems, written on the theme of an abandoned baby. Through well-directed readings they came quickly to appreciate the difference between stylised and naturalistic representations in drama. This was very good learning and they enjoyed the work. Pupils collaborate extremely well in group activities and there is a very positive workshop atmosphere in lessons. Written work is carefully researched and well presented. Pupils have a very good understanding of dramatic techniques and terms. In their evaluations of their own work and that of other pupils they show good knowledge of what makes effective drama.
138. Very good teaching that enables pupils to learn rapidly and thoroughly is the starting point for the very high standards in Years 10 and 11. Teaching encourages all pupils to become fully involved in activities. When pupils have their own ideas about how something might be done in a lesson teachers encourage them to try these out. Pupils are made responsible for organising themselves effectively and they respond very well to the high expectations of the teacher. Pupils work hard to achieve high standards. Teachers ensure that lessons are very focused. They choose activities that are challenging and engaging as seen when Year 11 pupils developed thematic improvisations arising from their discussion of parenting issues and teenage pressures. Profound issues were explored effectively through well-constructed dramatic scenes and the pace of learning was brisk. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and their achievement in drama is good.
139. The subject is very well managed. The head of department has achieved substantial improvement in standards of drama across the school. Lunchtime clubs are very popular. Regular school productions, such as *Fame*, involving pupils from all years, are important to pupils' learning outside the classroom. This learning is further extended into the local community through joint dramatic reviews organised with a local centre for adults with learning difficulties. The most recent review was re-staged with funds from Social Services in a central venue, where it played to an audience of around a thousand people. This typifies the very good work of the drama department, which is often outstanding.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Higher attaining pupils and many of those with special educational needs make good progress.
- The department is well led and managed with an underlying trend of improvement.
- Teachers are committed to raising standards.

- Teachers use assessment increasingly effectively to identify pupils' attainment and set them targets for improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Some pupils do not achieve well enough.
- Some teachers do not effectively manage the disruptive behaviour of some pupils in a small number of lessons.
- Too much time is wasted at the start of lessons.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

140. Attainment on entry is below average. Pupils in Year 7 know little geography and have only simple knowledge of Britain. Their literacy skills are significantly below average. In teachers' assessments at the age of 14 in 2002, attainment was broadly in line with the national average and has improved in recent years. Progress between the ages of 11 and 14 was broadly satisfactory. In the GCSE examination in 2002, results were significantly below the national average and lower than in 2001. Pupils' progress across the GCSE course in 2002 was unsatisfactory. However, higher and lower attaining pupils added good value. Boys performed better than girls.
141. By the time pupils are in Year 9, standards are below average overall. The highest attaining pupils have above average understanding and, for example, relate plate tectonic boundaries to areas of high risk from earthquakes and volcanoes. The same pupils have good enquiry skills. They also have a positive attitude to learning and make good progress as they move through Years 7 to 9. Pupils with average and lower levels of prior attainment struggle with the same ideas and gain basic ideas about the causes of earthquakes and volcanoes. Most of these pupils make sound progress. Many pupils are too dependent on the teacher and show little tendency to learn for themselves. A significant minority of pupils in most classes do not bring basic equipment. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets, because they are well supported in class by learning assistants. However, there are some pupils who need support and none is provided. This is particularly so for a significant minority of pupils who behave badly. Some of these slow or prevent the progress of other pupils. In almost one third of lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of a small number of pupils are unsatisfactory. Generally, teachers deal with behaviour problems satisfactorily but in a small number of lessons they tolerate unacceptable behaviour by some pupils, which reduces expectations of some sets to work and behave well.
142. By Year 11 standards are below average. However, many pupils achieve well in lessons. For example, a Year 11 set of low attaining pupils had a clear understanding of ecosystems and could explain their function clearly. Another class of Year 11 pupils worked well together in small groups to isolate the causes and effects of hurricanes and those of high prior attainment achieved well. Higher attaining and the lowest attaining pupils achieve well – overall achievement is satisfactory. Some pupils of average prior attainment are underachieving, particularly the girls, and some work they do is undemanding. Teachers are taking action through providing support and revision classes and by seeking the support of parents. Pupils' thinking skills are stronger than their factual knowledge of geography because they do not do enough case studies. Coursework marks achieved by higher tier pupils attract the praise of the external moderator, but coursework marks achieved by lower attaining pupils are not high enough.
143. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there is some good and very good teaching. Where teaching is good or better, lessons are characterised by enthusiasm which pervades teaching and learning. Teachers then talk for a minimum of time before setting pupils

well-chosen tasks which involve pupils developing their thinking skills. This happened in a good Year 9 lesson on plate tectonics and in a Year 7 lesson for lower attainers who managed large numbers well. They were able to rank the size of major British cities and mark them accurately on a map using an atlas. There is some unsatisfactory teaching and this is closely associated with the failure to manage very challenging behaviour. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and leads to the organisation and preparation of good materials. Teachers use numeracy and ICT skills well but their use of listening and speaking skills is not as well developed. Some good use is made of extended writing but this is inconsistent. The department is correct to increase fieldwork experience before the age of 14 because this prepared pupils well in their writing about the Flamborough Head and Hornsea field trips. Marking is detailed but does not often show pupils how to improve. Involving pupils in the knowledge of their own learning is developing slowly.

144. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall as teachers seek to achieve a better match between tasks set and pupils' learning needs. Pupils then respond well and invest much intellectual energy in their learning.
145. The very narrow central corridor of the building means that pupils are obliged to line up outside. The time taken to move pupils one class at a time into classrooms is too long, and consequently the focus at the beginning of lessons is too much on control. This reduces the time for teaching and learning. In one unsatisfactory lesson, further time was then spent on correcting dress infringements and other unapproved behaviour, teaching started ten minutes late, by which time some had begun to lose interest in learning.
146. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall; the head of department is aware of the problems and seeks active support from the local authority to improve. Staff are committed to improvement. The capacity to do so, despite some staff carrying major responsibilities outside of the department, is good. Teachers have started to establish procedures to review and share good practice, but they do not observe and evaluate what they and others do well. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection because sharp assessment now identifies clearly areas for development. The department makes a strong contribution to the teaching of citizenship.
147. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory. Insufficient use is made of video materials because what the department has is mostly out of date. There is no interactive whiteboard or means of computer presentation. Teachers are short of books and good quality printed materials, particularly for Year 9, but they are preparing some good case study materials. The easy availability of computers in the library ensures they are well-used learning tools.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and in particular the management of pupils results in good behaviour.
- Examination results have improved over recent years.
- There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.
- Leadership is effective and is leading to rising standards.
- Resources for learning are good.

Areas for development

- On occasions, opportunities to use the full range of teaching and learning styles are not exploited.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have clear enough targets to help them improve their work.
- There are inconsistencies in marking pupils' work and giving them feedback on how they can improve.

148. In the 2002 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9, the attainment of pupils was below average but was part of an improving trend. Girls' attainment was better than that of boys. These assessments were undoubtedly cautious and referred to the particular year group assessed: they do not match the standard of attainment in work seen during the inspection. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were well below the national average. Girls' performance was better than that of boys. These results were in marked contrast to the trend over the last four years, when standards rose steadily; in 2001 GCSE results were in line with the national average.
149. Standards in the current Year 9 cohort of pupils are in line with the national average. Pupils of above average ability have a good knowledge and understanding and show some independence of thought to reach conclusions of their own. They can evaluate historical sources. Pupils of average ability can select and organise information to produce structured writing and can identify why different sources are useful to the historian. Those of below average ability can produce shorter pieces of writing and can use sources to extract information. Many pupils of average and below average ability have weaknesses in basic literacy but their knowledge and understanding are often better than their written work might suggest. For most pupils, evaluation of historical sources is underdeveloped. For example, in two Year 9 lessons, most pupils could make appropriate use of sources about Doncaster in the 19th century but not evaluate them for bias or reliability.
150. In the current Year 11, standards of attainment in work seen during the inspection are in line with the national average. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the topics studied. For example, they have a grasp of the basic issues surrounding the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Pupils of above average ability can deploy their knowledge and understanding effectively in good quality writing and they can evaluate historical sources. Pupils of average ability can use sources effectively and make some evaluation of them; those of below average ability demonstrate their understanding but do not evaluate their sources of information.
151. Achievement in relation to previous attainment is good. Pupils make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding from Year 7 to Year 9 and over the two years of their GCSE work. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented also make good progress.
152. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is more consistently good in Years 10 and 11 than in the lower years. Teachers manage their pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers plan their lessons well, with clear objectives so that pupils understand what they are doing. They present the subject in language which pupils understand. They use effective strategies to promote the literacy skills which underpin the subject. Methods and materials are generally well matched to the needs of pupils. In a good Year 8 lesson on religion in the 16th century, the teacher used cards with short statements about Catholic and Protestant ideas; pupils paired these, making difficult ideas accessible to these pupils of below average ability and enabling them to develop their understanding.

Pupils with special needs receive effective support in class but staff do not make good use of individual education plans. Occasionally, pupils are set suitable tasks but opportunities are missed to use the full range of learning styles. For example, a Year 9 high ability class studied challenging sources on Doncaster during the Industrial Revolution and extracted and combined information. However, the questions they were set did not encourage sufficient independent discussion with other pupils or opportunities to present their findings to the rest of the class. In a good Year 10 lesson, pupils used a well-prepared pack of sources about Edward Jenner's contribution to the development of medicine. These sources varied in difficulty and were not suitably matched to the specific capabilities within the group. In Years 10 and 11, all teachers focus systematically on developing the skills pupils need for examination success. Work is marked regularly but there are some inconsistencies in marking practice between different staff, including where classes are split between two teachers. Teachers assess and monitor pupils' work systematically using National Curriculum and examination criteria. Pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve. In Years 10 and 11 individual pupils have clear targets which they understand but this is less well developed in the lower years.

153. Pupils' attitudes in most lessons are positive; pupils are often very positive about their teachers. Most pupils are willing and co-operative and relationships in the classroom are good. The great majority of pupils make a good effort with their work. A minority, mostly boys, is prone to leave work unfinished. Many pupils sustain attention for long periods but those in lower ability groups sometimes lose concentration towards the end of lessons.
154. Leadership and management are good, with some very good features. The head of department provides a very good professional model and maintains a determined focus on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching and learning. There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating subject performance, pupil progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Examination performance is analysed very thoroughly to inform planning and teaching. Staff have identified factors which contributed to disappointing results, and these include poor performance in the coursework unit linked to poor attendance and attitudes by some pupils. The department has challenging targets for GCSE but target setting is less well developed in the lower school. There are good systems in place to support non-specialist staff and the staffing expertise of the department is carefully deployed. Resources are well managed.
155. The department makes an important planned contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of non-European cultures, as well as to citizenship. Visits and fieldwork enrich the curriculum. Resources for learning are good. However, poor behaviour on arrival at history lessons sometimes means that valuable teaching time is spent establishing an orderly learning atmosphere; a pre-occupation with class control in some middle and lower ability classes also inhibits the teacher from giving pupils opportunities to study more independently, seen for example in a Year 8 lesson on Henry VIII and the dissolution of the monasteries.
156. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Methods of assessment, resources and the quality of teaching and learning have all improved. The overall trend of examination results has been upward overall and numbers of pupils taking the subject at GCSE level have increased greatly. The department's capacity for further success is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 10 and 11.
- Gifted and talented pupils in Year 8 make good progress.
- Pupils have good access to computers outside of lesson times
- The amount of technical support is good.

Areas for improvement

- Improve teaching and learning in order to raise standards.
- Many pupils' are not achieving as well as they could
- The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their National Curriculum entitlement.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in other subjects
- Too few girls take a GCSE course in ICT

157. In the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 attainment was average. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average and were the worst results for four years. In previous years results fluctuated between broadly average or above average. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher A*/A grades in 2002 was below the national average. The proportion of pupils who did not gain a pass was well above the national average. The vast majority of pupils entered were boys. Pupils tended to better in their other subjects than they did in ICT.
158. By the age of 14 pupils' standards are well below average. Although pupils can use word processing and desktop publishing to enter and edit text, incorporating words and pictures, they are not able confidently to select information for different purposes and audiences. They are unable to talk constructively about the advantages of ICT. Pupils have a very limited understanding of the use of ICT to control equipment by giving a series of instructions in order to achieve a precise outcome. Pupils are too reliant on their teachers, and their independent learning skills are underdeveloped. Standards have been adversely affected by staffing difficulties, an inadequate scheme of work, weak assessment procedures and poor attendance by some pupils. Given their attainment on entry achievement is unsatisfactory. By the age of 16, standards are still well below average. Pupils taking the GCSE course have a reasonable fluency in basic operations, understand the structures of databases and spreadsheets and are able to use *PowerPoint* for presentations. However, design analysis skills and independent learning skills are weak. In addition, they lack awareness of the social, economical, ethical and moral issues associated with the replacement of traditional working practices with new technology. Given their attainment at the end of Year 9, achievement is unsatisfactory.
159. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. They are concentrated in the bottom sets where teachers rarely have support from specialist teachers or assistants, where boys outnumber girls by two to one and where behaviour is often unsatisfactory. In one Year 7 set, for example, nine out of the eleven pupils are identified as special needs, including some with emotional and behavioural difficulties and nearly all with poor reading ages. The teacher has no support and is often overwhelmed. Consequently pupils make unsatisfactory progress. A small number of gifted and talented pupils are identified in Year 8. They make good progress, particularly in acquiring independent learning skills.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers plan lessons carefully, ensuring that maximum use is made of the available time. Although there is no planned

contribution to developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, relationships with pupils are encouraging and supportive and help motivate pupils to want to learn. Pupils are managed effectively so that they settle down to work quickly and little time is wasted establishing good order in the classroom. In Years 10 and 11 attitudes are good and support pupils' learning. In other years, attitudes are satisfactory overall though in some classes a minority of boys are disruptive and prevent others from working. Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Pupils have no idea how well they are doing in relation to national standards or what they need to do in order to achieve a higher level. They are not encouraged to become independent learners and there are no self-help resources available to assist them.

161. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The National Curriculum is not being taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 and the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is unsatisfactory. There is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning in the department and no monitoring of how well pupils are doing. There is no plan showing how the subject will meet its targets. The recently appointed head of department has made a positive start in developing links with the South Yorkshire e-Learning project and in putting in place a temporary scheme of work. An audit has been carried out to inform the construction of a subject development plan, and the new national strategy in ICT, although not yet fully in place, is being trialled in some lessons. A new assertive discipline strategy is helping teachers manage pupils effectively. The lack of interactive whiteboards, or computers linked to large screens, limits teachers' ability to demonstrate the use of software in a clear and easily understood way.
162. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory overall. There has been an improvement in resources and staffing and the statutory requirement to teach ICT to all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is now met. There has been no improvement in ensuring that all Year 10 and 11 pupils receive their entitlement to the National curriculum or that other subjects use ICT enough in their teaching.
163. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects are unsatisfactory. In science, music and religious education, computers are rarely used. Only in geography is this aspect of the curriculum well developed. In geography there is systematic and widespread use of word processing and desktop publishing when presenting work and in the tabulation of data. In some other subjects opportunities are satisfactory. In art, pupils use photomontage in poster design and scanners are frequently used to input images for refinement and extension. In history, databases have been constructed from the Domesday Book. In design and technology pupils use computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture for textile design. Pupils with special educational needs use an integrated learning package to improve their basic skills. However, overall, there is insufficient use of new technology to aid pupils' learning across the curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths.

- There are opportunities for pupils to study both French and German in Years 7 to 9.
- Some teaching is good.
- There is a good scheme of work.

Areas for improvement.

- Standards achieved by all pupils, especially boys, are too low.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is not observed and evaluated to identify how it can be improved so that pupils learn better.
- Assessment information is not used effectively enough to improve the curriculum or to monitor pupils' attainment and progress.

164. In the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 pupils' attainment was well below average and lower than in previous years. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results at A*-C in both French and German were well below average. Results at A*-G were below average. There was a significant decline in results in 2002 compared to the previous year.
165. Standards are below average, at both the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. Boys achieve less well than girls. Higher attaining pupils achieve unsatisfactorily. Of the four aspects of the subject, speaking and writing are the weakest. There are a number of factors that adversely affect pupils' achievement. A minority of pupils do not attend school regularly, the behaviour of some pupils is poor and disrupts the learning of others and the school has had difficulty in recruiting and retaining modern languages teachers. The supply teachers employed have often not been languages teachers and this is a factor in the overall unsatisfactory standards but especially in speaking and writing.
166. By Year 9, pupils answer questions about such topics as their hobbies, spending Christmas in Germany, tourist attractions in Paris, finding their way about in towns and their daily routine. A majority of pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to other pupils when they are speaking. A minority find concentration for any length of time difficult. There is also a minority of rude and ill-mannered pupils who interrupt both the teacher and other pupils and teachers do not always deal with this effectively. By the end of Year 9, pupils can give short responses to questions. There are few examples of pupils going beyond this basic level and practising longer conversations with a range of vocabulary and showing ability to adapt their language to different circumstances. This is because teachers do not provide regular and challenging opportunities to practise speech. An encouraging exception was seen in a Year 8 lesson where pupils described their daily routine and what they had done. Many were varied in their vocabulary and brought occasional touches of humour to their descriptions. Pupils develop their reading skills mainly through reading textbooks and worksheets to find the answers to questions. Most pupils understand and read simple texts by the end of Year 9. There is limited evidence of reading for pleasure or reading more advanced texts. In their written work, the majority of pupils write phrases or short sentences from memory. There is no consistent literacy programme in languages to develop pupils' writing over Years 7 to 11. As a result there is little evidence that pupils go beyond the basics and write at length about such topics as their families or their hobbies, for example. It is this lack of a consistent programme which affects standards for higher attaining pupils in particular.
167. By the end of Year 11 pupils extend these topics as preparation for GCSE and add others such as descriptions of people, jobs and professions, the local environment, and aspects of addiction. The most important skills of speaking and writing are not developed well enough in earlier years to enable higher attaining pupils to achieve the

highest grades at GCSE. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, the percentage of passes at grades A*/A was well below that found nationally. In many other subjects in the school, higher attaining pupils achieve well. Few pupils carry out longer conversations using a range of tenses and a wide vocabulary. Although there are examples of high quality extended writing, there is limited evidence of a range of styles such as accounts of the local area, stories or more detailed descriptions of people.

168. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 although there is unsatisfactory teaching across both groups. There is also a minority of good teaching but this is not frequent enough to balance the unsatisfactory and poor teaching or to significantly raise standards. Where pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory, teachers do not have sufficiently well developed strategies to deal with the situation and the school's strategies for managing poor behaviour are not effective. As a result, lessons are disrupted and few pupils achieve satisfactorily. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, the use of the language being taught is unsatisfactory and frequently up to half of the lesson is taught in English. This restricts pupils' opportunities to listen to and to practise the foreign language. Teachers do not provide a range of work that is tailored to the needs of higher attaining pupils in particular. This lack of challenge is seen in pupils' oral work where few opportunities are provided for more sophisticated conversations. Analysis of pupils' written work provides strong evidence that a majority of higher attaining pupils do not write regularly and at length. The use of ICT to enhance and enrich the curriculum is satisfactory. Where teaching is good, teachers plan a range of challenging activities that actively involve pupils in the lesson and thus maintain their interest. Only a minority of lessons demonstrate a range of techniques such as imaginative use of the overhead projector, role-play, poetry or music. A majority of those pupils who attend school regularly show satisfactory attitudes to work and behave satisfactorily in lessons.
169. Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The head of department has revised the scheme of work for French and this provides a progressive programme of work that will help to raise standards when teaching improves. There are satisfactory procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment. However, the use of assessment information to check for deficiencies in the curriculum or to check the progress of individual pupils and groups is underdeveloped. Evaluation of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and although monitoring has taken place, it has failed to focus well enough on what pupils are learning and how their learning could improve. Standards have not risen as a result. There are trips to France and to Germany each year and these make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The subject has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Support given by the senior management team to maintain music provision is good.
- Support given by the visiting music support staff teachers is good.

Areas for improvement

- There have been rapid changes in staffing; the school has not been able to maintain a stable team of teachers.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Standards are too low.

- The range of extra-curricular activities is too small.

170. There have been six changes of head of department since the last inspection and there has not been a head of department in post for two terms. During the inspection, a supply teacher taught most lessons, and a non-specialist teacher on the staff taught some Year 7 classes. A member of the senior team has kept a watching brief over the department, including some Year 10 and Year 11 teaching, but the accumulated instability of staffing for such a long period has seriously affected all aspects of provision in the subject.
171. The 2002 teachers' assessment at the end of Year 9 showed pupils to be achieving above the national average. The majority of pupils enter Year 7 with standards below average, though there are some who are above. Inspection evidence showed standards to be below average at the end of Year 9 and in Year 10, indicating that teachers' assessments in 2002 were inaccurate. There were no GCSE entries in 2002 due to staffing problems when the cohort entered Year 10. In 2001, 14 pupils attained in line with the national average, but slightly under the point scores for all subjects in the school.
172. Standards are below average in Year 9 and in Years 7 and 8 also. Although pupils are being introduced to elements of the National Curriculum, the inconsistency of staffing leads to the skills of composing, performing and listening not being revisited regularly. As a result, there is no developmental progress across the three years, and the quality of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Year 7 pupils had studied families and instruments of the orchestra, but they had forgotten what they had learnt within one week. Year 9 pupils studying African, Indian and Caribbean music confused features of the different types of music when writing about them. Most pupils have acquired only the most elementary knowledge of musical literacy by the end of Year 9. They use letter names to play the keyboards, and most do not understand basic notation. None could name a piece of music they had listened to and appraised over the past two years. None could remember having composed a piece of music either individually or through group ensemble since coming to the school. Exceptions to this are the pupils who receive tuition from visiting music teachers. These teachers have made a significant contribution to the school by maintaining a constant presence during the period of instability.
173. Most pupils in Year 11 are working at below average levels, though they are predicted to get good results. In Years 10 and 11, some pupils have good standards of practical performance, due to the individual tuition they receive. Overall, the standards of composition are poor. Most pupils have difficulty composing with keyboards because they have very limited knowledge of notation or of the clefs. Listening and appraising skills of most pupils are poor. They cannot aurally recognise families of the orchestra when analysing music. The irregular tuition these pupils have had in Years 7 to 9 and their subsequent lack of music awareness have contributed to unsatisfactory achievement. In each year there are a few pupils who, because they receive individual music tuition, could gain good results at the end of the course they are following. They perform well and compose satisfactorily.
174. Overall, most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their music lessons and they try hard with the tasks presented to them. Year 10 and 11 pupils are clearly disappointed with the inconsistency of musical guidance they have received over the years.

175. Teaching, overall, is unsatisfactory. In Years 8, 9 and 10 lessons, there were no lesson notes, no aims and objectives, no provision for pupils of differing musical ability, no reference to music levels of attainment, no evaluation made or targets given for improvement, and a lack of challenge. Lessons had no variety of activity or developmental shape. Year 7 lessons were well taught by a non-specialist teacher on the staff. In a Year 11 class observed, an assistant headteacher led the direction of the lesson, which she shared with a supply teacher: in this lesson, the teaching was good and pupils made good progress.
176. Staffing problems have created an unsatisfactory department. The head of department post has been advertised once, but there were no applicants. It was being re-advertised at the time of the inspection. Members of the senior management team, local education authority staff, and visiting music support staff teachers have worked hard to try to maintain standards. Despite this, the standards are low, many instruments and some music technology are in a poor state of repair, there is a limited extra-curricular provision, and the department contributes hardly at all to the social and cultural life of the pupils. There is a computer in the music teaching room, but it does not work. The department is in a worse state than it was at the time of the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Much of the teaching is good.
- The relationships between pupils and teachers are usually good and contribute to pupils' learning.
- Facilities are good.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work do not clearly identify methods to support progress for all pupils.
- Assessment information is not consistently linked to target setting.
- The highest attaining pupils are not consistently challenged.
- There are too few opportunities for teachers to discuss and share existing good practice.

177. In the end of Year 9 teachers' assessments in 2002 attainment was broadly in line with the national average but was lower than the previous year. In the GCSE examinations in 2002 the proportion of pupils obtaining A*-C grades was well below the national average although the trend over three years is an improving one. Results were above the average grades for the rest of the school.
178. Inspection evidence shows that the standards obtained by pupils in Year 9 are broadly average. This represents satisfactory progress during their first three years in the school in most areas of the curriculum. Most pupils apply the appropriate techniques and skills to hockey, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball and dance. In a lower ability gymnastics lesson in Year 8 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what constitutes quality of movement and translate this into their own performances, building a good sequence of a range of matching and mirroring movements, showing a commendable degree of precision, control and fluency. They work very well together and evaluate and analyse their own and the performance of others in the group in order to improve. In basketball in Year 9 most boys understand the rules and their basic skills provide a sound basis for improvement though they have little tactical awareness and

their specific basketball skills do not reflect the amount of time spent on basketball during the previous two years. A significant minority of more capable pupils in both basketball and hockey were not given the opportunity to extend their skills. Overall, the ability of pupils in Years 7 to 9 to observe and analyse performance is below average but improving, but where it does occur it is contributing to improvement in pupils' performance, especially in gymnastics.

179. Standards in Year 11 are in line with the national average and overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Evidence from GCSE coursework and from a GCSE theory lesson on the effects of exercise on the heart indicates a good understanding of many aspects of the physiology and anatomy units. Pupils in a Year 10 GCSE practical lesson on developing their performance skills in throwing the discus were able to apply this to a good understanding of the main coaching points. Standards for those pupils not taking GCSE are average although standards in a Year 11 badminton lesson were significantly below average and their progress over a four-year period has been unsatisfactory. This is because the time allocated for core physical education for these pupils is not sufficient to cover the curriculum in sufficient depth or breadth and because there has been insufficient focus on the progress of these pupils in this activity.
180. Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually good. Most pupils are enthusiastic, well behaved and co-operative, demonstrating a real enjoyment of the subject. They are generally attentive and are able to sustain concentration throughout the lesson. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are usually very positive and this is a significant factor in the progress made in most lessons. In the minority of lessons where this was not the case progress was significantly restricted. There are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to undertake different roles such as coach.
181. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons a secure knowledge of the subject is regularly conveyed to pupils through perceptive observation of performance, appropriate intervention and good teacher-directed question and answer sessions. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies and an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning, is also a feature of these lessons and discipline and class management are good. In the unsatisfactory lesson and to a lesser extent in other lessons that were not so good, management of the pupils was unsatisfactory, planning was not specific or detailed enough, and the range and type of activities was not appropriate, particularly with respect to extending the most capable pupils. In many lessons appropriate development did not occur as the lesson was late starting and the teacher did not have enough time. Assessment of performance by teachers in the best lessons is regularly used to enhance teaching but even in some of these lessons individual pupils are only rarely set clear targets for improvement. Observation and evaluation by pupils in lessons, to help improve performance, is still developing and is not consistently applied though it was used very effectively in a gymnastics and a dance lesson. The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to the National Curriculum is developing but does not yet involve pupils in setting their own targets and is not contributing to their progress. Marking of GCSE theory work is not providing enough information to help pupils make appropriate progress and pupils are often not aware of how well they are performing related to GCSE assessment criteria.
182. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages although insufficient time is allocated for Years 10 and 11 to cover the National Curriculum in appropriate depth. Curriculum organisation is, however, good and for Years 10 and 11 ensures that pupils have the opportunity to develop performance skills in two activities and to gain

some experience in three others. Schemes of work and curriculum planning are not making an appropriate contribution to either teaching or learning and there is no specific guidance on developing the potential of the most able pupils. Although provision for the use of ICT is identified in schemes of work there was little evidence of this in any of the work or lessons. The importance of health related fitness is inconsistently applied. Pupils do not have an appropriate understanding of the importance of fitness to a healthy life-style and there is insufficient allocation of time in lessons to develop levels of fitness. There is an appropriate range of activities after school and at lunch time for pupils to extend and develop their skills although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to represent school teams.

183. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the day-to-day organisation of the department is good. All members of the department are committed to working hard for the subject and several are generous with their time although some, including the head of department, have significant other responsibilities in the school. The departmental handbook contains most policies and procedures but is not consistently adhered to and in many respects is more a statement of intent than a reflection of departmental practice. Although teaching and learning in the department are now being monitored, there is no formal feedback and there are few opportunities for the department to share good practice and for this to affect the overall quality of teaching in different activities. Department development planning identifies appropriate priorities but does not identify clearly enough a time frame or specific responsibilities and there is no long-term plan. Both indoor and outdoor facilities are good and are a significant factor in the progress made.
184. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Although the time allocation for Years 10 and 11 is still inappropriate and assessment is not guiding curriculum planning, time is now provided for all activities and there are now enough text books for the GCSE course.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strength

- At age 14, pupils achieve satisfactorily, and reach levels of attainment in line with the expectations of the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus.

Areas for development

- At age 16, pupils underachieve. Their attainment is below the expectations of the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus and the GCSE examination syllabus.
- Difficulties in retaining staff adversely affect the attitudes, achievement and attainment of Years 10 and 11 pupils.

185. In the 2002 GCSE full course examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grade A*-C passes was well below the national average. Their average point score was well below the national average point score. On average, pupils achieved significantly less well than in their other subjects. In the 2002 GCSE short course examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was also well below the national average. In both the full and short course examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grade A*-C passes was significantly lower than in 2001, when the school entered pupils for the first time. Standards declined because the school was unable to recruit and retain specialist teachers of the subject.

186. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 9 are broadly in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country, and of their origins and distinctive features. They have a satisfactory grasp of religious language, concepts and ideas. They understand why the beliefs of practising members of faith communities are important to them, and how they shape their lives. Within that context, their skills in making a personal response to religious questions are well developed, but their evaluative skills are underdeveloped.
187. In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 11 was below the expectations of both the agreed syllabus and the GCSE examination syllabuses for their age. Their knowledge and understanding of the ethical and philosophical issues they meet in their study of marriage and the family, social harmony, the sanctity of life, and belief in God, lack depth. Their ability to evaluate different religious and secular responses to questions of belief and morality is underdeveloped.
188. The achievement of both boys and girls is satisfactory overall at age 14. They are challenged with work of increasing depth and complexity as they move through the school. Within that context, higher attaining pupils achieve well. The progress of lower attaining pupils is less secure, because work is not well enough matched to their individual needs. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory at age 16. This is because in general teachers' expectations are too low, and work is insufficiently challenging. Long-term staffing problems have also de-motivated pupils. A significant minority of pupils underachieve, and cause others to do so, because of the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour they bring to lessons, particularly with supply teachers.
189. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that it is unsatisfactory over time. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a good grasp of their subject, know clearly what they want their pupils to learn, and share their aims with them. They plan their lessons well to achieve their aims, and hold pupils' interest through a good variety of stimulating and challenging activities and tasks that are well matched to their needs. For example, Year 9 pupils made very good gains in understanding the concept of evil, because the teacher planned very well to catch their interest through a board game challenging them to rank wrong actions on an incline of severity. Their understanding was then extended by paired work responding to the thoughts of famous authors and thinkers on evil. Teachers manage behaviour well, and foster good relationships in the classroom.
190. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, expectations are too low and work is insufficiently challenging. Supply teachers find it difficult to manage the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some pupils. For example, Year 10 pupils learnt very little about the ethical issues surrounding prejudice and discrimination, despite the teacher having planned the lesson well. Most had not brought with them the completed homework that was necessary for the first activity, and had no intention of making more than a nominal effort in any of the subsequent tasks. Pupils who wanted to learn made little progress, because the teacher's energies were absorbed by those who did not want to. In some classes with supply teachers, learning is unsatisfactory because a significant minority of both boys and girls deliberately misbehave.
191. The head of department exercises effective leadership and day-to-day management of the subject in those areas that are within her remit to address. She has a clear vision of the educational direction the subject should take if standards are to be raised. She has done much to improve the schemes of work, and gives good support to non-specialist

and temporary teachers. She is aware of the need to improve assessment procedures and marking, which do not do enough to help pupils understand how to raise the level of their attainment.

192. There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection. The school has effectively addressed the key issue of the previous report concerning insufficient time for teaching the agreed syllabus. Statutory requirements are now met. A GCSE short examination course has also been introduced for all pupils in Years 10 and 11, together with an optional GCSE full course. There is now more good teaching than previously, and the quality of leadership and management has been raised. However, the school has yet to resolve the staffing problems that are having an adverse impact on the attitudes, attainment and achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, five 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 2001.

GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	1	100	52	-	2	1.00	0.8
Chemistry	1	-	43	-	5	-	0.8

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	4	100	96	-	46	2.0	6.6
Biology	4	75	88	25	34	4.0	5.3
Chemistry	1	100	90	-	43	4.0	5.9
Communication studies	4	100	93	25	31	5.5	5.5
Economics	4	25	89	-	36	0.5	5.5
English language	21	57	91	5	30	2.0	5.3
English literature	17	76	95	29	37	4.5	5.9
French	2	50	89	-	38	3.0	5.6
Full design and technology	2	100	91	-	30	6.0	5.4
General studies	39	36	85	5	30	1.3	4.9
Geography	8	100	92	13	38	4.5	5.7
German	3	67	91	-	40	2.7	5.8
History	5	80	88	40	35	4.4	5.5
Mathematics	4	50	87	-	43	1.0	5.8
Psychology	10	70	87	20	34	3.4	5.3
Sports science	8	75	92	-	25	2.3	5.1

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England

Health and social care	5	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
------------------------	---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

193. The focus of the inspection was on biology and mathematics. One lesson was observed in each of chemistry and physics. In the Year 12 chemistry class, four of the five who started the course remain in the group. The size of the AS group suggests that the subject is becoming more popular. Teaching was very good, and learning was consolidated very effectively. Students were interested, focused and very responsive. Numbers taking up the A-level physics courses have increased over the past three years, though only male students are attracted. Present A-level students are achieving better than Advanced Level Information System (ALIS) predictions. In the Year 12 lesson observed, standards were above average and teaching was good.

Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Teacher/student relationships are adult and productive.

Areas for improvement

- Retention rates through to Year 13 are low.
- Students' general mathematical fluency is unsatisfactory.

194. Broadly average standards of work result from good, well-considered teaching, and the students' attitude to the subject. Students' achieve well taking into account that they start the course with standards that are below average overall. The overall quality of learning in mathematics is good.
195. A-level examination results in 2002 followed the pattern of previous years, and were very low. The GCSE re-sit group in Year 12 achieved a good A-C pass rate. The department operates an open admissions policy to the A-level programme, so that standards on entry have been below those normally found, though they are rising. In light of this, progress made by students in lessons was good.
196. In work seen in class during the inspection, standards were close to the national average. In a Year 12 lesson, students used Poisson distribution tables effectively and, despite the small group size, did not hesitate to vocalise their thinking and raise pertinent questions. Year 13 students used differential calculus, and its application to small increments, to determine a close approximation to the square root of 17. Students' weakness in simple algebraic manipulation slows down their rate of learning. In Year 13, for example, students did not automatically relate pure mathematical relationships to a problem in mechanics because of difficulty in transposing an equation.
197. Teaching is good overall. Lessons in mechanics and statistics are taught separately by different teachers, the two groups combining for lessons in pure mathematics. This supports both strands. Teachers have good subject knowledge, good relationships with students and plan lessons very well. Lessons make full use of a range of activities,

including use of programmable calculators and an interactive whiteboard. Whiteboards are used very effectively by employing colour to help track the source of figures during a complicated calculation.

198. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Monitoring of individual students' progress is good. Use ICT is good, but needs further development. Despite a good atmosphere in lessons, class sizes of around ten in Year 12 fall to half that by Year 13.
199. In comparison to the time of the last inspection, overall standards seen in lessons have improved. ICT is playing a growing and productive role in the teaching of mathematics.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of effective teaching methods.
- Formal assessment is used to monitor students' progress very well, and very good support is given.
- The subject is well led, and good learning resources are provided.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of ICT for measurement and data handling.
- There is a shortage of larger items of scientific equipment and of computers.
- Students have underdeveloped independent learning skills for their coursework.

200. Numbers entered for the 2001 A-level GCE examinations were small, but students achieved a range of grades. Since the last inspection, numbers have been small but steady. The average performance in examinations has been below that seen nationally, but the school is able to show that most students do better than predicted by their previous attainment. The results in the more recent 2002 examinations were disappointing. Most students failed to gain a pass grade, in spite of satisfactory grades being gained in the modular examinations in Year 12.
201. Standards of work seen among current students are overall in line with the national average. In Year 13, they are achieving well, relative to school predictions. Students are quick to grasp new but complex concepts, such as the functioning of nerves, and show a sound understanding of the A-level topics they have studied previously, such as the functioning of the kidney and the biochemistry of respiration. They have good investigative skills of predicting and planning, and analyse problems well, as seen in one lesson on enzyme action in apple tissue. Students in Year 12 are almost all achieving their predicted standards. They show good knowledge and understanding of their work at this level, as was seen when they carried out dissections of the heart. They also use their research skills well to investigate controversial topics, such as the widespread use of antibiotics. In both years, students' very positive attitudes contribute much to their good progress. They are very focused on their work; they answer questions confidently, they use good reasoning to discuss topics, and they ask intelligent questions of their own.
202. Teaching is good, and, as a result, students learn well. The teacher shows good subject knowledge. Explanations are clear and well organised. Lessons are planned

well to include a variety of effective teaching methods. Very good interaction between students encourages them to show initiative. Learning is consolidated well, and very regular ongoing assessment tests students' understanding and provides very good examination preparation. The day-to-day marking is very good and helpful to students. While ICT is used well for research, there is a need for further development for its use in measurement, control and data handling. Guidance for investigative work is very thorough, but students would benefit from more independent planning and implementation. Each year group normally benefits from the teaching being shared between two specialists, but long-term absence of a member of staff has resulted in re-organisation and re-timetabling. A number of lessons are held during the lunchtime and after school, and students are very appreciative of the efforts made by the department to minimise the effects on their studies. Students' independent learning skills are underdeveloped, but teachers are making good efforts to develop the skills of these students.

203. Work in the subject is well led and well managed, and the programme of work is well organised. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. There is now an appropriate amount of time allocated to teaching and standards are higher. Regular formal assessment is monitored very well, and there is very good guidance that informs students, sets targets, and effectively aids their progress each half term. A good range of support material is provided and good use is made of the library facilities. Within the department, there is a shortage of computers and of larger items of scientific equipment, important for the A-level curriculum.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No subjects in this area are taught.

BUSINESS

204. Two Year 12 business studies lessons were observed. The provision is good, and the course is well planned and well managed. Teaching and learning were good in these lessons. Students achieved well, some from a low starting point. Standards overall were satisfactory. Students had very good attitudes to their studies. Ten of the original 12 students are continuing through to the examination.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The focus of the inspection was on ICT in the sixth form.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the quality of provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Strengths

- The department is well led and managed.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well constructed, and provide a range of activities, which help students to build up their knowledge and understanding.
- Students have a sound grasp of concepts, apply them well, and, overall, are achieving well.

Area for improvement

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of interactive white boards and data projection. |
|--|

205. The retention and pass rates for students completing courses are good. The pass rate shows continuous improvement over the last three years. Students endeavour to produce work of a high standard. They are capable students, and the standard of work represents very good achievement.
206. The work of students seen in lessons, in their folders, and in conversation, confirms that standards overall are above average, and achievement is good. Students do well because assignments are focused on their capability to use software for particular applications. Students have a good understanding of the complexities of using ICT in large organisations. They are keen to talk about their work and can explain how they have carried out a particular task.
207. All students show interest and enthusiasm for the subject. When they are working individually on computers in lessons they are good at helping each other. Discussions are common; they are always relevant to the work, and contribute usefully to the good learning.
208. Teaching is good. The teachers have a very good command of the subject, including some first hand experiences of the use of ICT in organisations other than the school. There are opportunities for staff to update their knowledge. Teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the subject to their students. They are good at anticipating aspects likely to be misunderstood, and they make good use of questioning to check on students' understanding. When students are working individually, teachers make good use of their time, discussing work with students, and using opportunities to stretch students by asking them challenging questions and showing them further possibilities. Teachers fully meet the needs of the keen, enthusiastic students, and ensure that the quieter students understand what they have to do to make progress.
209. Students receive very good feedback on their progress and attainment. Positive verbal feedback is given during lessons. The formal recording and monitoring of students are very rigorous, giving teachers a clear indication of progress and attainment. Internal verification and cross marking of assignments are effective and very detailed records are kept.
210. Leadership and management of the department are good. The teachers meet regularly to plan their work and to discuss good practice. There is effective monitoring of results and there is a good level of monitoring of student progress. A well-organised system of recording individual results for each unit and comparing current standards with previous attainment ensures successful monitoring of individual students' progress and achievement. Demanding targets are set, and there is rigorous monitoring of outcomes. The use of interactive white boards and data projectors will enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
211. The department has established good links with businesses and training providers. The team is constantly looking at ways of meeting the needs and demands of the local community.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

212. One lesson was seen in each of physical education, travel and tourism, and leisure and tourism. A Year 13 A-level physical education lesson was observed in which students worked at above average standards. Six students started the course, and four are

following it through. The teaching and learning were good and students were very responsive. The course is well planned and managed, and students enjoy it. Teaching was good in the Year 12/13 travel and tourism lesson observed, and students made good progress. They are confident and mature in their approach to the work. Attainment was in line with that expected at this stage of the course. A Year 12 leisure and tourism (intermediate) course was observed. The work was well planned and managed. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. Students have a good understanding about the industry, and are well informed about the local setting. Retention rates are good.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

213. A joint Year 12/13 lesson was observed, in which teaching was good and students made good progress. Standards were in line with those expected. A productive interaction between the teacher and students contributed to the successful development of the lesson.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

214. A Year 12 art and design lesson, a Year 13 performing arts lesson and a Year 12 media studies lesson were observed. In the art and design lesson, teaching was good and a high level of individual support and advice given. Standards overall were slightly below the national average, but students were achieving well in relation to their ability. There is currently no Year 13 A-level art class. The overall provision for performing arts is very good. In the lesson sampled, teaching was excellent and students made exceptional progress. Standards of attainment were well above average. Students seldom fail to complete Year 12, and most continue into Year 13. The provision for media studies is good. This is a new course, and a popular choice with students. Few students drop out in Year 12, and most continue into Year 13. In the lesson sampled, teaching was very good. Standards were above average.

HUMANITIES

215. The focus of the inspection was upon geography. History and psychology lessons were also observed. Standards of attainment in history are above average, with students having secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. Teaching is very good. Attitudes are very positive and relationships very good. Student numbers are small, but retention is good. Standards in psychology are above average. Students have a good understanding of theoretical models, and they can apply their understanding effectively. Teaching is very good, ensuring that students are active learners, and that they are challenged to develop their powers of thinking. Attitudes to the subject are very positive. Numbers are healthy and increasing, and retention is satisfactory. Law is also taught, but it was not possible to sample teaching and learning because the tutor was absent. Students are keen and generally very successful because they invest much independent work into their studies.

Geography

Overall, the quality of provision for geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Students make good progress towards their target grades.
- The attitudes of students are very good and they work well within a secure framework of very good assessment which gives them confidence.

Areas for improvement

- Help students clarify their intentions earlier in Year 12.
- Build a stronger base of geographical knowledge.
- Attract more high attaining boys from GCSE to As.

216. Attainment on entry to AS was above average in 2002 because most of the students had A* or A grades at GCSE.
217. Attainment at the A-level examinations in 2002 fell slightly and was below the national average but, based on their prior attainment, students achieved better in geography than in many of their other subjects. Over recent years attainment has remained below the national average at A-level, but students, particularly female students, have consistently made significantly better progress in geography than in their other subjects, by about three quarters of a grade. The department has usually attracted few of its most able male students to the sixth form, even though they have done better than females at GCSE.
218. Inspection evidence shows students are making good progress towards their target grades which are above average overall. They know about the causes and effects of flooding: one student was able to demonstrate a high level of understanding of hydrology in a concise and deceptively simple summary. Students develop good skills of synthesis from a wide range of resources and are able to use case studies in a variety of contexts. Nevertheless, the range of geographical knowledge of some students is narrow.
219. Attainment in Year 13 is above the national average and students are working with confidence towards their target grades. Assessment is very good in a firmly supportive structure which offers them the security of knowing exactly where they are, how they are making progress and what they have to do to improve. This is an exemplar of good practice which is only beginning to be applied between 11 and 16. Students work well together as a supportive group. At the beginning of a Global Futures module one student presented to those who had had university interviews the previous day a very clear summary of the theoretical effects of population size and population change on the quality of life.
220. Teaching is good and students mature quickly into purposeful independent learners. Teaching is shared amongst three of the four subject specialists who bring a variety of styles and interests along with their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Good planning, clear objectives, a brisk pace and a range of methods are strengths of teaching which bring about good learning. Organising classes into small groups enables teachers to establish a fast learning dialogue where teachers use effective questioning techniques to help students use their knowledge to extend their understanding. In one lesson on population theory this development was particularly challenging because pauses allowed students to think out their answers before the next quick step forward.
221. Students develop good key learning skills. They mature rapidly into impressive young adults who choose to study: they learn independently with ease and growing confidence. Easy access to computers in the adjacent library enables appropriate use of a variety of databases and search engines including the department's own intranet. Home computers are used appropriately, although the department does not know who does not have a computer at home so that they cannot be offered specific support in

school. Students co-operate well to share tasks towards a common goal and present their findings in writing and orally with growing confidence. Students are required to understand and use statistical skills as they discuss trends in population growth with the aid of simple correlation techniques.

222. Resources are unsatisfactory. The number of library books is below what might be expected but students' achievement does not suffer as a result because teachers work hard to compensate for a deficit of printed case materials by preparing their own. There is no observed use of classroom equipment such as a variety of projectors, videos and interactive white boards to show strong visual images in a strongly visual subject. Leadership is good and morale is high. Fieldwork in North Wales cements good relationships which are valued by students who are secure in what they perceive as a good department. Students in Year 13 are insecure about their future intentions.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

223. The focus of the inspection was upon English language. One lesson was seen in each of Year 12 and Year 13 English literature, and one Year 13 German lesson. The provision for English literature is satisfactory. It is a popular subject choice. Very few students fail to complete Year 12. Almost all continue into Year 13. In lessons sampled, teaching was satisfactory. Standards of attainment were below average. Only a small number of students study German or French in the sixth form. Provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good, and students achieve well in relation to their GCSE grades. Retention rates are good.

English

Overall, the quality of provision in English language is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good, so that students make rapid progress
- Examination results are above the national average
- The English language course is popular, and few students drop out

Areas for improvement

- Lower attaining students in Year 12 do not feel well supported
- Students have insufficient opportunities to extend their learning through speaking and listening.

224. A-level English language results in 2002 were well above the national average for 2001. Half the students entered achieved either A or B grades. These results showed a marked improvement on those for the previous year, and were the highest yet recorded in the school. They were notably higher than results achieved in English literature, whereas in the previous three years they had been consistently lower. Students overall are shown to have achieved better than expected results in the school's analysis. Set against their levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form, students achieve well in English language.
225. Work seen during the inspection was above average. Students in Year 13 showed that they had very good understanding of the methodology for undertaking their personal research projects on structure analysis. When talking about their work, they are well informed and make good use of appropriate technical vocabulary. They organise their

folders of work very well. Their essays are well constructed and pursue clear lines of argument. There is good evidence of careful analysis and thorough research of topics on language acquisition and change. Students produce well-crafted creative writing and good commentaries. In a Year 12 lesson, most students showed that they lacked confidence when talking in class, and group discussions on language and gender were less penetrating than usual. The written work of lower attaining students in Year 12 is well below average.

226. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject. Marking is conscientious and teachers' comments show students how to improve. Teachers prepare lessons carefully, having very good regard for the examination specifications. Students quickly acquire technical vocabulary and come to terms with demanding analysis of language. Relationships with students are cordial and positive, so that students feel valued and are encouraged to work hard. Teachers manage the course so as to give students every encouragement to be resourceful independent learners. Students make extensive use of the Internet, and other sources of information, to research their work. Opportunities are missed for students to be more fully involved in lessons by using structured talk to extend their learning.
227. English language is one of the most popular A-level courses. Twenty-six students are currently taking the subject in Years 12 and 13. Attendance is good and very few students drop out before completing the course. Students enjoy their lessons, but lower attaining students in Year 12 are finding that the course is more difficult than they envisaged, and are struggling to cope.
228. Management of the sixth form English language course is satisfactory. Schemes of work are shortly to be revised to take account of changing examination specifications. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.