

INSPECTION REPORT

NUNTHORPE SCHOOL

Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough

LEA area: Redcar and Cleveland

Unique reference number: 111740

Headteacher: Ms Debbie Clinton

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 27 September – 1 October 2004

Inspection number: 268428

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1362
School address:	Guisborough Road Nunthorpe Middlesborough
Postcode:	TS7 0LA
Telephone number:	01642 310561
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Ian Click
Date of previous inspection:	8 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Nunthorpe School is a larger than average 11-16 comprehensive school with 1362 students on roll. There are 140 pupils with special educational needs, which is below the national average. The percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is below the national average. The percentage of students whose mother tongue is not English is low and only two students are at the early stage of learning English. Only six per cent of students are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The percentage of households with children in high social class households is above the national average. Overall, the attainment on entry to the school is above the national average. There is a low mobility of students with only eight students who joined the school other than at the usual time of admission. The school gained, and has since retained, the Investor in People award in 1996 and gained a Schools Achievement Award for the three years up to 2002. The school is a Leading Edge School preceded by three years as a school with Beacon status. In addition the school is a gifted and talented ambassador school and gained a national Sportsmark award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Lead inspector	Work related learning
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector	
27201	Clive Ashworth	Team inspector	English
32330	Ann Behan	Team inspector	Mathematics
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	English as an additional language Modern foreign languages
18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	History
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
10209	Vince Gormally	Team inspector	Art and design
3755	Trevor Hulbert	Team inspector	Geography
12890	Tom Jardine	Team inspector	Science
15312	Kay Lord	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
24894	Clive Petts	Team inspector	Design and technology
31701	Graeme Rudland	Team inspector	Music
1845	Robert Tweed	Team inspector	Religious education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The strengths of the school clearly outweigh any weaknesses and the school has maintained the very high standards identified in the previous inspection report. **Overall this is a good school.** The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The standards achieved by students when compared with national standards are well above average, especially in Year 11; in relation to students' prior attainment most students are achieving well. The leadership and management of the school are good. Most parents are supportive of the school, as are most students. The school has a strong ethos and a particular strength of the school is the high quality of relationships between adults in the school and students, which enables all students to feel valued within the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The high attainment of students in Year 11.
- The very high standards achieved by students following courses in drama, music and art.
- There is very good quality teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11.
- The high levels of attendance in the school contribute to students' achievements.
- There is a very good quality of pastoral care for students, especially the mentoring and monitoring of students in Year 11.
- The school makes very good use of the local and wider community to enhance students' personal development.
- There are inconsistencies in the marking of students' work.
- There is insufficient rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The high standards at GCSE have been improved upon since the last inspection. However, the trend in the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 is below the national trend. The school has effectively tackled most of the issues identified for improvement in the last report. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that the data on students' attainment when they enter the school is used to ensure continuity and progression in learning and in identifying targets for students to aim for in Years 7 to 9. There still remains a weakness in the consistency of marking students' work and the school is still failing to provide a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

A places the school in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally.*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

The overall standards achieved by most students are very high, especially in Years 10 and 11. Most students achieve well as they progress through the school. Standards of English language and literacy skills are good as is students' competence in mathematics. Students' competence in ICT is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs and students with English as an additional language make good progress relative to their prior attainment, as do gifted and talented students. Very high levels of GCSE performance are directly attributable to the willingness of teachers to support students outside of lesson times and the high quality of mentoring and monitoring of students in Year 11. The individual results at GCSE for chemistry, biology, physics, art and design,

textiles and drama are outstanding. Standards in the end of Year 9 national tests are not as high as they should be and the school has failed to meet its targets for the proportion of students reaching level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science.

Students' attitudes are very good as is their attendance and punctuality in arriving at school. Behaviour is very good and students are generally very well behaved in the dining hall and around the school. **Their personal development, which includes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good but is very good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching in drama is excellent. There is a high quality of lesson planning across the school, which enables students to learn at a brisk pace. The commitment of teaching staff to provide support for individuals and groups of students outside of the normal school day is a real strength. There is a very good use made of assessment data to set targets for Year 11 students but this does not yet extend to students in other year groups. Not all teachers give clear and regular feedback to students in Years 7 to 9 on how to improve their work. The breadth of the curriculum is good for students in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 in meeting the needs of students. Extra-curricular provision for students is very good, especially for gifted and talented students and all students have many opportunities to benefit from a good range of educational visits. The support and guidance given to students is very good. Child Protection procedures are in place and are very effective. School teaching and support staff know their students very well. The school has effectively tackled the health and safety issues identified during the inspection week. There are very good links with parents. The quality of the school's links with the community and with other schools and colleges is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is good. However, in one respect governance is unsatisfactory in that governors are failing to ensure that all students have a daily act of collective worship. The headteacher has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. The professional development of all staff is a strength of the school. Governors offer very good support and challenge to the school. There is a lack of a rigorous system at all levels of management to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the good teaching and the progress their children make. A minority, however, have concerns about homework and being kept informed about how their children are getting on. The inspectors judge that the amount of homework set is appropriate for the ages of the students. There is relatively low attendance by parents for consultation meetings and over a third of parents do not attend to find out how their child is progressing. The views of students are as positive as those of their parents and 98 per cent of students in response to the inspectors' questionnaire stated that this is a good school to be at.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all teachers are consistent in marking students' work so that every possible opportunity is taken to ensure that all students know how to improve their work.
- Establish a rigorous monitoring of students' work by middle and senior managers to ensure that there is a consistent approach to marking by all teachers to ensure that standards in Years 7 to 9 improve.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all students receive their entitlement to a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The overall standards achieved by most students are very high, especially in Years 10 and 11. Most students achieve well as they progress through the school. Standards of English language and literacy skills are good as is students' competence in mathematics. Students' competence in ICT is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs and students with English as an additional language make good progress relative to their prior attainment as do gifted and talented students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results place the school in the top five per cent of similar schools.
- Very high levels of GCSE performance are directly attributable to the willingness of teachers to support students outside of lesson times and the high quality of mentoring and monitoring of students in Year 11.
- The individual results at GCSE for chemistry, biology, physics, art and design, textiles and drama are outstanding.
- Standards in the end of Year 9 national tests are not as high as they should be and the school has failed to meet its targets for the proportion of students reaching level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.4 (34.7)	(33.4)
Mathematics	36.9 (37.8)	(35.4)
Science	35.7 (35.3)	(33.6)

There were 267 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Students enter the school with standards that are above the national average. Their overall standards of attainment in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well above the national average for English and mathematics and above for science. In comparison with similar schools based on students' prior attainment, results for English, mathematics and science were well below average. The trend in the school's average NC points for all three core subjects was below the national trend. Results for 2004 show an increase for English and science over the school's 2003 results but a dip for mathematics. Standards are not as high in Years 7 to 9 as they are in Years 10 and 11. In part this is because the standards of teaching are higher in Years 10 and 11 but also because it has been the school's policy to target any additional teaching resources into Years 10 and 11.
2. Standards seen in lessons were above average in Years 7 to 9 but were not as high as the test results would indicate. The explanation for this is that the inspection took place at the beginning of the academic year and National Curriculum tests take place at the end of the year. Students enter the school with standards that are above average. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average, which indicates that achievement is satisfactory.
3. For individual subjects, by the end of Year 9 standards are well above average in art and design, music and drama. They are above average in all other subjects except for design and

technology where standards are average. In relation to their prior attainment most students are achieving very highly in music and drama. For all other subjects students achieve well except in mathematics, science, design and technology and history where achievement is satisfactory.

4. Individual students with special educational needs make good progress, in line with their peers. Gifted and talented students achieve well. Their achievements, and the progress they make, are in line with other similar students. There are currently very few students in the school who are at the early stages of English acquisition or who speak English as an additional language. These students are achieving in line with other students in the school.
5. For each of the last two years the school has failed to meet its targets for the proportion of students reaching level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science. In 2004 the school did meet its targets for the proportion of students reaching level 5 and above in ICT. However, assessment in Years 7 to 9 may have produced misleadingly high scores in ICT as the system for assessing students' competence in ICT was insufficiently rigorous. The school may not be on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2005.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	75 (79)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (99)	92 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	43.3 (43.6)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 277 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C was well above average in 2003. The provisional results for 2004 show the same proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A*-C as in 2003. However, the 2004 figures may change when the outcomes are known for the re-marking that has been requested for over ninety candidates' individual results. The school is performing in the top five per cent in the country when compared with similar schools. There are several factors that contribute to these high standards. Students are well motivated and attend regularly. They receive very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 which enables them to learn effectively. Of equal significance is the deliberate policy to target additional teaching resources into Years 10 and 11 so that class sizes are smaller and students can gain more individual attention. Of perhaps greater significance is the willingness of subject teachers to support students at lunchtimes and after school.
7. In the analysis of individual subjects in the 2003 and 2004 GCSE examinations most subjects show results in excess of the respective national average. However, the individual results for chemistry, biology, physics, art and design, textiles and drama are outstanding.
8. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G was well above the national average. In 2003 and 2004 the school met its targets for the proportion of students gaining five grades A*-C and one A*-G. For the last two years the target for average points score was exceeded.

9. Standards in lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 reflect the standards of recent examination results. Standards were well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, religious education and drama. For all other subjects standards are above average except for citizenship and design and technology where standards are average. In relation to their prior attainment most students are achieving very highly in English and religious education and drama because they are well taught. They are achieving well in all other subjects except for design and technology and citizenship where achievement is satisfactory. Standards are very high in food, child development and textiles. However, standards in graphic products and systems and control were unsatisfactory and the provisional 2004 GCSE results reveal a further decline. As a consequence, achievement is unsatisfactory. Where achievement is unsatisfactory, mainly with boys, knowledge and understanding is superficial, and students are too reliant on teachers to tell them what to do rather than thinking for themselves. In all areas, graphic techniques are insufficiently developed and hinder the drive to raise design standards.
10. Overall, most students are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. The value added score based on prior attainment is well above average. Relative to the national performance of boys and girls there is no significant difference. Girls do outperform boys but the gap is in line with the national difference. Gifted and talented students have been identified since they started school, and through the involvement with Excellence in Cities, have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. Their achievement is good.
11. The school's analysis of GCSE results in 2004 indicates that students with special needs achieve good results in relation to their learning difficulties, and their achievement is consistent with that of students generally. In Years 7 to 9, students achieve good standards. Those students who receive support in the Effective Learning Centre make good progress towards their individual targets.
12. Currently there are no students with English as an additional language requiring extra support. Many of these students speak their mother tongue at home as well as English. They are well integrated into school. They value education and their achievement is good and in line with the achievements made by other students in the school.
13. Standards in literacy are above expectations. The reading and writing abilities of most students enable them to access the curriculum; speaking and listening skills are generally above average. Subjects make satisfactory and sometimes good contributions to developing and maintaining students' literacy skills. Most students read with fluency and understanding in all subjects and they undertake a wide range of writing including news reports, letters, argument or persuasion and book reviews, as well as factual writing. Students make good progress in reading and listening; progress in writing is less developed in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining students write lengthy, interesting, and detailed pieces of writing.
14. Students enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is above the national average. By the end of Year 9 attainment is above the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Year 9 higher attaining students use their knowledge of the properties of angles and triangles to solve problems and prove formulae. They can explore number patterns and find the n th term of a sequence. Lower attaining students in Year 8 are able to add simple fractions, express fractions in their simplest terms, and order fractions using common denominators. The lowest attaining students find mental calculations difficult because they cannot easily recall multiplication tables.
15. Standards in ICT are good across the school. Word processing helps raise standards in literacy, and numeracy is reinforced by the manipulation of numbers and data in spreadsheets. There is little difference in the standards of boys and girls, except that girls tend to present work with rather more care. Most students achieve well in all year groups. Students with special educational needs do well, and achievement is satisfactory for those identified as gifted and talented.

16. The very high academic standards achieved by students, at the time of the last inspection, have been improved upon. In the Key Stage 3 national tests there are improvements in mathematics and science results when compared with those in 1999. At GCSE, 75 per cent of students gained five GCSE grades A*-C compared with 71 per cent in 1997.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes to work are very good as is their attendance and punctuality in arriving at school. Behaviour is very good and their personal development, which includes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students have very good attitudes towards learning.
- Students are generally very well behaved in the dining hall and around the school.
- Students' personal development at the school is good.
- Attendance levels are very good, as is punctuality to school.

Commentary

17. Most students behave well in lessons and around the school campus. With students having access to most areas of the school at lunchtime and taking into account the nature of the site, there is much potential for problems. Some parents felt there was inadequate supervision at lunchtimes. Many teaching staff informally and voluntarily support the leadership team's efforts at lunchtime supervision by remaining in their teaching areas. The inspectors' judgement is that most students behave sensibly and with maturity and do not need further supervision. The behaviour in the dining room is civilised. A relatively low number of students take the cooked meal option as the meals on offer would seem to make little contribution to healthy eating. The majority of students have a healthier diet by choosing to buy a sandwich lunch or bringing packed lunches from home. The dining room is too small for a school of this size and so packed lunches are eaten in classrooms. However, allowing students to eat in science laboratories is not good practice.
18. Additionally, there is evidence of consistently very good attitudes and behaviour from many students, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and good behaviour management systems are in place and are consistently implemented across the school. The day-to-day behaviour management and control is very much a team effort by a very united combination of the leadership team, heads of year, form tutors, classroom support staff and specialists in behavioural support.
19. Students with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning. They apply themselves well and show a capacity for sustained hard work. Their behaviour in lessons is very good, and they are very responsive to what teachers require. They accept additional support willingly and without any embarrassment. They work enthusiastically in mixed ability groups and make full contributions to their lessons. They take a real pride in their written work, and produce very good artwork to complement it. Students in the Effective Learning Centre are not only purposeful and hard working, but also eager to accept the support they get there. The Centre also accommodates students temporarily withdrawn from lessons on health grounds, or because of special circumstances, and they all coexist alongside each other harmoniously.
20. There is a school council in place, which helps to promote students' personal development, and there is also a very wide range of opportunities for students to enhance their personal development through frequent visits into the local and wider community. Additionally, school based opportunities are provided for students to take responsibility for their own standards of work and behaviour in their everyday life at the school. The weekly period of PSYCHE (personal, social, young citizenship and health education) provides an effective input to students' personal development.

21. All the assemblies during inspection week included significant elements of what the school calls PSYCHE, and the very powerful presentations about the life of Martin Luther King provided students with a rich insight into the oppression of black people in late 20th century America. Students make a strong contribution to helping raise funds for different disadvantaged groups both locally and internationally. Last Christmas, several hundred shoeboxes of toys were sent by Year 7 and 8 students to Romania and Year 7 students distributed Christmas hampers to local elderly citizens. Students are prepared well for living in a multicultural society.
22. Assemblies and tutor periods play an important part in the personal development of the students. The 'Think link' focus during inspection week was the work of Dr Martin Luther King. Year assemblies were moving and provided thinking and reflection time, and some opportunities for formal prayers were offered. Opportunities for self-expression were provided in a Year 10 tutorial for individuals to recall to the class some of Martin Luther King's achievements. Charities are very well supported, locally, nationally and worldwide. Students research these individually and in groups, culminating in presentations to the form and year group before voting which to support. The Year 11 raising of attainment programme has proved successful over a number of years. All students are involved, with varying degrees of responsibility, providing support and encouragement to peers. This has the added advantage of raising standards and self-esteem. Residential and visits abroad contribute to the moral, social and cultural development of the students. Successes are celebrated as evidenced by many displays. In class, students work well collaboratively, in groups or pairs. Work in music and drama is highlighted as a particular strength, providing the scene for individual performances and opportunities for self-development for present and past students of all abilities. Elections for the school council are yet to take place in this academic year. This is a yet another key tool for personal development.
23. The school has maintained the high standards identified in the previous inspection report.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (93.8%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.1
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	1.1

24. The overall attendance at the school is very good when compared to similar schools. Punctuality in arriving at school is also very good. There is the occasional lateness to lessons by some students caused in the main by the poor design of the building. The school is active in trying to improve this situation by considering a revision of the current 'bell' system, which tends to create bottlenecks around the school during lesson changeover. The incidence of unauthorised absence is much lower than other schools. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time. It is not a priority for the school to follow up first day absences but the systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are very good.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1294	63	2
White – Irish	5	2	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	14	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	10	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

25. The number of fixed term exclusions is in line with national figures for a school of this size. There is no real increase in the number of exclusions since the last inspection. Analysis shows that fixed-term and permanent exclusions by the school are fairly used and are appropriate responses to the nature of the incidents.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good as is the assessment of students' work. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of most students. The range of out-of-school activities is very good. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Students' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The support and guidance given to students are very good as is the effectiveness of the school's links with parents. The quality of the school's links with the community and with other schools and colleges is very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and it is very good in Years 10 and 11. The assessment of students' work is very good in Years 10 and 11 but is not as strong in Years 7 to 9.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in drama is excellent.
- Teaching and learning are stronger in Years 10 and 11.
- There is a high quality of lesson planning which enables students to learn at a brisk pace.
- There is a very high commitment of teaching staff to provide support for individual and groups of students outside of the normal school day.
- There is a very good use made of assessment data to set targets for Year 11 students but this has not yet been extended to students in other year groups.
- Not all teachers give clear and regular feedback to students, especially in Years 7 to 9 on how to improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 144 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (7%)	36 (25%)	55 (38%)	41 (28%)	2 (1%)	0	0

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

26. Overall, teaching and learning are good and very good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is excellent in drama and very good in music and religious education. In all other subjects, teaching is good except for citizenship and design and technology, where it was satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is excellent in drama and very good in English, science, art and design, geography, history and religious education. In all other subjects teaching is good except for citizenship where it is satisfactory.
27. One of the major strengths in teaching across many subjects is the high quality of lesson planning to include a variety of teaching tasks that makes for a very effective use of time. For students, this results in a very good pace to their learning. There is a very high quality of relationships between students and their teachers, based on mutual respect. Most teachers provide encouragement and give students confidence to tackle their work effectively. The commitment by all teachers to provide individual help to students, especially those in Year 11, outside of lesson times is an outstanding feature of the school and makes a significant contribution to the very high results students gain in their GCSE examinations. Students enjoy many of their lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers' expectations are high in most subjects, most noticeably in religious education and drama. The management of students' behaviour is in the main very good and it is rare to see teaching or learning time being lost because of having to spend time managing poor behaviour. Most students try hard in lessons to acquire new knowledge and skills. As a result of being well taught most students have well developed skills in being able to work independently.
28. In lessons in which teaching is satisfactory, there are some weaknesses. In a very small number of lessons, students rely too heavily on what their teachers tell them and too little on their own ideas. Occasionally the range of tasks set is too narrow to meet the needs of all students, particularly in mixed ability classes in Years 7 to 9.
29. Students with special needs receive expert support from both specialist teachers and teaching assistants. The school's decision to withdraw students with learning difficulties from the second modern foreign language enables them to receive extra targeted support in the Learning Centre, generally on an individual basis. Much of this support comprises specialist programmes, which are taught with expertise and engage students well. Students also use computer programs with confidence. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that the ethos

of quiet and sustained concentration within the Effective Learning Centre enables students to remain focused and to make good progress.

30. Mixed ability teaching makes a very valuable contribution to the progress of students with special educational needs in most subjects, by providing an ethos of high achievement and models of good language development. In-class support is effective in helping students take advantage of the mainstream curriculum, and in ensuring the effectiveness of the school's emphasis on mixed ability teaching. Teachers and support assistants work closely together in the classroom, although they would benefit from having greater opportunities to plan lessons together. Students are supported sensitively and unobtrusively. Teachers, aided by the very effective work of their departmental special educational needs co-ordinators, provide additional learning opportunities for students that meet their needs discreetly.
31. The teaching and learning of students with English as an additional language are good and these students achieve as well as and sometimes better than other students in the school.
32. Since the last inspection much work has been undertaken to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of this is reflected in the quality of teaching seen during the inspection. Good quality professional development courses have been provided for teachers resulting in the production of a handbook entitled 'Towards Excellence in Teaching and Learning'. Similarly, the evidence of good professional development is reflected in the consistently good quality of lesson planning. Less well developed is a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. However, there is more openness in sharing good practice both in teaching and in how students learn. The impact of these strategies for improvement has resulted in an increase in the percentage of satisfactory or better teaching since the last inspection. What has not changed is that teaching and learning still remain stronger in Years 10 and 11 than they are in Years 7 to 9.
33. The teaching of literacy skills is good and as a result literacy standards are generally above average. As a result of a clear literacy policy appropriate staff training has been undertaken, for example on reading and text types. Key words are well used by most departments and subjects such as English, religious education and history offer good opportunities for extended writing. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are generally corrected, although not entirely consistently across all subjects. Most subjects provide good opportunities for a wide range of reading opportunities. Speaking and listening activities are good in almost all subjects; as a result speaking is generally clear, confident and fluent. Several subjects –including English - encourage the redrafting of work to ensure accuracy.
34. A numeracy policy is in place, and opportunities for students to practise mathematical skills are identified in some schemes of work. However, these opportunities are not consistently applied. Students have sufficiently good numeracy skills in subjects which require good mathematical skills to ensure that their progress is not impaired.
35. There is a rigorous system of using assessment data to set accurately individual targets for students in Year 11. This is linked to an extensive monitoring and support system for individual students which has contributed to improving GCSE results overall. Less well developed is monitoring and target setting for students in other year groups. In Years 7 to 9 a system has been introduced recently where students record their National Curriculum levels for each of their subjects in their student planners. However, not all students are aware of the strategies that are needed to reach the next level. Most teachers are effective in assessing students' understanding during lessons but written feedback on students' work is not consistent across the school. The school marking policy requires that only key pieces of work be marked once every half term with National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades, and effort grades. Other work is marked according to faculty policy. This has led to some missed opportunities in marking, as not all subjects give clear and regular feedback to students on how to improve their work. In geography the quality of marking in Years 10 and 11 is very good and provides students with a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their work.

The curriculum

The school provides a curriculum of good quality. It is fully inclusive and provides a good range of academic subjects at GCSE level. Work experience is well established. There is a lack of vocational courses and the school recognises the need to extend the range of alternative courses. The school provides additional opportunities for gifted and talented students. The school's resources are generally good. Accommodation is satisfactory. Teaching areas are often crowded but good management by teachers means the quality of learning is not affected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of the curriculum is good for students in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 to meet students' needs.
- Plans to extend the range of courses to meet the needs of individual students in Years 10 and 11 are not yet finalised.
- Extra-curricular provision for students is very good, especially for gifted and talented students and all have many opportunities to benefit from a good range of educational visits.
- Accommodation is often crowded and restricts activities in physical education during bad weather.
- The school does not provide the statutory daily act of worship for all students.

Commentary

36. The curriculum meets all the statutory National Curriculum requirements. However, it is failing to provide a daily act of collective worship. The allocation of time to subjects is good, especially in Years 7 to 9. The school provides a wide range of academic courses at GCSE level that meet the needs of the majority of students. The breadth of this programme is extended through provision of three specialist sciences, business education, music and drama. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed systematically across the school. The school provides successfully for students with special educational needs. The school is reviewing the range of courses and is proposing to introduce a number of vocational and occupational subjects in Years 10 and 11. Joint course provision with partner institutions is at an early stage of consideration. The taught programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship (known jointly as PSYCHE) provides a good core with well-developed opportunities for students to take responsibility in the school and within the local community. The school provides effectively within this programme for attention to alcohol and drug misuse as well as sex and relationships education. Work related opportunities are provided and programmes such as the Nunthorpe Challenge offer chances to develop personal, social and physical skills. Lower aspiring boys are motivated effectively because of the very good relations between teachers and students. Students are encouraged and are given the confidence to achieve well to meet their personal progress targets. Careers advice and information about post-16 education is good. Subjects such as history and drama prepare students well for the style of teaching they will meet on A-level courses.
37. Students with special educational needs benefit from having the same curriculum and learning opportunities as their peer groups. Many students also have additional individual or small-group sessions in the Effective Learning Centre, which provides highly structured tuition for their specific difficulties. Only limited progress has been made avoiding gender stereotyping in all areas of design and technology.
38. Enthusiastic staff provide a good range of opportunities for activities outside the normal school day. Particular strengths are the many high quality performing arts activities, including a drama performance at the Edinburgh Fringe. Many subjects including French, English, drama, mathematics, science, geography, history, physical education and music regularly arrange educational visits and trips and make good use of visitors which enhances the quality of learning for students. These include former students who are now national and international

sports personalities. A well-developed extension programme for gifted and talented students provides for a variety of interests ranging from multicultural cookery to business enterprise and there are after-school recreational opportunities such as the popular 'Warhammer' games club.

39. Overall, the provision of resources is good. With the exception of design and technology where unsatisfactory resource provision hinders the drive to raise standards in graphics, modelling and manufacturing departments are well provided with the necessary books, apparatus, sports equipment, stationery and ICT resources - although access to ICT suites can at times be difficult. The library, although small, is satisfactory and a growing number of rooms have either data projectors or electronic whiteboards which are increasingly well used.
40. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory. However, the number of students in this popular school places pressure on teaching/dining areas as well as stairways. Teachers make good use of the often cramped conditions (especially in some computer rooms) so learning is not impaired. The exception is in physical education, where the inadequate changing facilities cause delays to lessons. In bad weather, there are not enough indoor facilities to provide for all the groups in Years 10 and 11. Limited storage in art and design means that students' coursework cannot be properly stored
41. The staffing of the school is good. The school is rigorous in its selection of staff and the high turnover of staff over the past two years has had no discernable impact on the achievement of students. The professional development of teaching staff is organised effectively and economically with minimum disruption to teaching and learning. The school runs an annual staff conference, and this is valued by both teaching and non-teaching staff.
42. Specialist staff for special educational needs, both teaching and non-teaching, show a high level of expertise, although the availability of support to individual departments is not sufficiently high. Subject teachers, particularly faculty members responsible for special needs, have very good knowledge and skills and an allowance of time for planning which compensates to some extent for the relative lack of in-class support.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for child protection, welfare and health and safety are good and the procedures for monitoring students' personal and academic developments are very good for Year 11 students. The procedures for seeking and acting on students' views are very good. These judgements are broadly in line with the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are in place and very effective.
- Relevant staff are trained in child protection systems and procedures.
- School teaching and support staff know their students very well.
- Medical records are well maintained and regular fire drills are undertaken and recorded.
- Very good risk assessments take place in advance of school trips.
- The school provides outstanding mentoring and monitoring of the progress of Year 11 students.
- The existing systems for involving students through seeking and acting on their views are very good.
- The health and safety issues identified during the inspection week have been effectively tackled by the school.

Commentary

43. Child protection systems and procedures are in place and all staff are aware of these. Relevant staff training in child protection matters has also taken place. The school teaching

and support staff, very well supported by a range of external agencies, provide a very high degree of welfare and pastoral support to individual students. Interviews with several students of different ages demonstrated that they feel safe and secure. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, 98 per cent of students feel Nunthorpe is a good school to be at. They also feel that they can approach members of staff should they have any personal difficulties or problems. The school closely monitors students' academic performance and personal development, both formally and informally, and steps are taken to identify any individual problems with a range of effective strategies. The system for monitoring and mentoring Year 11 students is of an outstanding quality and makes a major contribution to enabling students to reach very high academic standards. However, the outstanding quality for monitoring and mentoring Year 11 students is not yet reflected in other year groups.

44. The school operates a good first aid system for minor accidents and appropriate records are maintained. Regular fire drills are carried out and the school also maintains a record log. A further log is maintained of students' medical records, including food allergies. The school also carries out regular health and safety audits of the site and is very strong in undertaking risk assessments in advance of external visits and trips.
45. Lessons such as PSYCHE are used well to provide students with the opportunity to talk about themselves and to express ideas and suggestions as to how they perceive a range of issues. Students' personal development is further enhanced through the provision of individual targets (both academic and personal) to which students are expected to apply themselves. A wide range of behaviour management strategies is in place and they are regularly reviewed and/or adapted to ensure that systems and procedures match each individual student's requirements. The school acknowledges students' achievements through the praise given to them in the classroom and in assemblies and in their annual celebration of achievement evening.
46. Communication between the special needs co-ordinator and subject teachers is very good. Subject teachers receive helpful student profiles which they can refer to in their class lists, and they in turn write targets for students on school action and school action plus which are consolidated to produce very effective and valuable individual education plans. Students with statements have their plans written by the SENCO, and these are carefully developed to reflect the needs outlined in their statements, and to guide teachers and teaching assistants in providing effective support.
47. The very high level of child protection, welfare and pastoral support to students at the school, together with the very good procedures for promoting students personal development and well being, have a very positive impact on their learning and self-confidence and they are a significant strength of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' views of the school are very good, as are the school's links with parents. The school's links with the local community and partner institutions are very good. These judgements are broadly in line with the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents and students like the school.
- The teaching and support staff are felt to be good and caring.
- The school is good at reaching out to parents and in keeping them informed.
- The school makes very good use of the local and wider community to support the curriculum.
- A significant minority of parents appear reluctant to attend parent evenings to hear about the progress their sons and daughters are making.

Commentary

48. The majority of parents who returned the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. One parent stated that there was a buzz in the school, developing new teaching styles taking into account the way pupils learnt. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. Parents also feel that the teachers and support staff are good and that the school is well led and managed. Parents generally agreed the staff were hardworking and caring and that they gave up a lot of their time for pupils for extra-curricular activities.
49. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual governing body report to parents and via the regular and well-designed newsletters is of a high standard. Annual academic reports to parents are detailed and very well presented although there is a lack of consistency in identifying areas for individual students to improve. There are well-planned parents' evenings and open days each year during which parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and there are extra opportunities for the parents of Year 7 students to visit the school. In addition, the school welcomes any parent to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's education. A minority of parents do not take advantage of these opportunities to visit school in order to discuss their child's progress. The school is not clear why so many parents do not attend and is working with parents to try to increase the attendance at consultation meetings. The school's practice of sending congratulatory postcards to home when a student has made a special effort is an excellent example of the school's determination to further promote links with parents whilst at the same time supporting and encouraging the student. A further good example of the developing school/home partnership is the planned change in school uniform to which every student and every parent will be fully consulted. The parent/teachers association at the school, known as FANS (Friends of Nunthorpe School) is very active and supportive of the school.
50. The school campus also houses the Nunthorpe Adult Learning Centre and this provides parents and other local residents with both daytime and evening opportunities to develop their own skills in a wide range of areas such as computers, arts and crafts, languages and performing arts. The school has many other effective community links such as the antisocial behaviour workshop for Year 7 students provided by the Cleveland Police. The school also makes very good use of the local environment to enhance students' learning.
51. The school has very good links with other local schools and colleges together with a very wide range of business links and contacts. These are utilised very well to support Year 10 students during their work experience week.
52. The school's links with parents, the community and other school and colleges provide a very strong contribution to students' learning and personal development and are a major strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards and has identified appropriate strategies to implement the vision.
- The professional development of all staff is a strength of the school.
- Governors offer very good support and challenge to the school.
- There is a lack of a rigorous system at all levels of management to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.
- There is no clear link between the resources needed for implementing the school improvement plan and the setting of the school's annual budget.

Commentary

53. The newly appointed headteacher has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and she has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. Her enthusiasm, commitment and strong leadership have motivated and influenced staff and students. Among many strengths, she has a particular expertise in strategic planning and her vision for the school in 2010 identifies some very challenging targets. The recently restructured leadership team of headteacher, one deputy headteacher and four assistant headteachers is an appropriate number for a leadership team for a school of this size. The team includes some very experienced senior staff and also one who is in their fourth week in their new roles. It is evident that they work well together as a team, they are committed to raising standards even higher and are identifying the strategies to ensure that changes will be successfully introduced.
54. The good leadership provided by the headteacher and members of the leadership team has contributed significantly to maintaining high academic standards within the school. The leadership team is committed to running an inclusive school, which, in part, is why there is a school priority this year to review the curriculum especially for Years 10 and 11 to ensure that the curriculum offered fully meets the needs of all students.
55. Overall subject and pastoral leadership is good. There are several subject areas where the leadership and management are very good or excellent, as Part C of the report indicates. The leadership of design and technology, is not as strong as in other areas. The school has an ambition to become an effective self-evaluating school and correctly has identified the need to provide leadership training for the school's middle managers in order for this to happen. The recent requirement for middle managers to produce action plans for their areas of responsibility is an appropriate innovation. The initial draft plans are very good at identifying what improvements are needed. They are less successful in identifying accurate success criteria. There is a weakness at all levels of management in applying a rigorous system for the monitoring and recording of classroom performance. In some areas there is a lack of drive and determination to raise standards in areas of known weaknesses.
56. Management is good. The well-written and detailed policies effectively identify a clear vision for improving the school. Less effective is the consistent implementation of these policies. For example, there are inconsistencies in marking, especially in Years 7 to 9, with examples of too generous marking and there is also a lack of consistency by teachers in providing feedback in their marking which enables students to improve their work. By contrast, in Years 10 to 11 assessment of students' work is very good and much more consistent across all subjects. In part these weaknesses are a consequence of the high turnover of staff within the school.
57. The priorities for improvement identified in the development plan for the current year are appropriate. For each issue there are clear strategies with identified criteria for success. Appropriate timescales for their completion have been identified. The identification of the resources needed to implement the priorities is less well developed and there is no clear link between the resources needed for implementing the plan and the setting of the school's annual budget. The school day runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed. Performance management and appraisal are properly established. There is a greater emphasis on collecting monitoring data than there is on evaluating the data to identify future changes in practice.
58. The leadership and management of special needs provision are very good. The enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator has a clear vision of what is needed, and communicates this well to her teaching colleagues. She has very effective arrangements for the induction of new students into the school, attending reviews in Year 6, writing profiles of students and preparing them for entry to Nunthorpe School. The leadership and management of other aspects of inclusion are good as there are no issues with regard to inclusion.

59. The professional development of staff is a strength. The school is strongly committed to improving the expertise of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The annual residential conference for all staff is an expensive event to hold but represents very good value for money in developing the skills and expertise of staff. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported. There are effective arrangements in place for the induction of staff new to the school. Performance management is fully implemented and contributes to the identification of training needs.
60. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely and well with the headteacher and senior staff. Governors play a very supportive role in planning for the school's improvement. Governors offer very good support and challenge to the school. However, in one respect, governance is unsatisfactory, as the school does not meet all of its statutory requirements. The school is failing to provide a daily act of collective worship, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The governors are aware of this but claim that there is insufficient accommodation to have whole-school assemblies or year assemblies daily for all students. The inspectors' views are, that whilst the school does not meet the statutory requirements, there has been an effort since the last inspection to increase the opportunities for developing students' spiritual awareness.
61. In the last inspection report there was only one weakness identified under leadership and management and that was the failure to provide a daily act of collective worship. This still remains an issue.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,272,484	Balance from previous year	72,733
Total expenditure	4,141,193	Balance carried forward to the next	204,024
Expenditure per pupil	3,045		

62. Financial control is good. The governing body agreed to implement all of the recommendations arising out of the last auditor's report in April 2001.
63. The finance committee meets regularly and its members are well informed and monitor expenditure rigorously. The principles of best value are well applied, for example, when the school decided to end its service level agreement with the local education authority for portable appliance testing. It has proven to be more efficient and cost effective to train the school's ICT technicians and purchase the necessary test equipment.
64. The governors and senior managers have historically made a conscious decision to put additional resources into Years 10 and 11. This has resulted in smaller classes which has contributed to the very high standards achieved by students in Year 11. No additional resources have been targeted into Years 7 to 9, despite the known weakness in the standards achieved by students in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. The allocation of resources to priorities is a weakness and the resourcing of departments and the setting of the annual budget is more heavily influenced by the previous year's pattern of spending than by a clear identification of current and future needs. This issue has been recognised by the school. In the current year funds are available to be allocated to departments for priorities identified in the school and department action plans. The additional grants the school receives, such as

Excellence in Cities funding and special needs are effectively used for the purposes they were intended for.

65. The school provides good value for money.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school meets the statutory requirements for work related learning.
- The contribution to work related learning from careers is good.
- There is not a sufficiently wide breadth of vocational courses for students to select from.
- Some departments have yet to identify the contribution they make to work related learning.

Commentary

66. Students' learning through work experience is very good. All students have the opportunity to undertake work experience. For this they are well prepared in their PSYCHE lessons and feedback from students and employers indicates a high level of satisfaction with the arrangements with for work experience. For a small number of students there is the opportunity for extended work experience in Year 11, which allows them to have up to three days a week on work experience and for them to take a restricted number of GCSE courses on their remaining days in school. There are three students in the current Year 11 where this opportunity is felt to be appropriate.
67. Students' learning about work is limited. The current curriculum for Years 10 and 11 provides few vocational courses and the partnership with local colleges does not extend to students having the option to attend college based courses. This issue is recognised by the school in that one of the priorities for the development of the school during the current academic year is to review the range of courses to be offered to students in Years 10 and 11.
68. Students' learning for work, by developing skills for enterprise and employability, is good. As part of the school's preparation for work experience approximately 40 people from the local community attend to provide individual interviews for every student which enables them to practise and develop their interviewing skills.
69. There is a good range of outside speakers, including the Connexions Officers, who have contact with students in Years 9, 10 and 11. Whilst the number of hours allocated to the school by the Connexions service has not been reduced there have been significant changes in their roles. Nunthorpe School, along with many other schools, both locally and nationally, has concerns about the changes in the type of support they will be receiving. It is too early for inspectors to make a judgement about the quality of this support as these changes have yet to be fully implemented.
70. Most students are strongly motivated to work and have high levels of relevant skills that are valued in the workplace. Many students are able to take responsibility and are given the opportunity to innovate. The teaching in several subjects, but not all, emphasises applications of knowledge and understanding and skills, using a very good variety of contexts in which students can acquire and apply their learning. For example, in modern foreign languages students talk about the kind of job they would like and apply in writing for a job. In physical education there are opportunities for students to become Junior Sports Leaders.
71. The school's work related learning strategy is broad and meets the statutory requirements. Once the contributions from all subjects are clearly identified it will enable the school to provide coherent progression for students. Work related learning is well led and the various activities undertaken are well monitored and effectively evaluated.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by Year 11.
- Teaching and learning are very good and especially strong in Year 11.
- Leadership and management are very good and facilitate learning.
- Information and communication technology could be more effectively used to enhance learning.

Commentary

72. Standards at the end of Year 9 in the 2003 National Curriculum tests were well above average for students gaining level 5 and above, but in line with national averages for those gaining the higher levels. In comparison with schools of a similar type these results were well below average. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The average point score was below that for mathematics and science. In 2004 results were much higher: the percentage of students gaining levels 5, 6 and 7 was well above the national average.
73. The 2003 GCSE results in English (grades A*-C) were well above average: the percentage of students achieving A*-A was double the national average. In English Literature results were also well above the national average: again the number of A*-A grades was very high. Girls achieved rather better than boys, but both achieved well above the average for their gender. In 2004 there are no confirmed results for English yet (as a result of appeals by the school). English Literature results were substantially higher than those in 2003.
74. Standards were above average by Year 9 and well above average by Year 11 in all three attainment targets; reading, writing, speaking and listening. Speaking and listening are both strengths. Good speaking and listening opportunities lead to above average oral work by most students. Higher and middle attaining students use a wide vocabulary, appropriate tone and development. The responses of lower attaining students are more brief and less well developed, because they do not have the range of vocabulary that other students possess. Listening skills are well developed; most students listen carefully and respond appropriately. Students read widely at both key stages and are helped by the variety of reading opportunities available. Different types of reading strategies are frequently emphasised in all years. Many students in Years 10 and 11 produce sophisticated and mature responses to literature; some responses were well above the standard normally found at GCSE. Written responses to literature at both key stages show an impressive grasp of aspects of character, theme and language. Original and creative writing is a particular strength, demonstrating wide vocabulary, appropriate structure and development. Writing is weakest for some Year 8 and 9 boys but the faculty is aware of this area of relative weakness and has already introduced strategies to effect improvement. Standards of literacy are above expectations, overall. Lower attaining students, especially in Years 7 to 9 make errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation but the majority of students produce accurate work. Errors are generally well corrected and there is a good focus throughout Years 7 to 9 on basic literacy. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students with special

educational needs and those who are gifted and talented make progress consistent with their prior attainment as their needs are well considered in lessons. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

75. Teaching and learning are very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching was stronger in Year 11. All teachers have very good subject knowledge; they plan and pace their lessons well to ensure that learning is maximised. Generally excellent classroom management skills ensure that learning takes place in a calm and orderly environment. Most material is challenging, interesting and well adapted to suit the needs of varied abilities in the classroom - as a result all students make good or very good progress within lessons. For example, Year 11 studying the gothic influences in 'Jane Eyre' were supported by a variety of methods which made the subject accessible to all abilities. Very good teacher-student relationships lead to an impressive work ethos in most classrooms. Marking is generally good, though occasionally lacking in detail. Students acquire understanding and knowledge well because of skilful teaching; they apply themselves excellently, working productively and collaboratively. Information and communication technology is now used more than at the time of the previous inspection. However, it is not yet fully integrated into learning.
76. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Evident concern with raising standards still further is allied to clear strategic thinking and planning for improvement. The quality of all documentation is good. Data is now well used to inform planning. Assessment is good. A particular strength is the tracking of students, so that any underachievement is quickly recognised. Monitoring of teaching takes place but is not yet formalised; the new head of faculty is aware of this requirement.
77. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been broadly maintained, despite a slight dip in Key Stage 3 results for two years. The minor issues raised in the last report have been dealt with appropriately.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

78. Literacy standards are above expectations. The reading and writing abilities of most students enable them to access the curriculum; speaking and listening skills are generally above average.
79. Provision for literacy is good. The school has a clear literacy policy and a very able literacy co-ordinator. Appropriate staff training has been undertaken, for example on reading and text types. Guided reading and writing and the use of Progress Units are well established. Reading partnerships, where Year 10 students help targeted Year 7 students, have been well planned and are about to begin. Key words are well used by most departments and subjects such as English, religious education and history offer good opportunities for extended writing. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are generally corrected although not entirely consistently across departments. Most subjects provide good opportunity for a wide range of reading opportunities. Speaking and listening activities are good in almost all subjects; as a result speaking is generally clear, confident and fluent. Several subjects - including English - encourage the redrafting of work to ensure accuracy.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- The department provides very good opportunities for students to visit abroad.

- The performance by students in GCSE examinations is very good.

Commentary

80. At GCSE level the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades in both French and German is consistently well above national averages. Both boys and girls are attaining a high proportion of A*-A grades and the gap in performance between boys and girls is not as wide as that found nationally in languages. In Spanish GCSE, which is a two-year course only, students are gaining the higher grades. Entry numbers are low, hence there are no national comparisons. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessments show that standards are well above national averages in both French and German, with many students attaining levels 6 and 7.
81. In Years 7 to 9 achievement is good. The majority of students in Years 8 and 9 learn both French and German. A strength lies in the understanding of grammar, which is taught in context, with opportunities to consolidate learning. Students are interested in how languages work and ask relevant questions, demonstrating reasoning. The literacy strategy is firmly embedded in language lessons. Students are accustomed to referring to dictionaries and resources independently. They are competent in the use of information and communication technology. The enjoyment of language learning is manifest in lessons, resulting in full participation and good response. Year 7 students produced magnificent individualised French calendars for homework.
82. Homework is relevant; however, students would benefit from written comments on how to improve. Despite emphasis on fluency and pronunciation and opportunities to work in groups and pairs, many students lack confidence in speaking activities. Spanish is an option in Year 10. Students enjoy the challenge the two-year course presents and realise the need to cover new ground quickly. In Years 10 and 11, option numbers are high in both French and German. Achievement is good. Much emphasis is placed on examination techniques in all four skill areas. Examples of coursework in both draft form and completed pieces are evidence of high standards being achieved. Students contribute fully in lessons and offer suggestions on how to enhance work to gain a good grade. Boys in particular enjoy the use of 'PowerPoint' presentations, which they find motivating and challenging.
83. Teaching and learning are good overall, including some very good lessons. Language learning is made fun through a variety of teaching methods. Students respond well to high teacher expectation and challenge. Materials are authentic and interesting. Teachers make and adapt worksheets so that all students have support or additional materials to extend learning. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are able to reach their potential. Lessons are well sequenced with a variety of activity to enable students to complete tasks readily and work independently out of school. Occasionally there are lapses in pace, resulting in loss of concentration. However, on the whole, attitudes and behaviour are good as a result of good classroom management. Staff give freely of their time. There are many opportunities for students to visit France and Germany, which enhance language learning.
84. The head of department is enthused by languages and leads and manages an effective team of experienced linguists. She has clear vision and high expectations. Teachers are clear about individual roles and responsibilities. The comprehensive departmental handbook is an excellent guide for all staff. There has been good sustained improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a shared commitment within the department to improve teaching and raise standards.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- Good teaching and rigorous use of target setting for students in Years 10 and 11 are improving GCSE results in mathematics and statistics.
- Marking of students' class work is inconsistent.

Commentary

85. In the 2003 National Tests for 14 year olds, results were well above the national average but well below average when compared to similar schools. The results in mathematics were better than those in English and science. Results have improved since 1999, broadly following the national trend. The results in 2004 are similar to those of 2003.
86. The 2003 GCSE examination results in mathematics and in statistics were well above national average, and well above average when compared to similar schools. Students' results in both subjects were broadly in line with their average results across their other subjects. The 2004 GCSE examination results are similar to those of 2003. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in mathematics, but girls do better than boys in statistics. The proportions of students gaining grades A*-C in both subjects have increased significantly since 1999.
87. Students enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is above the national average. From work seen during the inspection students in Year 9 are attaining above the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Year 9 higher attaining students use their knowledge of the properties of angles and triangles to solve problems and prove formulae. They can explore number patterns and find the n th term of a sequence. Year 8 higher attaining students working in probability can identify the outcomes of combining two experiments and produce diagrams and tables as representation. Lower attaining students in Year 8 are able to add simple fractions, express fractions in their simplest terms, and order fractions using common denominators. The lowest attaining students find mental calculations difficult because they cannot easily recall multiplication tables.
88. Students in Year 11 are attaining well above the national average. This represents good achievement. Higher attaining students use a variety of mathematical concepts to solve complex problems. They are able to solve quadratic equations using different methods, apply their knowledge of angles and the properties of circles effectively, and use trigonometry to investigate and solve two and three dimensional problems. Lower attaining Year 10 students are able to apply Pythagoras to solve simple problems, and multiply and divide three digit numbers by two digit numbers and this represents good achievement.
89. Teaching and learning are good overall. When teaching is good or better lessons are well planned, contain a variety of learning activities and support the teaching of literacy. In these lessons students respond with enthusiasm, relationships are very good and students collaborate well with one another to produce good work. Students of all backgrounds and levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. For example, in a Year 9 class a variety of learning activities was used which led to very good learning. The teacher started the lesson with a class activity recapping properties of angles and triangles, leading to the introduction of formulae associated with angles and parallel lines. This was followed by students working individually to gain experience in applying the formulae. The class was then separated into groups of four to compete in solving increasingly difficult problems. The teacher ended the lesson by asking individual students to attempt to prove the

formulae that they had been using, providing the students with the opportunity to practise speaking and listening skills. In other lessons that are satisfactory, there are weaknesses. There can be over direction by the teacher and a lack of variety and pace, so that some students lose concentration and become restless.

90. The leadership and management of the mathematics faculty are good. The director of learning, and the mathematics staff, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the faculty and share a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. New schemes of work, in line with the national strategy, have been introduced and in-service training and staff development are linked to this. The use of assessment data for target setting has recently been adopted for students in Years 7 to 9. Targets are recorded in students' planners and National Curriculum level descriptors are displayed on classroom walls. There is a rigorous system of assessment and target setting for students in Year 11, linked to an extensive monitoring and support system for students, which has contributed to improving GCSE results in mathematics and statistics. There is a variety of extra-curricular activities open to all students.
91. Marking of work is in line with the school policy. However, the work in class books is generally marked by students and there is little written feedback given by teachers. This leads to inaccurate work being left unmarked and uncorrected which has the effect of restricting the progress students make.
92. There has been good progress since the previous inspection. Test results at the age of 14 and GCSE examination results have improved significantly. A new modular GCSE mathematics course has been introduced which has been well received by students. There is now a strong induction programme with local primary schools, which aids transition into Year 7. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning has increased significantly.

Mathematics across the curriculum

93. A numeracy policy is in place, and opportunities for students to practise mathematical skills are identified in some schemes of work. However, these opportunities are not consistently applied. There were occasional good opportunities observed for students to use number skills in some subjects:
 - In ICT, students use spreadsheets and formulae to produce graphs.
 - In science students perform calculations for various measurements, and use formulae and graphs to solve practical problems.
 - In design and technology students measure distance and angles, and weigh ingredients.
 - In music students count beats and note rhythms.
 - In physical education students measure heart beats.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement at GCSE is good.
- Very good teaching leads to well above average standards at GCSE.
- An enthusiastic team of hard working teachers is keen to raise standards.
- Systems to raise achievement in Years 7 to 9 are inconsistently implemented.

Commentary

94. In 2003, standards in the national tests for 14 year olds were above average and standards in GCSE were well above average. Results for GCSE physics, chemistry and biology were

particularly high. The proportion of A* and A grades at GCSE was above the national average and no student failed to attain a grade. The results were as good as mathematics at GCSE but the test results at the end of Year 9 were less good. In 2004, the national test results were about the same but GCSE results were somewhat better. There was no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls or by students from minority-ethnic backgrounds.

95. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average; they are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. As students' attainment on entry is above average this represents satisfactory achievement during Years 7 to 9 and good achievement during Years 10 to 11. In Year 9, students have a good knowledge of facts, an increasing understanding of concepts and competent practical skills. They can work out the relative reactivity of metals by observing a series of experiments and understand the industrial applications. They competently carry out experiments to make metal salts and can correctly predict the names of salts made from a range of acids. In Year 11, students have a very good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and concepts and can apply them to unfamiliar contexts. Gifted students are suitably challenged. Students are able to analyse graphs very well to explain terminal velocity and to carry out associated calculations. They can suggest why disc brakes have holes in them and why the stopping distance varies between different cars. They recognise and express reasoned views on the moral and social implications of speeding in cars. Students use their literary skills very well to produce a lively class presentation on enzymes in industry. Standards of scientific investigative work are particularly high.
96. The standards of teaching and learning are good; they are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 11. Several aspects improve students' achievement. When it is used, ICT engages students well and helps them develop their understanding of scientific concepts. The brisk pace of many lessons increases the amount learned. Teachers encourage all students to contribute to class discussions that clarify their understanding of scientific ideas. Students apply themselves well to tasks set and co-operate readily with teachers' demands. Regular checks on students' learning ensure that they have understood the purpose of the lesson. Achievement is held back, especially during Years 7 to 9, by some aspects of the teaching. The range of tasks set is too narrow for mixed ability classes. There is too little marking for improvement. The booklets used to support each unit in Years 7 to 9 are underused and not as effective as they could be. They contain good systems for self-assessment but they are rarely completed so students are unsure what they need to do to improve and the quality of reproduction is poor in parts and some students find the material too difficult to read. Teachers do not expect students to write enough to develop their scientific literacy and too often allow them to leave work unfinished.
97. Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed acting head of department knows the strengths and weaknesses of the faculty and is keen to raise standards. In particular, the shortcomings in Years 7 to 9 are recognised and steps such as better intervention to address underachievement and improved monitoring of students' work are in train. Data is well used to identify students' achievement and very effective remedial action is taken in Year 11. Staff meetings are routinely used to discuss the curriculum.
98. The dated accommodation is enlivened by excellent eye-catching displays that help create an attractive environment for learning. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, including revision classes, trips and industrial links, helps raise students' achievement. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained and areas for improvement have been addressed but there is still more to do, for example, in providing greater opportunities for students to use ICT to learn.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high levels of achievement in Years 7 to 9 and from GCSE candidates.
- Good teaching, supported by extremely good student attitudes and behaviour, leads to very effective learning.
- The school's vision and structures to drive ICT as a tool in teaching and learning is a strength.
- The management of ICT within the department requires greater clarity and a sharper focus on teaching, learning and attainment.
- Committed teachers offer lunchtime and afternoon clubs and drop in sessions.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not robustly linked to national attainment criteria, and has produced achievement statistics, which may be misleadingly high.

Commentary

99. With the exception of applied GCSE ICT, standards in ICT are good across the school. Teacher assessments for Year 9 show 95 per cent of students achieving level 5 or above, against a national average of 62 per cent. Although last year's results for the applied GCSE were very weak (only one candidate passed at GCSE grades A*-C) work from the current students suggests considerable improvement. Word processing helps raise standards in literacy, and numeracy is reinforced by the manipulation of numbers and data in spreadsheets. There is little difference in the standards of boys and girls, except that girls tend to present work with rather more care. Most students achieve well in all year groups. Students with special educational needs do well, and achievement is satisfactory for those identified as gifted and talented. However, assessment in Years 7 to 9 may have produced misleadingly high scores, albeit they do show good progress between Years 7 and 9 and a strong upward trend over time. However, many students bring very high levels of ICT, (a number, for example, already have their own live websites) and for this group, the challenges presented do not fully tap into or extend their ability.
100. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Good recent appointments have created a strong and energetic young team: much teaching seen during the inspection was good or very good (none was graded unsatisfactory), leading to very effective learning. Relations among students and staff are excellent, so little time is lost managing behaviour and lessons have very good pace and energy. Students are responsive to each other, listening to their peers as well as to the teacher. Strong teacher commitment is demonstrated through lunchtime and afternoon clubs and drop in sessions. The best teaching is inventive and well planned, teachers making good use of electronic data projection to get ideas across clearly. It also gives students breathing space: allows them time to think and frame answers before the teacher intervenes. This respect is especially helpful to lower attaining and less confident students, and helps explain good achievement.
101. The department is well led but there are weaknesses in the management. Management of the use of ICT by subjects to enhance learning rests with a newly created post of E-Learning director, while two parallel committees have been created, respectively for the strategic management and delivery of ICT, and for learning and standards improvements through ICT. The vision for ICT is excellent, and the structures represent an intelligent and helpful division of labour. There is a commendable beginning, but there remains a need for the use of ICT and e-learning to embed itself more thoroughly in the culture of the school.
102. The departmental ICT development plan is focused on raising achievement and the development of staff's professional competence but there is a need for greater differentiation of methods and materials both for higher attaining and lower attaining students. There is little

formal monitoring of teaching and learning and there is no clear picture of the extent to which ICT is used in other subjects. Practice in assessment requires improvement, as does some development in staff skills for the management of those few classes with difficult behaviour.

103. There has been major investment in resources, infrastructure and training since the previous inspection, albeit a number of factors still have a negative effect on learning. In most of the ICT rooms there is not enough working space away from the computers for students to plan and reflect individually, nor to work easily in groups or as a whole class. In some rooms a lack of ventilation or air conditioning leads to enormous heat gain and seriously detracts from students' ability to concentrate. Although ICT provision is on a path to substantial improvement, a few issues from the last inspection remain unresolved even now - particularly the unsatisfactory provision in Key Stage 4 for those students not taking the GCSE course.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

104. Provision in cross-curricular ICT is **satisfactory**.
105. ICT is used as an aid to teaching in many subject areas, ably supported by technical staff. The computer rooms and library provide opportunities for students to use computers outside lessons, and they have access to the Internet for research. There is some whiteboard technology, with commendable levels of staff enthusiasm. ICT makes a useful contribution to provision for students with special educational needs. Much of this support comprises specialist programmes, which are taught with expertise and engage students well. Students with special educational needs also use computer programs with confidence.
106. Although few departments assess ICT work using the recommended guidelines or identifying levels of attainment, several do make effective use of ICT in learning. Some student work is word processed, ICT is used for presentation, Internet based research, manipulation of sounds or data and for analysis of information. There is good use of spreadsheets, and of graphics and design packages. In English and the humanities subjects students use ICT in the presentation of their work. Programmable keyboards in music support composition. Computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing equipment is used in design and technology, especially in textiles with programmable embroidery and sewing machines.

HUMANITIES

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average and improved further in 2004.
- Standards at the end of Year 9 are above national expectations because most students develop above average skills in evaluation and explanation.
- Assessment in Years 10 and 11 is detailed, diagnostic and supports learning but the use of performance data to inform progress monitoring is underdeveloped in Years 7 to 9.
- The head of department provides an excellent role model for students and staff.
- Dedicated teachers work hard to prepare and deliver interesting and challenging lessons in which the very good classroom relationships support high levels of achievement.

Commentary

107. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are good. Teacher assessment in 2004 indicated that four out of five students were performing at or above the National Curriculum expected level and the achievement of both boys and girls was good. Help for lower attaining students is good so that they make the same progress as their peers. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average for A*-G pass grades and the higher A*-C grades. Fewer boys

than girls achieved top A*/A scores. As the result of changes made to the syllabus and the pattern of coursework, standards, especially among boys, improved in 2004. Standards of work seen were good and students make good progress.

108. Teaching and learning are good overall and are very good in Years 10 and 11. Many elements contribute to the interesting lessons. A common feature is the variety of activities used to promote learning. For example, a curved Perspex sheet and vigorously rolled footballs enabled Year 10 students to understand how seawalls deflect and dissipate wave energy. Lessons start promptly and teachers are good at checking learning as the lesson progresses and at the end. Speaking and listening skills are good. Teachers systematically promote an understanding of specialist words. Using various approaches (for example, flash cards, word bingo, mini-presentations,) students have to explain and extend their answers. Students grow in confidence so that limited explanations in Year 7 develop, by Year 9, into answers that are thoughtful, detailed and supported by evidence. Good use is made of the nearby North York Moors and Teesside and students in every year have opportunities to conduct fieldwork. GCSE students recognise the dedication of the teachers and are grateful for the high quality and ready availability of help.
109. Overall teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers who have to move between rooms experience time pressures. Teaching and learning in these lessons can become hurried. The quality of marking in Years 10 and 11 is very good and provides students with a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Detailed written advice helps students to understand how they can improve and contributes to the high standards achieved. Marking in Years 7 to 9 is less consistent and detailed. These students do not know how well they are doing or how they can improve. The department appreciates this and materials have just been introduced that will allow teachers and students to build up a clearer picture of strengths and weaknesses. Geography classrooms do not have computerised teaching aids but good use is made of the specialist computer rooms. Students are proficient at using computers to find information and present work. However, data handling in Year 11 coursework is not well developed.
110. Leadership is very good. The head of department has expert subject knowledge and a clear vision for further improvement. The department reviews its work carefully and refines course materials. Management is good but there are insufficient opportunities to share the best teaching approaches with all teachers in the department. The many good features identified in the previous report continue and there has been good improvement in the use of computers which improves students' learning.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Year 11 attain standards well above national expectations.
- Between Years 7 and 11, students make good progress, even from relatively high levels of attainment at entry.
- The teaching of history is at least good and is very good in Years 10 and 11.
- The head of department leads history very well.
- The head of department is aware of the need for even more intellectually rigorous challenges for the gifted and talented students.

Commentary

111. Standards of attainment at the age of 14 are well above the expected level, judged by teachers' assessments of National Curriculum levels. The standards in classes seen and in students' work are above average.
112. In Year 9, students' handling of different forms of historical data is good, and students are able to work effectively as individuals or in pairs and groups to develop their understanding of history. Students use historical sources well. They decide their order of importance to the subject in hand and make judgements about their reliability. Higher attaining students use their knowledge and understanding to identify, evaluate and use sources of information critically to analyse relationships between features of a particular period. For example, in their studies of the First World War, students effectively analyse the relationship between Serbian nationalism and the alliances which led to the conflict.
113. Lower attaining students make satisfactory progress in line with other students, because their teachers know them well, use good materials well matched to their needs, and provide effective guidance in lessons. For all students overall progress is hampered by a lack of 'hands on' artefacts and there is insufficient access to information and communication technology, particularly interactive whiteboards to support their understanding of the subject and to ensure a high level of presentation of work.
114. At GCSE, students' attainment is well above national averages. Their achievement in this stage of their learning is good. Students develop their analytical skills effectively and the higher attaining students demonstrate a high degree of sophistication both in their ability to engage in historical polemics, and in their skills of preparing and presenting coursework. For example, Year 11 students, in their studies of the Irish conflict in the modern period, choose appropriate texts to set the historic scene for the coursework.
115. Teaching is very good overall. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. A team of young teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious love for it and their commitment and enthusiasm are strongly communicated to students, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of methods that support learning well. They help students to use evidence effectively. Homework is set regularly and marking is well focused, supporting progress, learning and achievement.
116. Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Very good relationships underpin learning because students listen intently to each other and work well together in all years. In several lessons, students worked very effectively in mixed pairs, a method of organisation thoughtfully employed by the department, mindful of supporting the attainment of both girls and boys. Students mostly behave well, with high concentration and focus.
117. Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership is very good. The head of department has produced documents which signal his clarity of vision about the future of the department. The documents underpin much of the good work of the department, particularly, but not exclusively, in the areas of formal and informal assessment, and in effective teaching. In this, his colleagues, whom he, in turn, supports, support him particularly effectively. The head of department is aware of the need for even more intellectually rigorous challenges for the gifted and talented students and for lower attaining boys. He and his colleagues are excellent role models of commitment to the maintenance of the highest standards.
118. Good improvement has been made, in this strong department, from a strong base identified in the last inspection report.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school demonstrates its commitment to the subject by entering all students for the full GCSE course.
- Students achieve very high standards by the age of 16.
- Teaching is very well planned, using a range of stimulating activities and learning styles.
- The pace of lessons sets high expectations and keeps students firmly on task.
- Students' attitudes to the subject show keen interest and sustained hard work.
- Library provision is insufficient to enable students to learn independently.

Commentary

119. The standard of students' work in Years 7 to 9 is good. Students show a detailed understanding of the Five Pillars of Islam. They give extended descriptions of the Hindu account of creation and write in depth about and design arguments for the existence of God. The department is developing levelled assessment tasks, which show that most students are above average for their age. Inclusion is good as students whether boys or girls, higher attaining or lower attaining are achieving well. Students with special needs are taught in mixed ability groups alongside their peers and this enhances their achievements. Students in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well.
120. GCSE results, with nearly three quarters of students obtaining A*-C grades, are very good, taking account of the fact that all students are entered for the full course. They show a good improvement on last year, and the trend of examination results is rising. Girls obtain somewhat better results than boys, and the department follows the school's policy for tackling this in Year 11. Students with special educational needs achieve well and get good results. Students in Years 10 and 11 are achieving at a very high level.
121. Teaching and learning in religious education are very good. Lessons are very well planned, using a range of activities designed to challenge students. A lesson on different kinds of religious experiences used group discussion very well to hold students' interest. Excerpts from the film 'Gandhi' were used in carefully planned short sequences to enable the teacher to highlight key points. Students in Year 11 benefit from careful attention to preparation for coursework, and from the very high expectations that teachers have for them. Teachers set a pace to lessons that promotes learning and keeps students fully engaged. Higher attaining students would benefit from greater opportunities for independent learning, for instance through use of the library or their own personal resources to research topics. Assessment in Year 11 is particularly thorough, and students are not only aware of their individual targets, but also of what they need to do to reach the next level.
122. Students have very good attitudes to learning, and work with sustained effort in all lessons. They show reflection and originality, for instance when discussing the Sufi legend of the Conference of the Birds. They draw well on their own experience in discussing moral and social issues such as euthanasia. They use information and communication technology to good effect to produce word-processed mock newspaper accounts of the Crucifixion, demonstrating rich use of vocabulary and attention to detail.
123. Leadership of the department is very good. The enthusiastic and committed head of department, fully supported by her faculty head, sets a clear vision for the subject and supports colleagues in achieving agreed goals. Staff share a perception of the subject's importance and value to the life of the school. Good management is exemplified by availability of good resources, very thorough support in lesson plans for non-specialist colleagues, and good arrangements for first-hand experiences such as trips to places of worship.
124. Provision for religious education has made good improvement since the last inspection, in that all students now have the opportunity to take a full GCSE in the subject and achieve improved results.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching in textiles, good teaching in food and child development, resulting in continuous achievement and well above average GCSE results.
- Standards in graphics and product design are too low.
- Insufficient attention is given to raising standards in areas of known weakness.
- Inadequate resources hinder the drive to achieve specific technological skills and competencies.
- Risk assessments are incomplete and there is an absence of robust safety monitoring routines.
- Computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacture (CAM) require systematic coverage in all years.

Commentary

125. At the end of Year 9 the standards achieved by students are broadly average. Standards are high in food and textiles in Years 7 to 9. Overall the standards students reach by the end of Year 11 are above average. Standards in 2003 GCSE in food, textiles and child development are well above average. Provisional 2004 GCSE results show further improvement. This represents very good achievement in Years 10 to 11 by all ability groups including students with special educational needs. Girls' results are better than boys' because of the high results in child development, food and textiles where the majority of students are girls. However, 2003 GCSE standards in graphic products and systems and control were unsatisfactory. Provisional 2004 GCSE results reveal a further decline. As a consequence, achievement is unsatisfactory. The performance of girls is significantly above that of other school subjects. In contrast, the performance of boys is well below that of other school subjects. Over the past two years the relative performance of boys has declined. In those GCSE subjects where achievement is very good, students use knowledge of materials, ingredients and processes well, analyse their work effectively and complete practical projects to a high standard. Where achievement is unsatisfactory, mainly with boys, knowledge and understanding are superficial, students are too reliant on teachers to tell them what to do rather than thinking for themselves. In all areas, graphic techniques are insufficiently developed and hinder the drive to raise design standards. There is no systematic use of computer aided manufacturing to shape, form and finish materials safely and accurately. Computer aided design is not used sufficiently enough to raise standards.
126. While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, teaching in textiles is very good and consistently good in food and child development. When students are asked challenging questions at a brisk pace, they apply previous knowledge well and are keen to extend their understanding. In product design in Years 7 to 11, too little challenge is presented, teaching method is too narrow and lesson pace too slow. Too often, teaching does not inspire higher attaining boys. Expectations of behaviour, particularly boys in Years 8 and 9, are not high enough. Generally ICT is insufficiently used as a learning tool. This is evident when students are undertaking research and compiling their coursework folio. Students benefit from very good learning support from the food technician.
127. An insufficiently strong focus on strategies for raising standards of teaching and learning and tackling underachievement of boys is a feature of unsatisfactory leadership and management. There is a lack of in depth monitoring and evaluation of classroom performance. No provision is made for explicit training to raise expectations and present consistent challenge in lessons. No written policies and good practice guidance are in place for literacy, numeracy and ICT in Years 7 to 9. Risk assessments are inadequate and safety monitoring is weak. Development

plans do not focus strongly enough on fundamental priorities for improving consistency of teaching, for example methodical sharing of existing good practice. No robust criteria for success are in place. Accommodation is adequate but unsatisfactory resource provision hinders the drive to raise standards in graphics, modelling and manufacturing.

128. Taken as whole, improvements since the last inspection are unsatisfactory. There has been insufficient progress in addressing known weaknesses in teaching and learning. Students face unchallenging tasks in workshop areas, graphic techniques remain immature and opportunities are lost for students to systematically acquire essential knowledge and understanding in product design and graphics. Only limited progress has been made avoiding gender stereotyping in all areas of design and technology.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very high results in GCSE examinations.
- Attainment at the end of Year 9 is well above average.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students' progress is aided by very good behaviour in class.
- The use of ICT to support learning is still underdeveloped.
- Provision for the storage of work is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

129. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, students gain well above average grades in comparison with expectations nationally, girls gaining better results than boys. In GCSE examinations at Year 11, students achieve very high results. A feature in the most recent years has been the very high proportion of A* and A grades at GCSE obtained by girls.
130. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are very high. In work seen, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 show very good skills in drawing from observation with well above average keenly observed portrait work. Design work in colour is very imaginative and carefully executed, whilst three-dimensional work in clay is both creative and well constructed. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 reflects the very high standards of the work produced for GCSE examinations. At this stage students develop their ideas in a personal way and show a high degree of creative self-confidence. Much of the work in pictorial composition is derived from the study of 'still life' groups, which are used as a source of ideas rather than simply for direct observation. Students show originality in developing compositions from the study and enlargement of detail. Large-scale three-dimensional work, using a wide range of materials, is inventive and boldly conceived. There is very little evidence of the use of computers in students' creative work and this still remains a comparative shortcoming. Students' are achieving well in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11.
131. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. The best teaching seen was in Years 10 and 11 but no unsatisfactory teaching was witnessed. Lessons are invariably carefully prepared, clearly introduced and delivered at a good pace. In the best lessons the teaching is very sensitive to individual needs, promoting very good learning across different levels of aptitude and ability. As a result, students with special educational needs, together with gifted and talented students, reach their full potential. Learning is further enhanced by the careful planning and sequencing of lessons, one building upon another; observation to selection, to design and refinement, for example. Students' very good concentration and behaviour in class also contribute to learning and a prevailing productive working atmosphere. Assessment of

work is thorough and helps students to gain a good understanding of their own progress. A good feature, also, is the practice of collective critique, students discussing each other's progress at the end of lessons.

132. The leadership and management of the department are very good. All school policies are acknowledged in the documentation, relationships are very good and an excellent team atmosphere exists. All the teachers in the department show very good subject knowledge and versatility. There is a developing use of ICT but it has not yet been effectively established. Since the last inspection attainment has improved throughout all years. GCSE results show a steady improvement over time to the present very high level, and making and craft skills, criticised at the last inspection, are no longer a shortcoming. Problems in accommodation persist, however. Studios are cramped when used by the existing large groups of students, and storage limitations create difficulties for large-scale working.
133. Work was sampled in **drama**.
134. In 2003 GCSE, over four out of every five students attained grades A*-C, against a national average of over three out of five. Nearly half the students achieved the highest grades A*-A, more than twice the national average. Additionally, the school entered a far higher proportion of candidates than is usual for the examination. In 2004 the proportion of students gaining A*-C grades increased to over nine out of every ten. Examination results of this calibre have been maintained over many years. Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and very high in Years 10 and 11.
135. Teaching and learning are excellent overall. Teaching combines extreme rigour and accuracy with high energy and is often inspirational. Expectations are consistently high but realistic; this leads to very good achievement by all. Students with special educational needs make excellent progress and boys and girls achieve equally well because of the high quality teaching. Relationships are excellent. Students enjoy drama, work collaboratively and positively to improve their knowledge and performance skills. They can discuss technical aspects of drama with appropriate language. Above all, teaching generates a sense of shared exploration to which students respond well.
136. Leadership and management are excellent. A clear view of how excellence is attained and maintained is reinforced by good documentation, target setting and assessment.
137. Drama makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school. It is valuable in developing moral, social and cultural understanding. Productions involving students from all areas of the school are well established; students have performed at venues such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and York Playhouse.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership has a positive impact on standards.
- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement.
- The support for students' learning and musical development outside of class lessons is very good.
- Teaching does not always engage students in musical activity.

Commentary

138. Standards at the end of Year 9 are very high and this represents very good achievement because students' standards in music on entry to the school are average. In Year 9, students create effective compositions, drawing on their understanding of chords, scales, and other musical devices. They understand and apply the correct techniques when playing the keyboard. They have understanding of the features of a range of styles and are able to evaluate their work. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average. This represents good achievement because students undertaking the course are drawn from a wide range of ability.
139. Teaching is very good overall and sometimes it is excellent. Lessons are well paced, and taught with enthusiasm and commitment. Teaching is always imaginative, and the best lessons are made fun by a range of participatory activities which help students to learn. All students are valued and respected, and this leads to a confidence to participate, and very good relationships. Students are regularly asked to think about what they have learned, and what they need to do to improve. There is excellent use of paired and group discussion in lessons. Lower attaining students are given good support both by teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers draw out powerful lessons about the spiritual value of music. Some lessons are less effective from a musical perspective because either they do not involve active participation in musical activity, or the activity is curtailed through lack of time. There are inconsistencies in the marking of students' work in Years 7 to 9. Students in Years 10 and 11 are given excellent guidance on how to improve their work.
140. Energetic and vibrant leadership generates a spirit of enjoyment and commitment which permeates the department throughout the day. Developmental priorities have rightly focused on raising the achievement of students. The management of the subject is very good. Teachers provide valuable additional support, particularly to Year 11 students, outside of lesson times.
141. There are very good opportunities for students to learn to play instruments, and to engage in music making. Clubs are open to all, and cater for a wide range of musical interests and needs. Improvement since the time of the previous inspection has been very good. Teaching strategies have been well developed, the provision of ICT to support learning is now very good, and the subject is very popular.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain high standards in GCSE and in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9.
- The expertise and enthusiasm of the teaching staff is a strength.
- There is very strong leadership and management.
- There is unsatisfactory accommodation, especially the areas for students to change in.
- The allocation of time for physical education does not meet the national recommendation of two hours per week.
- There is insufficient coverage of the four strands in the programme of study.

Commentary

142. Standards in the work of students in all year groups are above average. Good support strategies are in place in Year 11 to help students achieve the highest grade possible. More boys than girls follow the GCSE courses and boys perform well in the practical aspects of the course. However, in 2004 the girls' results were higher than the boys. In the 2004 teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 girls also achieved better than boys. Summary assessment is good, but a greater emphasis needs to be placed on clear, diagnostic feedback to individuals, linked to good coaching, so that students know what is needed for improvement.

143. Students achieve well in all years. Students entering the school in Year 7, especially the boys, are eager, enthusiastic learners, showing good understanding of health and fitness. Throughout the school students have positive attitudes to their lessons and generally try hard to master the new skills and improve their performance. Students with special educational needs achieve in line with other students. Higher attaining students in all year groups achieve well in developing control and accuracy in their performance especially in the GCSE practical lessons. In GCSE theory lessons the achievement of boys is enhanced in the boys only group as they are not in competition with the girls and also by examples that boys can more easily relate to, i.e. cars turning at roundabouts – so that deeper understanding is developed and applied to new learning. Higher attaining students are not always set challenging tasks.
144. Teaching and learning are good across the department. Teaching is well organised with a strong emphasis in providing time for students to consolidate skills. Students are interested and high participation rates enable effective learning to take place. Staff have a range of expertise and experience and work together well as a committed team. The emphasis in teaching is on acquiring and developing skills, common at the start of a new school year when students are beginning new courses. Students' understanding of warm up is not well developed and does not help to raise their knowledge of health and fitness nor contribute to the development of a healthy lifestyle. Limited opportunities exist for students to evaluate their own or others' performance, especially in Years 7 to 9. The department has recently purchased an ICT software package to help students view their own performance and consider what they need to do to improve.
145. Leadership and management of the department are very good. There is a drive for improvement and a strong sense of direction. Leadership is reflective, self-critical, reviews its work, finding reasons and making improvements. This is an ambitious department. A high priority is placed on the selection and deployment of staff, who are all physical education specialists. Assessment is organised effectively to give insight into students' progress. Complex arrangements are in place to reduce the effects of limited indoor accommodation, especially to ensure that indoor lessons do not suffer unduly during bad weather. The school is hopeful that the planned improvements in accommodation will result in the building of a fitness suite and additional changing rooms to improve the current situation. GCSE classes do not have access to a specific classroom room for their theory lesson, so use of ICT is limited and there are limited opportunities for display, which would contribute to raising the quality of students' theory work.
146. Timetabling, especially in half year groups, puts great pressure on the changing areas, whilst the 50 minute lessons in Years 8 and 9 often become only 30 minutes after changing, moving to the outdoor areas and collecting the necessary equipment. Extra-curricular activities help to support learning and increase opportunity. The department is exploring other less traditional activities to encourage lower attaining students.
147. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Dance for boys is now in place; learning objectives are shared with students in all lessons; the scheme of work has been reviewed and in-house professional development is now a feature of the department utilising their own considerable expertise.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

148. Work was sampled in **business studies**, which is offered at GCSE. Standards are above average. The strength of the students' class work is their basic understanding of the subject matter and their steady accumulation of knowledge which is well organised in their files. Students confidently deal with business concepts and apply appropriate business terminology effectively. For example, in a Year 10 class on business ownership, students successfully and appropriately used expressions such as 'sole trader' and 'partnership' when discussing the merits and demerits of self-employment.

149. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their subject well. Pace and challenge are both strong aspects of teaching. Learning is good and reflects the good teaching, which takes students' knowledge and understanding to a deep level.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership to co-ordinate citizenship has been established.
- A draft policy is in place and an effective audit of the contribution from other subjects has been undertaken.
- Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 was completed appropriately and reported as required.
- There is a lack of understanding of the difference between PSHE and citizenship.
- There is insufficient attention to the teaching of the three strands of citizenship.

Commentary

150. Standards at the end of Year 9 show the majority of students achieving at the expected level with many achieving at the higher levels. In most lessons the learning about citizenship and the intended outcomes are not clear and planning does not relate sufficiently to the three strands of the National Curriculum. The evidence from students' work shows that most students are making at least satisfactory progress. All students have a portfolio in which they can store their learning, and this, linked with teacher's planners, show progression over time. This aspect of the work is still developing.
151. Students in Years 7 to 9 achieve better than Year 10 and 11 students who are less focused, unable to draw on previous knowledge and transfer their learning to new situations. Students show interest in the lessons and most apply themselves productively to their learning. Where the teaching is stimulating and engaging, students apply themselves eagerly to the tasks and achieve well. Good examples of this were seen in Year 10 when students engage in a democratic process in choosing a charity to support, and in Year 8 lessons where the focus was on bullying.
152. Provision is part of the PSYCHE programme (personal, social, young citizen and health education) delivered by form tutors. Schemes of work are developed by heads of year, with contributions from their teams of tutors. An annual review by heads of year with their year teams, and heads of year with the citizenship co-ordinator effectively evaluate resources and lessons, making changes as appropriate. The programme is designed in four strands with citizenship allocated a larger proportion of time. The programme is very crowded and it is not always clear when aspects of citizenship are being delivered, or when it is personal, social and health education. Teachers and students do not understand the difference and opportunities are missed to move from PSHE into citizenship, such as when personal choice of food becomes an issue for society as a whole or using the secret ballot for the choice of a year charity to illustrate the democratic process of voting in local and national elections. Other subjects contribute effectively to citizenship and through special events, such as the citizenship day.
153. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The features of good teaching are: good relationships between students and their tutors; confident delivery with good subject knowledge; use of group work, opportunities for students to reflect on their learning; teachers' enthusiasm and well planned lessons with clear learning objectives. The use of ICT and interactive whiteboards help to engage students in their learning. Questioning is well used to establish

student starting points and to build up ideas. Weaknesses in some teaching included too rushed a delivery. The group sizes are often too large to facilitate discussion. There are missed opportunities to relate the learning to wider citizenship issues, as in the secret ballot for the choice of charity. Some classrooms are not conducive to active learning.

154. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are clear lines of responsibility, some effective teamwork in year groups; leadership is respected and has the capacity to effect change. Procedures are clear and are generally followed. A citizenship policy is in place and a curriculum audit has been undertaken in which gaps in provision were identified. There is a development plan for improvement. The subject was not inspected at the time of the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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