

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST WILFRID'S C OF E HIGH SCHOOL AND TECHNOLOGY  
COLLEGE**

Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119815

Headteacher: Mr David A S Whyte

Formatted: Bullets and  
Numbering

Lead inspector: Mrs J Jones

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 268934

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1631
School address:	Duckworth Street Blackburn Lancashire
Postcode:	BB2 2JR
Telephone number:	01254 604023
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Matthew Grant
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Wilfrid's is an 11 to 18 mixed Church of England school serving students in the diocese of Blackburn. The school is much bigger than average, with 1631 students compared with about 1000 nationally. There are 339 students in the sixth form. In most years, and particularly in the sixth form, there are significantly more girls than boys. Since the previous inspection the school has moved into new accommodation on the same site as one of the old buildings.

The students are predominantly white. The heritage of approximately nine per cent of students is Asian. There are relatively more such students in the sixth form because students from other schools join at this stage. A number come from one of the local girls' Islamic schools. The proportion of students with special educational need, including those with Statements of Special Educational Need, is below average.

Students come from a very large area and from up to 100 primary schools. There is considerable deprivation in some of the wards students come from. However, the proportion of students claiming free school meals is below average. The school is about to have a hearing impaired unit. At present there are four students with significant hearing impairment in the school. Students have above average levels of attainment when they start in Year 7.

The school is in its third phase<sup>1</sup> as a Technology College.  
The condition and situation of the boys' playing fields are significant barriers to learning.

### *Awards:*

2004: Basic skills QM, IIP, Sportsmark, Careersmark, NAACE Mark. 2001 and 2002 Schools Achievement Award, Curriculum Award 2000

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<sup>1</sup> The specialist status is regularly reviewed to check the school meets requirements. Third phase means that the specialist status has just been renewed for a third time

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12460	J Jones	Lead inspector	
19743	A Taylor	Lay inspector	
27050	V Blackburn	Team inspector	Science (11-16) Biology (sixth form)
1819	R Crowther	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form) Sociology (sixth form)
13734	H Davies	Sixth form co-ordinator	Geography Business studies (sixth form)
1759	G Edwards	Team inspector	Product design (sixth form) Manufacturing (sixth form)
21971	J Glennon	Team inspector	English
8756	P Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics
20287	D Harris	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (11-16) Work-related learning
22906	B Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
19915	P Hooton	Team inspector	History
3943	D Innes	Team inspector	Physical education (11-16) Provision for students with special educational needs Provision for students with English as an additional language
27665	A Lees	Team inspector	Music (11-16)
19096	S McClean	Team inspector	Design and technology (11-16)
20380	N Pinkney	Team inspector	Chemistry (sixth form)
31680	P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design (11-16) Citizenship
28197	H Ward	Team inspector	Provision for students in the Hearing Impaired Unit

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. It is a civilised community, in which the headteacher's very clear vision, based on Christian values, gives the school an exceptionally strong Christian ethos. Teaching and learning are good and enable students to achieve well. Leadership and management are good. The school gives good value for money. The sixth form is cost effective.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students, whatever their race or faith, are treated equally and the ethos of the school is outstanding.
- Results in tests and examinations are above average overall and students achieve well.
- Pastoral care and students' own commitment to their learning make a significant contribution to the strong sense of purpose in the school.
- There are inconsistencies in the management of departments that make it difficult for teachers to share the many areas of good practice within departments and across the school.
- Individual education plans for students with special educational needs are not effective and therefore not used enough. Hearing impaired students are well supported.

### CHANGES SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The school has moved into new premises following two and a half years when the new building gradually replaced the old and the school was a building site throughout that time. Most of the key issues from the previous report have been tackled successfully: the curriculum is much improved, provision for modern foreign languages is now good, and the senior management team has been restructured and several new effective appointments made. There is still work to be done to improve management in some departments. Results in tests in Year 9 have risen faster than the national trend, but there was a fall in the average point score at GCSE in years 2001 to 2003. The 2004 results show improvement. In the sixth form students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment although the overall point score for A-levels fell between 2001 and 2003.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
GCSE examinations	A	A	B	D
A levels/AS-levels	A	B	C	

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

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

Achievement is **good** overall. Test results in English, mathematics and science were well above average in 2003. Results in 2004 show continuing high attainment and were well above the average for similar schools in mathematics and science. National figures for comparison in English were not available at the time of the inspection. Results in mathematics were very high compared with similar schools. Results in examinations at the end of Year 11 show that the high standards are maintained and students' overall point score, that takes account of all subjects and grades gained, was above average in 2003 and well above average in the previous two years. However, results were below those of students in similar schools. A-level groups are generally too small to compare accurately

with national data; however, it is possible to compare individual students' progress with the grades they could be expected to get on the basis of their GCSE results. Results rose in 2004

Standards seen in work and lessons are at least above average in most subjects. In Year 9 standards are well above average in English, mathematics and geography. In Year 11 standards are well above average in English, mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages and music. In relation to students' attainment when they start in Year 7 their achievement is good. In nearly all cases they do at least as well as, and often better than, expected. Overall standards in the sixth form are above average.

Students' attitudes are excellent and their behaviour is very good; attendance is well above average. Students' personal development is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Students are mature, responsible and loyal.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** overall, and is at its best in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. This enables students to learn well and gain better results than could be expected from their attainment when they start in Year 7. Assessment is satisfactory overall but is patchy across departments. In mathematics and modern foreign languages it is very good, but there are weaknesses in English and citizenship. Assessment is very good in the sixth form. The curriculum is good overall; in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form students are offered a wide choice of courses and in these years the curriculum is very good. The school cares very well for its students. They are well guided and supported in all aspects of school life, and those from ethnic minorities are welcomed and fully integrated. The school has established and maintained very good links with other schools, colleges, industry and parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is **well led and managed**. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school that matches the school's powerful mission statement. In this he is well supported by an effective senior management team. The governing body provides very good support and guidance. The move to the new building, which involved extensive fundraising, and the logistics of running a school on an ever-changing building site have been very well managed. This additional pressure has, however, meant that senior managers could not move as fast as they wanted on improving the management of all departments. There is still work to be done to bring the quality of planning and evaluation in some subjects up to the standard of the rest, and to improve the way teaching is observed, and good practice shared. The school development plan has identified these issues and the capacity for improvement is good.

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is highly regarded by parents and is oversubscribed. Students enjoy school and are proud to be part of this Christian community.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In order to raise standards, the school should:

- Improve the systems for monitoring teaching and improving the work of departments so that management and assessment in all departments are consistent with those in the best and teaching is as good in Years 10 and 11 as in other years.
- Ensure that individual education plans for students with special educational need have clear and achievable targets, and that they are used by all their teachers.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

St Wilfrid's School has a sixth form of 339 students compared with the national average of 186. It provides a good education and is cost effective.

Standards are currently above the national average overall. Students' achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. Most students stay in the sixth form for both Year 12 and Year 13. The sixth form is well led and students receive very good support and guidance from staff. Students' attitudes are very positive. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The very strong Christian ethos inspired by governors and senior managers pervades the life of the sixth form and is a great strength.

### The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of teaching and the help provided for students are both good.
- Students' attitudes to learning are excellent and this has a positive impact on standards.
- The sixth form is well led and managed.
- Standards achieved in many subjects are above average, particularly in mathematics and geography where they are well above average.
- The involvement of students in the life of the school is very good.
- There is a wide range of suitable courses.
- With the increased numbers of students since September 2004, social space in the sixth form centre is limited.

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected in full	
Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision is satisfactory. Students achieve satisfactorily and reach standards close to the national average. Teaching is good but some students enter the course with inadequate skills and understanding. Achievement is satisfactory.
Mathematics	Provision is very good. Standards are well above average and students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and positive attitudes to learning.
Science	Biology Provision is good. Standards are average. Achievement is good as a result of good teaching and very positive student attitudes. Chemistry Provision is good. Good teaching and a challenging curriculum result in good achievement.
Information and communication technology	Provision is good. Teaching is good and this results in good learning. Students achieve well.
Humanities	Geography Provision is good. Standards are above average in Year 13. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching and very positive attitudes. Psychology Provision is good. Standards are average. Teaching and learning are good and students' achievement is satisfactory. Sociology Provision is good. Good teaching results in satisfactory achievement. History Provision in history is good. Students achieve well because good teaching is developing students' responsibility for learning. Boys perform especially well at the higher grades.



Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Product design Provision in product design is good. The ethos for learning is good. Teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement.
Business	Satisfactory provision. Standards are average overall. Achievement is satisfactory
<i>The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.</i>	

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Students receive very good support and guidance. They find their teachers and tutors very helpful and approachable when they need extra help. Approximately one in seven students joins the sixth form from other schools and is extremely well integrated into the life of St Wilfrid's. For example, girls from the local Muslim school settle in well and are very happy in the sixth form. Teachers mark work regularly and provide helpful guidance. Regular reviews of progress are made and helpful targets are set to assist students to raise the standard of their work. The quality of assessment and marking is good. Tutor time and the guidance days are very well used to guide, support and monitor progress. Guidance on careers and university entrance is now much better than at the time of the previous inspection.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Leadership and management are good. The director of sixth form studies has a clear vision and high aspirations for the development and improvement of the sixth form. The sixth form management group and tutors work efficiently as a team. The broad curriculum is effectively planned to meet the needs of most students. There is mutual respect between tutors, subject teachers and students. Students are increasingly asked for their views and whenever possible appropriate action is taken. Students are encouraged to participate in the life of the school and in the management of the sixth form. The sixth form runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students enjoy life in the sixth form. They find it well managed and friendly and they are appreciative of the opportunities available. They consider their teachers to be knowledgeable and helpful. Teaching is challenging and enables them to develop independent learning skills. They feel that courses available meet their needs and contribute to their career plans. Their views can be communicated directly to staff or through the sixth form senior students committee or the sixth form council.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Test results at the end of Year 9 are well above average and examination results at the end of Year 11 are above average. The proportion of students achieving the higher GCSE grades of A\* to C is well above average. Sixth form results are above average. Standards in lessons are well above average overall in Year 9 and in Years 11, 12 and 13. Students' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Test results at the end of Year 9 were well above the average for similar schools in 2003.
- GCSE results were below the average for similar schools in 2003, in spite of being well above the national average.
- Standards at A-level are above average.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Standards in tests and examinations***

1. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average in national tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In comparison with other schools where students entered the school with similar levels of attainment, results in English were above average, and in science were well above average. Results in mathematics were very high.
2. In 2003, results in examinations at the end of Year 11 were above average overall. The proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\* to C in GCSE subjects was well above average, and the proportion gaining five or more grades at any level was average. The proportion gaining one or more grade at any level was below average. This was in part because in 2003 a small group of students who found academic subjects difficult followed an alternative curriculum that provided vocational opportunities but did not lead to accredited qualifications. The school has now modified this and in 2004 all but two students obtained some qualifications. The results in 2004 showed an improvement overall. GCSE results do not measure up so well against similar schools. In 2002 and 2003 the overall results were below the average in this category.
3. In 2003, results in English, mathematics and science were well above average. The results in English literature were very high compared with national figures but the school enters a smaller proportion of students than most schools, so the comparison is not a fair one, and in fact these very able students do even better in their other subjects. In 2004 the results in mathematics maintained this high standard. In science the results rose in 2004 but in English they fell.
4. Generally boys' results are not as good as those of girls, though the difference is no more than that seen nationally, and in German, unusually, they do as well as girls. The difference in performance of boys and girls has an impact on the overall results because there are significantly more girls than boys in the school. In 2004 there were over thirty more girls than boys and this has the effect of enhancing the school's results when compared with national data. The difference was even more marked at the time of the previous inspection.

### **Standards seen in work and lessons**

5. Overall the standards in lessons are well above average by Year 9 though there is some variation between subjects and year groups. Highest standards are in English, mathematics and geography, where work is well above average, both in Year 9 and in Year 11. In science work is above average in both of these years. Overall standards are well above average in Year 11.
6. Standards in art and design and citizenship are average by Year 9. Standards are average in citizenship and below average in art by Year 11.

### **Students' achievement**

7. Students achieve well between Years 7 and 11. Overall, they enter the school in Year 7 with above average attainment and in Years 7 to 9 they make significant gains in their learning. Achievement is good, so that by the end of Year 9 attainment is well above average. In Years 10 and 11 their achievement is satisfactory. They build on the good achievement in earlier years, though on the whole the gain over these two years is not as great.
8. Pupils on the register of special needs achieve well. In GCSE examinations, they exceed expectation based on attainment identified when they enter the school. The four hearing impaired students with statements of special educational need are achieving at and sometimes above the level of their peer groups. They are all extremely articulate young people who participate fully, get very good support from their student support assistants and are a credit to themselves and the school. They are extremely positive about their ability to succeed and have high expectations for their futures.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.9 (35.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	39.6 (39.3)	35.4 (34.7)
science	37.2 (36.4)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 246 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	66 (67)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	90 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	37.8 (39.3)	24.7 (34.8)

*There were 245 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

### **Sixth form**

#### **Commentary**

9. For Year 13 students taking A-level examinations in 2003 the average total points score was above the national average. In 2002, it was well above the national average. Students did better than expected from their GCSE results in 2003. Girls did better than boys overall, in line with the difference found nationally. A-level standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Standards achieved in 2003 in vocational A-levels were above average in health and social care and leisure and recreation and average in business studies.

10. For current students on A-level courses, standards overall in Year 13 are above average and students achieve well. Of the subjects inspected in detail, standards are well above average in mathematics and geography. They are above average in chemistry, history, psychology and product design and average in English, biology, information and communication technology (ICT), sociology and business studies. In mathematics, achievement is very good. In most subjects, achievement is good because teaching is good and students display very positive attitudes to learning. In English, and business studies, however, achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls in most subjects, but in geography, English language and biology male students are achieving at a higher level than females. The reverse is true in business studies. Nearly all students complete the courses they start, and most choose to stay on to Year 13.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.9 (98.5)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	31.4 (36.6)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per student	264.8 (270.9)	258.2 (263.3)

*There were 124 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

**Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Students' attitudes are excellent and their behaviour is very good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is very good overall. Attendance is well above the national average and is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students come here wanting to learn and strive hard to succeed in their studies.
- The Christian faith is ever present, successfully combined with a strong environment for learning.
- Students display a strong adherence for their faith and display a respect for those of others.
- Opportunities to enrich students' personal development are of high quality.
- The attendance rate is high but punctuality is sometimes an issue due to late buses.
- Very positive and effective links have been established between the sixth form and the main school.

**Commentary**

11. Students' attitudes to learning are excellent! They come to school with a definite desire to get the most from their education. This is an important reason for the high standards. Inspectors were greatly impressed by students' attitudes in the library. They use it sensibly at break and lunchtimes and show a real determination to learn for themselves. They are highly motivated and use their time in school well.
12. Sometimes, in Years 10 and 11, students' willingness to learn is a stronger influence than the quality of teaching they are receiving. In these situations, their determination to get on carries them through and largely overcomes any deficiencies in the lesson. They behave very well throughout very long lessons.
13. Students are generally co-operative, and are satisfied consumers who have very few complaints about the school. There is a collective, supportive goodwill evident amongst students. They enjoy school life and are very good at contributing answers in class. They also have a huge capacity for helping others, largely because the school's provision for their social development is very good and encourages them to be responsible citizens.

14. A shining example is the peer literacy support scheme, where older students help younger ones with individually tailored programmes. These could be in spelling, or grammar, and are making a difference, with some close bonds forged between partners. The house system fosters a strong feeling of belonging and gives students lots of different opportunities for meeting new friends and socialising, often with a competitive element.
15. As at the time of the previous inspection, behaviour is very good. Most students come from supportive Christian families. In addition, the school has a very strong moral and spiritual guidance, which permeates daily life. The school has a distinctive atmosphere of its own based firmly around Christian principles. Prayers are important parts of the school day and deeply meaningful. Morning services in the neighbouring church are highly spiritual occasions when students join as a family, often inspiringly led by the school chaplain and headteacher. Students show a deep respect for their own and others' faiths.
16. Students are encouraged to respect and value the beliefs of others. They do so quite readily and the school community is tolerant and harmonious. There are established links with other religious leaders in the community and a genuine desire and sensitivity on the school's part to welcome in students from other faiths. This is especially so in the sixth form.
17. The school provides very good opportunities for students to develop their cultural appreciation of life. The annual gym and dance show is a traditional highlight of the year and house drama competitions provide enjoyable opportunities at lunchtimes and after school. The award winning Cheerleaders group have gained international acclaim. Watching the 80 or so girls taking part in an inspiring two-hour practice after school, reinforced how broad and stimulating the school's very good all-round cultural provision is. Music too makes an important contribution to students' cultural background.
18. These aspects of school life have been successfully maintained at very good levels since the previous inspection.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.2	School data:	0.3
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

19. Students' attendance is very good and well above the national average. Parents value the importance of a good quality education and ensure their children attend regularly. Punctuality is a problem at times because of the heavy reliance on buses, which are sometimes late in the mornings. This is an ongoing issue for the school.

### Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – Traveller -Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1487	62	0
1		
1		
2		
5		
2		
4		

Mixed – any other mixed background	6		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	45		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	38		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	5		
Black African	6		
Any other ethnic group	3		
No ethnic group recorded	28		

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

20. Exclusions are rarely used and the rate is low, comparing very favourably with other schools.

### Sixth form

21. Students are very mature and have excellent attitudes to their work. A strength is their capacity to learn for themselves together with very high expectations of their own performance. These excellent attitudes are reflected in their attendance rate, which is very high. Students make a very notable contribution to the life of the school and are actively involved in house activities and helping their younger peers. Although in over-crowded conditions (because of the sixth form's increasing popularity) students tolerate the cramped social situation well and make the best of sixth form life.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education. Teaching is good overall. There is a very good curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities for enrichment and accommodation and resources are good.

#### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11. A distinctive feature of these years is the quality of learning, which is better than the quality of teaching and is good. There is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. Assessment is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and assessment are very good in mathematics in all years and lead to good achievement.
- Assessment of work and progress is very good in the sixth form.
- Most teachers use ICT well.
- Some lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, lack the pace and vigour seen elsewhere.
- Assessment practices are inconsistent between subjects in Years 7 to 11.

#### Commentary

22. Overall teaching is good, though there is variation across the age groups. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is good. There is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, but teaching and learning in nearly a third of lessons seen were very good or excellent, and a further 40 per cent were good. In Years 10 and 11 there is less variation and teaching is satisfactory; all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory but the proportion of very good and excellent lessons was lower than in other years. Occasionally the learning seen was better than the teaching because students take their work very seriously, particularly in the years leading up to GCSE, and apply themselves conscientiously even when teaching is rather uninspired. There were lessons where this happened in English, geography and music. Teaching in mathematics is

very good in all years. In English it is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In science teaching is good in all years.

23. Most subjects have adopted the Key Stage 3 Strategy<sup>2</sup> and it is now embedded in lesson planning. Teachers share lesson objectives with students, though in some cases the objectives are more concerned with what students will do in the lesson than in what they will learn. In mathematics there are good lively introductory activities, often using students' whiteboards to enable teachers to assess students' understanding or to introduce topics and speed up the lesson.
24. In other subjects too, for example in history, geography and ICT, lessons often begin with lively starters that set the scene for the main tasks, and end with a review of what has been learned. This latter part is sometimes a bit rushed, and this is partly because most lessons are shorter than average at 45 minutes.
25. The use and impact of ICT have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Most teachers now are competent users of such devices as electronic whiteboards and data projectors. Many use computer presentations effectively to introduce key ideas or refer back to earlier work. There is scope for extending this use still further; some presentations for which teachers still use overhead projectors would be improved if they were transferred to computer presentation software, where animations can be added to illustrate explanations.
26. In the few unsatisfactory lessons teachers failed to plan with sufficient clarity, so that students were confused and did not do enough work. In one lesson this led to silly behaviour very out of character with the courteous manners normally seen in the school.
27. Teachers in all departments have very good knowledge of their subjects and many use the knowledge well to devise lively and interesting activities. This is more evident in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. The very good subject knowledge is used particularly well in modern foreign languages where students benefit from hearing the foreign language spoken throughout the lesson. As a result they make very good progress and their speaking and listening skills are high. In science too, the presence of good subject specialists is a strength. For example, in science students are taught physics by physicists who have a deep understanding of physical principles and there are similar strengths in chemistry and biology.
28. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 supports the well above average standards students reach in most subjects by the end of Year 9 and enables them to build on the firm foundations in Years 7 to 9. However, it lacks some of the vigour and inventiveness seen in Years 7 to 9. Teachers prepare students well for examinations and the students' own high motivation enables them to learn well. However, in some lessons the pace is slower, and tasks are routine. For example, in science there is some dictating notes to students or asking them to copy text. Most students are able to work more independently than this. The pace is too slow in some double lessons when teachers do not break up the time sufficiently with different activities. Sometimes the double lessons are used well. For example, a science lesson in which students had to move from group to group finding out more about the safety of mobile phones made good use of the time and students worked hard throughout.

### ***Teaching of students with special educational needs***

29. Teachers have available to them good information about difficulties faced by pupils with a range of learning difficulties. Some teachers do not have copies of this information. Individual education plans have been written for students with more severe problems. These identify long-term needs and suggest possible strategies. The targets set within them are often too vague to be helpful or for progress towards them to be measurable. The best examples are clear and helpful to teachers and pupils. Some very good practice in matching tasks to the

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<sup>2</sup> A national strategy to improve the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 through better planning  
St. Wilfrid's C of E High School and Technology College 15

very different needs of pupils within the same class was observed in modern foreign languages.

30. There is an effective partnership between teachers and support assistants, who know the students with statements of special educational need well. Students with learning difficulties learn well in a number of subjects where classes are small and the teacher chooses the tasks appropriately. In these groups teachers are skilled at maintaining sufficient structure to the tasks whilst allowing students to use their own ideas. The quality of learning in these lessons is good because students are very keen to do their best. Teaching and support staff are encouraging while still challenging students to try hard.

### ***Teaching of students with hearing impairment***

31. Hearing impaired students are well supported in this by the support assistants, who adopt usually good and sometimes very good and excellent strategies to ensure as much independent learning as possible but provide assistance when it is needed. The support assistants give support to other students in the class when the hearing impaired students are able to work independently. The teaching staff value the work of the support assistants with the hearing impaired students highly.
32. Teachers enjoy having the hearing impaired students in their classes but there is little evidence of planning to modify practice, or support materials to take account of their special needs. Individual education plans are insufficiently focused and are not reviewed and modified frequently enough.

### ***Assessment***

33. Assessment is satisfactory overall but the quality is not consistent across all departments. Assessment in mathematics is used very well to track students' performance and identify those needing more help. In English, assessment is unsatisfactory because marking is not consistent across the department, nor are assessments linked to targets for improvement, so the students do not know what to do to improve. Furthermore, the department does not have a clear enough idea of how all its students are doing. In science assessment for learning is satisfactory. Students' work is marked consistently, but as in English, there is too little target setting to enable teachers to identify weaknesses or share information throughout the large department. For example, there is some inconsistency in the performance of students who take three separate sciences, and better tracking of students would help teachers to prevent this.

### ***Sixth form***

34. Sixth form teachers have very good expertise in their subjects, which they use to give clear explanations and to prepare students well for examinations. In mathematics teaching was very good overall and lessons are well structured and teachers have high expectations to which students respond positively. Many teachers are skilful in asking questions that encourage students to think deeply and develop their understanding. Lessons are often well planned, with activities that interest and challenge students. In mathematics and geography, for example, students are encouraged to work independently and contribute well to discussions. While teaching in history is good overall, too few opportunities exist for developing extended discussions. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is often because the pace is too leisurely and not enough is expected of students. This is the case in some business lessons. Students do not always take up opportunities in sociology to question teachers or their peers and thereby develop their learning beyond the initially presented basic facts. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the sixth form.
35. A strong feature of teaching and learning in many subjects is the very good relationship between students and their teachers. Students are very keen to learn, and this, combined with



well-planned and delivered teaching, results in good overall learning. Most teachers give good guidance to individual students, according to need.

36. Assessment is very good in the sixth form. Most teachers mark work regularly and their comments provide helpful guidance. Most subjects track students' progress effectively and helpful guidance is provided to help students improve. Procedures are particularly good in chemistry, geography, history, ICT and mathematics.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 191 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6 (3%)	47 (25%)	82(43)%	53 (28%)	3 (2%)	0	0

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

#### **The curriculum**

The school provides very good learning opportunities for students aged 14 to 16. Students of all aptitudes and abilities can choose courses that suit them. For students aged 11 to 14 the curriculum is appropriately broad and relevant, but still has weaknesses in its structure that affect standards. Students have very good opportunities for enrichment through the extra-curricular programme.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very broad range of academic and work-related courses offers very good choice to students aged 14 to 16.
- Students of all ages have very good opportunities to extend and enrich their experience outside the curriculum.
- The quality of careers education and preparation for the world of work is very good.
- The shared teaching of classes in Years 7 and 8 and the use of 90-minute 'double' lessons in Year 9 continue to affect standards adversely in modern foreign languages and science.

#### **Commentary**

37. At the time of the previous inspection the school lost a lot of valuable teaching time through the movement from one site to the other. The new building, combined with an increase in the working week, has resolved this problem at a stroke. This applies to all subjects except physical education where time is inevitably lost in transporting students to the school's games fields some distance from the main site.
38. The curriculum provided for students in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Each year the school takes good account of students' wishes and creates a series of options designed to accommodate them, consistent with a balanced choice. Since the previous inspection several new courses have been added which, together with the conventional subjects offered at GCSE, amount to an unusually broad and rich choice for students aged 14 to 16. This has been made possible by the continuing award of Technology College status, but is also the product of innovative thinking and a deep concern for the needs of individual students. High attaining students, for example, take all three sciences separately to GCSE level. Others study each science in less depth and are awarded two GCSE grades. Consistent with its Christian foundation, the school requires students to follow a short course to GCSE in religious education, while those who wish to study it at greater depth have the opportunity to do so. Gifted linguists can study two foreign languages. Several students have opted for additional courses, for example in business studies, health and social care or sociology, all leading to the award of one or two GCSEs. Those who want to continue both geography and history can now do so, unlike at the time of the previous inspection.

39. It is in the area of design and technology, however, where the curriculum offers the greatest breadth. Students can now choose to study engineering, systems, graphics or manufacturing as an alternative to the full range of more conventional technology subjects. In addition to the award of GCSE grade, these new courses have a strong work-related content and develop skills, such as the use of computer-aided design, that are in demand in today's workplace. Alongside this, all students continue to do courses in ICT. All requirements of the National Curriculum are fulfilled.
40. Students with learning needs, for whom a predominantly academic programme is inappropriate, are also very well served. They follow a reduced curriculum with the dual aim of making them more employable at the same time as continuing to develop their basic skills. During the inspection, for example, students were doing a course at the local college in glass painting on one morning a week. This clearly gave them pride and self-esteem.
41. The curriculum for students aged 11 to 14 is satisfactory overall and meets all statutory requirements. The reservations expressed in the previous inspection report about drama and history no longer apply. Apart from in Year 9, where time is restricted, art and design and music now receive a better allocation of curriculum time. Students with learning needs on foundation courses can – and occasionally do – move to other groups if their progress justifies it, so they are no longer denied access to a fuller curriculum should this become appropriate for them. After a year of studying German in Year 7, the most gifted students start French as a second foreign language and can, if they wish, take it through to GCSE. All these are strengths. In English and German, however, several groups in Years 7 and 8 have more than one teacher. Standards are affected by this because co-ordination between busy teachers is not always as seamless as it could be. In Year 9 double lessons of 90 minutes are too long for the most effective learning in some subjects, in particular modern foreign languages. In history the single lesson of 45 minutes is too short to allow good development of themes.
42. Students are very pleased with the guidance they receive on careers, the world of work and later stages of their education. This is a very good aspect of the school's provision. In addition to the weekly tutorial sessions, when work-related topics are discussed as part of students' 'progress files', the school arranges five days in the year that have a strong focus on 'enhancing employability'. Year 9 spend a full Technology Day in the company of employers; Year 10 students increase their skills in preparation for two weeks of work experience. Students most in need of individual guidance have interviews with professional advisors.
43. The school offers a very rich menu of extra-curricular activities in which large numbers of students take part. Sporting opportunities are very good and involve at least half of the school in one activity or another. The school is, for example, well known for its cheerleading. Music, too, occupies large numbers of students in a wide variety of instruments, bands, choirs and workshops. During the week of the inspection several students were increasing their understanding of German culture and language by taking part in the school's long-standing exchange with a school in the town of Pegnitz in Bavaria. This work does much to extend students' learning experiences and is also helping to raise standards, as does the very good programme of study support, including homework clubs, sessions for students needing help, and visits to places of interest such as theatres, galleries and factories.
44. Students identified as having very high levels of ability are encouraged to accept demanding challenges by taking examinations earlier than usual, for example in mathematics and law. A small group of gifted students in Year 10 is currently studying law at AS-level after school.
45. Students with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum which was not the case at the time of the previous report. They benefit from being taught in smaller classes, especially in English and mathematics, by experienced specialist teachers.
46. The school is due to become the secondary resource facility for hearing impaired students in Blackburn with Darwen in January, taking over from another school and it may also take

students from surrounding districts. Staff in the school are very positive about the placement of the resourced facility for students with hearing impairment in the school and there is some very good practice but this is not always consistent. For example, there are inconsistencies in the use of radio hearing aids, in ensuring environmental conditions are right for students to lip-read, and in checking understanding. There is an over-reliance on the support assistants.

### **Accommodation**

47. The newly built school provides a good learning environment for students. Most subjects enjoy spacious accommodation at the expense of corridors which are narrow. In spite of a partial one-way system there is congestion on some corridors. Subjects have rooms which are close together, and well designed, equipped and used. Accommodation is especially spacious in mathematics, ICT and design and technology where there is a full range of subject specific workshops. Some subjects, for example English and modern foreign languages, do not have enough rooms for all the teaching staff, and this makes additional work for teachers, especially in modern foreign languages. In science there is a shortage of suitable and safe storage space. The accommodation for physical education ranges from excellent to very poor. The worst of this is the boys' playing fields, and facilities here are unacceptable.

### **Resources**

48. Overall there are good resources to support students' learning although there is some inconsistency in the quality in different subjects. Most subjects, especially design and technology, ICT and music, are making good use of digital and computer technology. Modern foreign languages would benefit from more. There are insufficient text books in geography and history for students to take home and some of the texts are old and in a poor state of repair. There is a better ratio of computers to students than in most schools. The learning resource centre is well equipped with computers with Internet access. Provision of books in the library is mixed. In English for instance the number of books is not extensive for a school of this size. New texts are lacking and many books in a variety of subjects are rarely borrowed.
49. There is a very good match of teachers to the needs of the school, with appropriately qualified teachers in all specialist areas.

### **Sixth form**

50. The sixth form curriculum meets students' aspirations very well. In addition to a very wide range of A-level courses, there are advanced vocational courses in business, manufacturing, leisure and recreation and health and social care. In addition there is an intermediate vocational course in ICT. Students also have the opportunity of entering AS-level critical thinking, general studies and key skills courses. A successful BTEC (British Technical Education Council) level 3 diploma Early Years' course equivalent to three A-levels is also offered. All students attend a number of personal, social and health education days through their sixth form life.
51. There is a good range of enrichment activities. These include involvement in sixth form activities through the sixth form council and senior students' committee and helping with younger students, as prefects, in sports clubs, paired reading or assisting students with special educational needs both in school and at a nearby special school. Activities to widen students' horizons include a variety of clubs and societies. There is a good range of trips to support learning in subjects. Geography is well supported by fieldwork and a residential course. Business students, however, have limited contact with the real world of business. Many students are highly involved in a range of charity fund-raising events. Students have the opportunity of being involved in the Challenge of Management conference organised by the East Lancashire Education Business partnership.

52. Sixth form teachers are very well qualified in their subjects. With the growth in size of the sixth form over the last year, social space is at a premium. The very good ethos in the school, however, has minimised some of the problems. Some students in English said that finding space for private study could sometimes be a problem. Students have computers available to use in their studies. The virtual learning environment and the digitalbrain are very effectively paving the way for the development of 'e-learning'. There are problems of accommodation in history where there is no base where students can study extra resources or historical magazines, or informally consult teachers. Business education does not have a dedicated room and the subject is therefore not taught in a suitable business environment. The number of students opting for AS psychology is creating a problem, as teaching rooms are too small to cope with the rapidly increasing numbers and this restricts the range of teaching and learning strategies which can be employed. Accommodation in design technology is, however, of very high quality.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Arrangements to ensure students' care and welfare are very good overall. Students receive good support, advice, and guidance. The extent of the school's involvement of students in its work and development is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students are cared for very well in a positive learning atmosphere with Christian values at its heart.
- Staff are skilled at providing support for students at risk of underachieving.
- Review days are working well, but not all students know enough about how they are progressing to see how they can improve.
- Systems for consulting with students in the main school and taking action are not as far ahead as they might be.

### **Commentary**

53. This is a school where relationships are warm and friendly. Teachers and other staff promote a strong atmosphere for learning, effectively combined within a caring Christian environment.
54. Staff are sensitive to the welfare and learning needs of students. They act decisively when alerted to those not performing as well as predicted. A support package involving learning mentors (funded through the school's involvement with Excellence in Cities), and senior teachers who are mentors, is making a difference by providing students, often boys, with frequent support and guidance about their performance, and this is helping avert underachievement.
55. The pastoral focus, from the senior management through to effective heads of year, has been on making form tutors more responsible for achievement as well as for welfare matters. The introduction of performance review days for Years 9 and 10 has been a positive move in this direction. There is still some way to go, both through form tutor involvement and via subject teachers, before all students are given enough information to understand exactly how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
56. The consultation process with students is satisfactory and in the early stages of being developed. Setting up a whole school council is a planned aim. This aspect of the school's work has had a back seat over the last couple of years. Year forums are in place, some working better than others. A recent request from the Year 11 forum has made it possible for these students to use the hall for socialising during lunchtimes, on a trial basis.

57. Child protection procedures are secure and staff have received recent training. The school has successfully managed the health and safety risks associated with moving into a new building, whilst the old one was being pulled down. Because of this experience, health and safety procedures are tightly controlled and awareness is very good. The positive elements seen at the last inspection connected to this aspect of the school's work are still very much in existence, although the new building provides a much healthier and more hospitable environment than before. However, there is a need to improve the arrangements for storing chemicals in the science preparation area.
58. The school meets the expectations of the revised Code of Practice for provision for students with learning difficulties. Early identification is helped by a good liaison with primary schools, and the use of test results. The school also takes notes of the concerns of teachers and parents. Reviews are held at required intervals and there is a high level of parental participation.

### **Sixth form**

59. Students receive very good support and guidance in the sixth form. Induction into the sixth form is well organised. Students meet their tutors regularly, and find tutors and senior staff to be approachable if they need additional help. Students have individual interviews to review progress and the management team follows up any problems. Targets are set for performance in Year 12 and Year 13. There are effective processes of individual action planning using ICT with regular contact with teachers, both personal and via email. Students appreciate these arrangements; all are clear about their target grades and how well they are performing in relation to them. There is a very effective work and social ethos in the sixth form. There is a sixth form contract to reinforce the expectations of students and staff. A significant number of students enjoy life in the sixth form. The management team seeks students' views and acts on them, for example, by recently increasing the amount of careers and higher education guidance in response to a student survey.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership with parents is very good. There are some very good links with other schools and the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive and hold the school in high regard. Their huge financial commitment made the building of this new school possible.
- Links with the Church are at the heart of school life.
- Parents receive some very pertinent, useful and innovative information about what is happening.
- Students' annual reports generally lack detail about progress and where students need to improve.
- St Wilfrid's influence as a Technology College is making a significant difference to ICT in partner primary schools and the community.

### **Commentary**

60. Parents are highly supportive and value the strong religious ethos and values at St Wilfrid's. Their significant financial donations, enabling the school to build new premises, are testimony of this support. There is very good support for learning at home and this is a significant factor contributing to the high standards in the school.
61. The school copes very well with the difficult task of making links with so many primary schools. Systems for helping Year 7 students to settle and make friends are well thought out and effective.

62. The influence of the Church is ever present in the daily school life of staff and students. The headteacher sets the tone for others to follow, and the strong Christian ethos is clearly felt by visitors. Parents particularly value this kind of education for their children. The headteacher's highly individual termly letters convey his high expectations of parents' role and reinforce the importance of the mission statement in everything the school does. They are particularly good (and quite unusual) in giving parents an insight into how the school is being managed and about future developments.
63. Information for parents is very comprehensive and most is highly informative. Year 9 and 10 parents have two opportunities to meet staff, because they also take part in performance reviews held between parents, student and form teacher. This is especially good provision for the parents in these year groups. Surprisingly, annual reports are rather short on information, although the format where teachers hand write their own individual comments, does mean they are highly individual. The school plans to improve the format. Each year group has its own parents' information evening, where aspects of the curriculum are covered, including a beginners guide to the Parents' Gateway and digitalbrain (see below)
64. The Parents' Gateway via the internet enables parents to gain access to useful information about the school and data relevant to their own children. This interesting ICT innovation has huge potential, and is currently providing information few other parents nationally have. Although the system has been beset by problems, those parents with access to the world wide web can see their child's attendance and discipline records and other welfare details. This is complemented by a very good quality web site, providing a myriad of information designed to help parents keep on top of all that is happening in school. Via the digitalbrain system, parents (although needing students to log in first) can gain an insight into what is being taught, including exactly what homework has been set.
65. There are very strong links with the community especially connected to ICT. Through the school's work as a specialist Technology College, partner primary schools are receiving regular technical support and teaching help, plus the opportunity for specialist training. Community computer clubs are operating at different school venues, including the new community base in school. There are established links with local companies. They support the school well on Technology Day, especially in relation to aspects of engineering, manufacturing and electronics, where industrial visits out, and visitors in, are commonplace. These contacts are helping to bring real life experiences into the curriculum and so make courses more meaningful for students. Local companies also make a significant contribution to students' work-related learning. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme involves a significant number of students.

### **Sixth form**

66. Links with the community are good. There are particularly strong relationships with the local Anglican faith community. The sixth form is active in supporting charities and students are involved in community work. Several enrichment activities make effective use of the community, through the personal and social education programme. There are positive links between sixth form students and a local special school. Links with the regional Education Business Partnership and local industry enhance the curriculum provision.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The governing body is very effective and the school is efficiently run. Provision for staff development is satisfactory overall with some imaginative features.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and senior managers sustain a very good ethos for working and living as part of a Christian community.
- The headteacher and senior staff have managed the establishment of and move to the new building very well.
- Some monitoring systems are not strong enough to ensure consistency of leadership in all subject departments.

## **Commentary**

67. The headteacher provides good leadership. He has a very clear vision for the school based on an unequivocally Christian mission statement. From this message comes a distinctive ethos in which all members of the school are treated with respect as human beings and are expected to treat others in the same way. The very good behaviour and attitudes of the students show how successful he has been in creating this ethos. He is very visible about the school and sets the standards that he expects others to follow. He has seen the school through a great deal of upheaval during the recent building programme and in ten months since the school has been on a single site he has taken actions to raise standards. In particular the expansion of the senior leadership team has led to more focus on improving teaching and learning. Although the headteacher provides effective support when it is required, on occasion action has not been swift enough and some weaknesses have been allowed to continue.
68. The senior leadership team provides effective support for the headteacher. Regular meetings ensure that its members play an active part in forming strategic policy. In addition senior leaders check the work of subject departments. They have been responsible for the formulation of policies to further the development of departments but have not been fully successful in every case. It is to their credit that the school has moved so smoothly into its new buildings but this has also meant that it is relatively recently that they have been able to focus on problem areas. Even here, however, there are signs that the senior leadership team is beginning to bring about improvements and there is more focus on striving for excellence across all subjects.
69. The quality of leadership of heads of department varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Departments are very well led and managed in geography, ICT, mathematics and physical education. These departments have very good systems for analysing performance and ensuring that all teachers share common aims and work as a team. In other departments these qualities are not as pronounced. In English, where leadership and management are unsatisfactory, there is now a good plan for raising standards, which has not yet had enough time to make much impact.
70. The school does not have clear procedures for the management of individual education plans for students with special educational needs, other than those with hearing impairment. There are no systems for monitoring the contributions of individual subjects.

## **Governance**

71. The governing body is very effective. In particular, it has played a full part in planning for and overseeing the building programme and been very efficient in raising the funds to pay its share of the cost. There is a sound plan for meeting the small proportion that is as yet unpaid. Governors are not sitting on their laurels but are planning for the next stage of improvement, which is to improve the poor playing field facilities. Governors are also responsible for the school's mission statement, which provides the structure on which the school's outstanding ethos is based. The governing body meets all its statutory duties.

### **Staff development and performance management**

72. Provision for staff development is satisfactory overall, with some strengths and weaknesses. Provision for the induction of new teachers, including those newly qualified, is very good. There is a very effective programme that is more imaginative than similar programmes in most school, and it dovetails well with the local education authority's programme.
73. The overall programme for staff development is good at present and has capacity to be better still as a result of innovations just beginning to have an impact. These resulted from a visit by three of the school's senior teachers to look at professional development for teachers in America. This is leading to research-based development and a keen interest in the process of learning that is helping many teachers improve their teaching.
74. The performance management cycle is up to date and includes lesson observations, reviews and target setting. Overall, however, the system for monitoring teaching is not rigorous enough. In some subjects, for example in modern foreign languages, additional lesson observations are carried out within the department, but in others, for example in English and design and technology, there are insufficient observations by heads of department beyond those of performance management to enable teachers within departments to share good practice.

### **Efficiency**

75. Systems for monitoring and evaluating finances are very good and the costs associated with the building programme are very well understood and managed. The highly effective role of the school bursar enables the school to have a good grasp of the principles of best value when purchasing goods or services and planning for the future. The school is working effectively towards remodelling the work force and has made some efficient and imaginative appointments, such as putting liaison with primary schools and induction of Year 7 students in the hands of a member of the non-teaching staff.

### **Financial information**

#### **Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,987,365	Balance from previous year	
Total expenditure	5,828,143	Balance carried forward to the next	159,222
Expenditure per student	3,750		

### **Sixth form**

76. The sixth form is well led. Members of the leadership team work well together and have a clear vision and high aspirations for the future development of the sixth form. The wide curriculum is effectively planned to meet the needs of students. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect between tutors and students. Students are being increasingly asked for their views and whenever possible appropriate action is taken. Recently careers and higher education advice has been strengthened in response to a student survey. Leadership is firm and fair, with clear lines of responsibility.
77. The sixth form runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and management is good. Procedures and policies are clear. Most tutors and students adhere to them but there is not as yet total consistency in their application and the management team is planning extra time to monitor formally the work in tutor groups. There is an appropriate balance between the income and expenditure of the main school and the sixth form. Monitoring and learning by the sixth form leadership team and tutors are good. In many subjects students are very well supported by



very effective assessment and tracking procedures. This is not so in English where insufficient use is made of data to track students' progress. The lack of liaison between the three sciences limits the sharing of good practice and the development of creative and imaginative teaching skills. In design and technology the scheme of work and self-evaluation of the work of the department are unsatisfactory.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Work-related learning**

78. The effectiveness of the school's provision for work-related learning is very good and it meets statutory requirements. This judgement is based on discussions with the co-ordinator of work-related learning and with students, evidence about work-related learning across subjects of the curriculum, and a study of documentation relating to careers education and to Year 10 work experience.
79. All students interviewed had completed two weeks of work experience and had learnt much from it about working practices. They confirmed how well the school had prepared them for the experience through ongoing training and briefing sessions, including a meeting with their parents and a prior interview with their prospective employers. Careers guidance, too, is good and students spoke highly of the quality of help the school was giving them. In addition to a week-on-week tutorial programme with strong focus on 'enhancing employability', the school provides five full days in the academic year when aspects of work-related learning are given greater opportunity of development, for example through visits by employers for Technology Day. There was no specific careers teaching during the week of the inspection.
80. The school is very sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable students, many with learning needs, for whom understanding the world of work has perhaps the greatest urgency. These students are part of a well-established and very appropriate foundation programme. This includes weekly sessions of an enterprise course where students have regular contact with tutors from industry and learn about problem-solving and the world of work. They also have interviews with professional careers advisors to help them determine the next step in their lives.
81. The very broad range of vocational courses offered at GCSE provides students with diverse opportunities to learn about work. Students following the course in manufacturing, for example, do extensive research into the needs of markets and clients, stages of production and health and safety. Students of engineering simulate industrial practices and work in an industrial context. Other courses, such as leisure and tourism, business, and health and social care, refer directly to the world of work and require students to develop skills in ICT, communication and research which are of real value in the workplace.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

##### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well to reach standards that are well above the national average.
- At GCSE students do not do as well as they do in their other subjects.
- Overall teaching is good but in some lessons students, particularly the highest attainers, are not fully challenged.
- Students have very good attitudes and are very well behaved.
- The leadership and management of the department do not examine performance rigorously enough to raise standards further.
- Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

##### Commentary

82. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average. Girls performed better than boys by the same amount as in most schools. Results in 2004 were similar to those in 2003 although more students reached the highest level.
83. Standards of work seen in Year 9 match the test scores, representing good achievement by students since Year 7. In their writing the highest attainers use complex sentences accurately and show enthusiasm for words. When reading they understand the subtleties of writers' language. Even the lowest attainers, including those with special educational needs, write with some accuracy and read fairly difficult texts confidently. Standards of speaking and listening are well above average.
84. Results in the GCSE examination in English in 2003 were well above the national average but both boys and girls did less well than in their other subjects. Results in 2004 were similar to those of 2003. GCSE English literature results in 2003 were very high compared to national figures but a relatively low proportion of the year-group was entered. As in English, students did not do as well as in their other subjects. In both subjects girls performed better than boys by about the national average. 2004 results were similar.
85. Students achieve satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11 and maintain their well above average standard. They do not continue the good achievement of Years 7 to 9 and consequently do better in other subjects. The highest attaining students write accurately for different audiences and purposes. There is some particularly insightful writing on literature, the work of Robert Frost in particular. Even the lowest attainers write fairly competently at a simpler level, for example in writing a newspaper account of a brawl between the Montagues and Capulets. Most students speak confidently, the best reaching a high standard when improvising in character in the court scene from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
86. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good; they are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan their lessons well, particularly in Years 7 to 9 where they use the Key Stage 3 strategy to good effect. Classrooms are very orderly as teachers insist on very high standards and, in any case, students arrive with very good attitudes. They behave very well and written work is very well presented. Most students work very hard and occasionally learning is better than the teaching. In some lessons, the pace is too slow and students are not challenged hard

enough. This happens particularly in the case of the most able students and is partly why they reach higher standards in other subjects.

87. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Although there are examples of very good marking they are not consistent over the whole department. Marking and comments are rarely linked to targets, National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Thus students have only a general idea about what they need to do to improve.
88. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection, although belatedly in some cases. There is now a satisfactory development plan and meetings concentrate on curricular matters. Drama and ICT are now included appropriately in lessons. However, there is still no strategy for raising standards. Although there is ample data available it is not used to track students' progress and take action where necessary. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough and good practice is not shared among all teachers. Some classes in Year 7 are still split between two teachers and this affects standards adversely. The proportion of students entered for GCSE English literature is still low. The department does not analyse its strengths and weaknesses critically enough. Hence improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

89. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are above average. There are successful intervention programmes, which raise the standards of those students most in need. The Year 7 home reading scheme strongly signals the importance of literacy skills and the school maintains this focus by providing a number of initiatives including competitions in drama, writing and debating. Subject teachers accept that teaching literacy is part of their role. Consequently literacy is given due priority in most subjects. Mathematics, in particular, is a subject where teachers constantly challenge students with quite complex technical language and expect them to explain clearly what they are doing. The good quality of provision is reflected in the recent renewal of the Basic Skills Quality Standards Award.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at GCSE in German, the main foreign language, are well above average.
- Good teaching in the foreign language has led to high standards of speaking and listening in German and French.
- The modern foreign languages department is very well led and has made significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- Students bring very positive attitudes to their learning and develop good independent working habits.
- The setting of homework and the quality of marking of students' work lag behind other aspects of teaching.

### **Commentary**

90. In 2003 GCSE results in German were well above average. Students achieved very well, especially those of middle and lower attainment who all gained at least grade D. Boys defied the national trend by doing as well as girls. French results were slightly below the national average. Girls did much better than boys. GCSE results in 2004 are as yet unvalidated, but the very strong trend in German has been maintained and French results have improved.

91. In Year 11 standards are well above average in German and above average in French. Although only the ablest students are now taking French, they have not yet caught up with German which they started a year earlier. In both languages students have unusually good speaking and listening skills. This reflects their teachers' persistent use of the language in the classroom. In this respect, too, lower attaining students, many of them boys, are achieving as well as others. The most able linguists write accurately and fluently in German or French, showing a good understanding of different tenses and a wide range of words. Boys pay less attention to detail and as a result many of them do not reach the same standard of writing as girls. Students are achieving well.
92. In Year 9 standards are above average in German and French. Gifted students are reaching very high standards. They speak and write in the language with confidence and increasing fluency. Many have very good accent and pronunciation and make spontaneous requests in German or French. This applies as much to boys as it does to girls. Well supported by classroom assistants and teachers' sensitivity to their needs, students with learning difficulties make very good progress in class. Students are achieving well.
93. Teaching is good overall and in many lessons it is very good. Students learn very quickly because they hear the foreign language used most of the time in lessons and are given lots of opportunities to speak it themselves. In most lessons there is pace, verve and challenge, creating a joyful buzz of activity and leading to fast, seamless learning. Teachers pass on their own enjoyment of the language to their students. Learning is further enhanced by the students' very positive attitudes and their keenness to be involved. Teachers are very skilful in their use of methods and resources to capture students' attention and keep them actively learning. An example of this is the electronic whiteboard which teachers put to good effect when they have a chance to use it. To date there is only one in the department. Another strength is the way teachers actively encourage students to be independent learners. Students assess their own and each other's work, use dictionaries, work in pairs and groups and are expected to work things out for themselves. All this is bearing fruit through students' mature approach to their learning.
94. In lessons where students do not learn as well, teaching either does not capture students' interest or it is unclear in establishing what they should learn. The setting of homework and the marking of students' written work are areas which currently lack clarity and rigour.
95. Leadership and management are very good. The department is led with vision and energy. Language teachers are a strong team of well-qualified professionals who work very well together. They meet regularly, share ideas and observe each other's teaching. This helps to spread good practice and makes for a unity of approach which is noticeable in the classroom. The department has become evaluative and constructively self-critical. It has moved on very well since the previous inspection and standards have risen significantly, particularly in German. In this it has received very strong support from senior management. One reservation contained in the previous report, which still remains and continues to affect standards in Years 7 and 8, is the number of groups which have more than one teacher. In Year 9, too, periods of 90 minutes are too long to sustain a strong pace of learning throughout the lesson.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good
- Students work very hard and take pride in doing their best.

## Commentary

96. Students' attainment in mathematics on entry to the school in Year 7 is above average. In 2003 the test results at the end of Year 9 were well above average and very high in relation to students in similar schools. In 2003 GCSE results were well above average in relation to national standards and also to students in similar schools. Test and GCSE results in 2004 are similar to those of 2003. In 2004 test results were above those of similar schools. These results have improved since the previous inspection.
97. There is no significant difference in the attainment or achievement of boys and girls in work seen or in test and examination results.
98. Standards of work seen in Year 9 and Year 11 are well above average and are similar across all aspects of mathematics. The cumulative impact of consistently well-prepared and structured teaching throughout the school is a key factor in the improvement and maintenance of these standards.
99. Higher attainers use their strong knowledge and skills base across mathematics to analyse increasing difficult and complex problems. Their algebraic skills are very good. Lower attainers are able to apply standard techniques to a range of problems; they are not as effective in dealing with unfamiliar situations. All students are encouraged to explain their methods of working both orally and in writing. This aspect of their work has improved since the previous inspection and successfully underpins their learning.
100. Learning support assistants work well with specific students with special educational needs; this helps them to achieve as well as others in their classes. Other students with special needs also achieve very well due to the strong work ethos in mathematics lessons and the way teachers match tasks to students' needs.
101. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 and 10 and 11 is very good. All groups of prior attainers achieve very much better than expected from their standards on entry, especially in Years 7 to 9. The increased number of mathematics periods in a week in Years 7 and 9 is a factor in this very good achievement. Students work very hard and their positive attitudes to mathematics are shown in the quality and presentation of their written work, including homework. These factors also contribute to their very good learning and achievement.
102. Teaching and learning are very good. Very strong class management and students' positive attitudes are important factors in this. Teachers are skilled at matching the level of challenge to students' prior attainment, leading to very effective learning. In a low attaining Year 7 class, the use of large number cards helped students to understand the effect of multiplying numbers by 10, 100 etc. In a high attaining Year 10 class, students were challenged to provide examples of rational and irrational numbers, and justify their choice. Teachers use ICT, especially interactive whiteboards, very well. Prepared material reduces the transition time between activities and makes sure no time for learning is wasted. The use of ICT has improved since the previous inspection.
103. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The new head of department has inherited very strong departmental systems, for example in the use of assessment information. She leads a very effective team of specialist teachers who work well together; the sharing of good practice is a key part of this. Performance data is used very effectively to analyse and track the attainment and achievement of individuals, classes and year groups.
104. As indicated above, improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The cumulative effect of so many very good aspects of the department is to give students excellent provision in mathematics.

## Numeracy across the curriculum

105. Students' mathematical skills are very good and help them to make significant progress in many other subjects. In science the use of mathematics is well embedded in their work. They can use number efficiently and have strong algebraic skills, such as in solving equations. In ICT students can manipulate formulae well. Mathematics skills are used well in design and technology and geography.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are consistently well above average.
- Teaching by science specialists is good and students learn well.
- Students' achievement is good.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the work of the department to share good practice and identify areas of weakness.

### Commentary

106. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 were well above national figures when compared with all schools, similar schools and the progress students make in relation to their prior attainment. These levels had been maintained for the previous three years with only slight fluctuations between boys' and girls' results. Results in 2004 were very similar.
107. GCSE results for both boys and girls in 2003 for double award science were significantly above national figures for the higher grades. In 2004 results improved by almost ten per cent and in both years all students who took the examination attained a grade. Every year a group of the most able students take GCSE in three separate sciences. In 2003, more students attained the highest grades in biology than chemistry. Results for students in both physics and chemistry for students taking separate sciences were significantly better than in their non-science subjects. In 2004 again there was a variation between the different subjects but this time biology results dropped. Another small group of students take single award science. Results in 2003 were well below average but good in relation to those students' prior attainment. For the last two years all students who completed the course have attained a grade.
108. Standards of work seen throughout the years are overall above average, with work seen in books at least above average. The work of the most able students is well above average. In class, several groups at the start of new units or reviewing previous years' work were attaining average levels. Teachers are very skilled at building up students' ability to reach above average standards in examinations but it is too early in the year for students to show these skills fully.
109. Students make good progress and achieve well in all years, particularly when the teaching is challenging and stimulating. They are able to use the correct scientific language to describe how alternative forms of energy such as hydroelectric power sustain the environment. They describe how one form of energy can be converted into another. Students with special educational needs achieve particularly well when taught in a small group with targeted support and special resources. In other groups these students do not achieve so well, particularly when their specific needs are not known by the teacher or resources are not fully matched to their needs.

110. The school holds much information on students' prior attainment and while the department has started to use the data, there is no standardised tracking or recording system for teachers to use. Information on target grades, National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades are not used sufficiently to enable teachers to identify any under-achievement and set targets for improvement.
111. Teaching is good across the department. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. There are many good features in most lessons. Students learn well when careful planning uses every minute of the 90-minute lessons with a wide range of activities including experiments. The best lessons consist of short sections with a review of progress at points throughout so that students themselves are fully involved in the learning. All practical activities are well resourced and supported very efficiently by the team of technicians. However, learning is not so effective when the pace of the lesson is leisurely or when activities use many worksheets or students copy notes. As mentioned at the last inspection, in some lessons students still have to listen for too long and have insufficient opportunities for independent work. Throughout, students are extremely well behaved and co-operative and take much pride in their work.
112. The range of strategies to improve students' literacy is not consistently used across the department. Discussion in groups, reading out loud and word banks for a unit are all used, but there are few opportunities for students to write at length about science other than answering questions.
113. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Marking of students' work is satisfactory and gives comments, marks and some corrections. However, it lacks reference to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades, short-term targets or advice about how to improve. There are few opportunities for students to assess their own progress.
114. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Currently the large department of subject specialists, many of whom have other responsibilities or are relatively new to the profession, functions effectively more as three separate subjects rather than as an overall cohesive unit. The many strengths within the department are not always identified, nor are the weaknesses, because systems for monitoring are not in place to identify them.
115. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory overall. Standards have been maintained and the department has taken advantage of developments in ICT to make effective use of the new equipment. However, there are still too many lessons where students have to listen for too long. The department has moved into 12 new laboratories, with offices and store rooms. As accommodation was mentioned as a weakness at the last inspection, improvement here is good. However, the one central preparation area used by the three technicians is seriously lacking in sufficient safe storage for the amount of chemicals and equipment kept there.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement by students.
- There is very good assessment using National Curriculum levels for students in Years 7 to 9 and tracking students' progress in Years 10 and 11.
- There is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching to ensure that there is consistently good teaching.

- Students in Years 7 to 9 have less time for the subject than seen nationally in the majority of schools.

### **Commentary**

116. Standards in GCSE have improved over the last three years. In 2004, 79 per cent of students gained A\* to C grades, 10 per cent higher than the previous year, when they were above the national average of 55 per cent.
117. In Year 9 students have skills and knowledge above those expected for students of their age. They are confident computer users and have good knowledge about databases, which they can interrogate in order to produce reports. They have good understanding of spreadsheets and how these can be used to model financial predictions. Standards of work in Year 11 GCSE ICT are high. Students have completed their first major project making use of a wide range of computer skills to produce leaflets and business letters, and more advanced spreadsheet work. Standards in applied GCSE and key skills are at average levels.
118. There is good achievement in the subject. Students make good progress from Year 7 where standards are average to above average in Year 9. In Year 11 achievement is satisfactory overall but it is good in GCSE groups and students here reach well above average standards for their age. Overall, and including non-GCSE students, standards are average.
119. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject, and are able to give students clear explanations about the use of software, leading to students making good progress. The three-part lesson structure is well established and effectively used. In excellent lessons planning is extremely good, tasks set are very challenging, and students are given clear guidance in how they can achieve high standards. In Years 10 and 11 students taking GCSE courses make good progress. This is because their teachers have a very good understanding of examination requirements and plan lessons accordingly. Students have very good attitudes in lessons, and their work rates and high level of interest contribute to the good progress they make.
120. Leadership and management in the subject is very good. There is shared vision by a highly committed team of teachers, technicians and support staff to provide very good opportunities for students. The Key Stage 3 ICT strategy has had to be adapted because of the limited time available in Years 7 to 9. Assessment is very good in Years 7 to 9 using National Curriculum levels, and the tracking of students' work in Years 10 and 11. Some observations of teaching are done, but there is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching to ensure that it is consistently good. There has been very good progress since the last inspection. There are increased curriculum opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11, the establishment of the network in the new building is successful and there has been considerable development of the curriculum online through the digitalbrain and the development of e-learning.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

121. Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of ICT software programs and can use their skills in many subjects when they have the opportunity to do so. All departments have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. There is very good use of ICT in mathematics, design and technology and music. Effective use is made of interactive whiteboards in these subjects as well as in science and geography. Students use word processing extensively in many subjects, particularly to complete coursework projects in Years 10 and 11. There has been good progress since the last inspection in the use of ICT across the curriculum. The new network, the virtual learning environment, the digitalbrain, and the class sets of laptops provide students with opportunities to use their ICT skills in many subjects.



## HUMANITIES

GCSE lessons in sociology were observed, one in Year 10 and one in Year 11. Both were good. A Year 10 group were taken systematically through information they had obtained about life style in the mid-twentieth century when they had interviewed their grandparents. Students made relevant points clearly and these were developed and summarised by the teacher in preparation for work on the nuclear family. Year 11 responded conscientiously and with enthusiasm to a brisk and at times humorous combination of revision work on questions about the media and an extension of their study and revision skills through practice of 'mind maps' using the same knowledge area. This has been a very successful course and a useful preparation for taking the subject in Years 12 and 13. Achievement has been very good.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are well above average and students achieve well.
- The subject is very well led.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be more formal and regular to enable best practice to be shared.
- Assessment of students' work is very good and performance data is carefully analysed and used to set targets and inform students of the standards they achieve.

#### Commentary

122. GCSE results were well above average in 2003. Similar results were achieved in 2004 compared to 2003 national averages. Students did not do quite as well as in some of their other subjects in 2003, but achievement was good in relation to prior attainment on entry to the course. Girls did better than boys by a similar amount to that found nationally. In 2004, although overall results were similar; the percentage of A\* and A grades rose to well above the national average for 2003.
123. Standards in Year 9 are well above average. Students achieve well in relation to their knowledge of geography on entry to the school. Students with special educational needs also achieve well, especially when provided with extra classroom support. Students quickly acquire very good skills in map work. They have a very good understanding of geographical ideas and specialist language. Their written work is generally very good and their use of number is well developed. Students develop a very good understanding of how physical and human aspects of geography interrelate and of the issues surrounding human development and physical processes.
124. Standards in Year 11 are also well above average. Students, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. Students gain a good understanding of geographical concepts. In urban geography, for example, Year 11 students analyse theoretical models of city structures and identify reasons for different types of land use. They show a very good knowledge of urban changes over time within Blackburn. They can identify the major characteristics of the tropical forest. Students' coursework is very good because they plan and structure it effectively and successfully apply the geographical techniques they have learned. Students use computers well to research, analyse and present data.
125. Teaching and learning overall are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge; most are enthusiastic and committed and in the good and very good lessons they use a range of methods that stimulate students' interest. Lessons are well structured in three parts and students have opportunities to learn independently and develop their thinking skills. This was

seen for example in one very good lesson where students were analysing the physical and human factors which influence hill sheep farming. In some lessons, however, the pace is not always rigorous enough, particularly for higher ability students. There is also some over-direction by the teacher, so that students lose the opportunity to improve their team-working skills or to develop the ability to learn independently. Most students have very positive attitudes and behave extremely well. Case studies and geographical simulations are used well to consolidate understanding of geographical ideas. Assessment is very good and students are informed of the levels they are working at and what they need to do to meet their target grades. Marking is inconsistent and in some cases there are only comments about attitudes.

126. The subject is very well led and well managed. The head of department is enthusiastic about the subject and has a very clear vision for its future development. Schemes of work and action planning to raise standards even further are very good. Very thorough analysis of performance is undertaken in the department and via links with senior management. The only weakness is the limited formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to enable best practice to be shared. Departmental work is monitored well through the analysis of assessment and performance data. Fieldwork is a strength of the department. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Results have improved, accommodation is much better and computers are now well used as a tool in learning.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Impressive GCSE coursework contributes to above average standards in GCSE.
- Improved teaching develops pupils' commitment to learning.
- Inconsistencies in teaching and assessment in Years 7 to 9 reflect the lack of shared responsibility for evaluating and developing the work of the department.

## Commentary

127. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 are average. Students' knowledge and understanding of cultures, the causes and consequences of political, economic and social change and the legacy for the world today are accurate and well embedded in chronological context. Students efficiently make notes from sources, numerical data and the Internet and organise findings in a variety of ways to throw light on important issues. The best teaching challenges pupils to explore human responses through role-play, oral presentations, songs and handling real substances like spices traded by the Mughals. Students with special educational needs achieve well because of such teaching and sensitive teaching assistants. Overall achievement is satisfactory rather than good, because there are too few opportunities for enquiry-based work leading to imaginative extended writing and there are inconsistencies in assessment.
128. In 2003 GCSE results improved to well above average, although numbers choosing history were well below average, having fallen over three years. A teacher will use a bursary to explore students' attitudes to history. Standards of work seen in the current Year 11 are above average in line with predictions because students know their GCSE targets through monitoring and marking. So achievement is good. Students review their work, study and create model answers targeting GCSE skills. Impressive coursework studying cholera among Jewish settlements in Manchester plus an evaluation of the Jewish Museum, demonstrate pupils' sharp, critical interpretation of evidence. It is a timely and sensitive curriculum innovation allowing pupils to clearly illuminate the roots of prejudice and intolerance. High attaining pupils produce outstandingly fluent writing, using literary conventions to signal different types of viewpoints.

129. Teaching and learning are good overall, and some are very good and excellent, especially in Years 10 and 11. In most lessons students are engaged in paired or group activities drawing conclusions from new knowledge to offer to the whole class. Lively activities kick start the lesson, objectives are shared with students and learning progress is compared with these objectives intermittently. These lessons are powered by a partnership between teachers' excellent subject expertise and students' enthusiastic commitment.
130. All teachers maintain a rapid pace through good planning although time is too short, especially in Years 7 to 9, to allow talk-based activities to develop in great depth. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good or better, particularly in Years 7 to 9, tasks and lesson objectives are not related to history skills and do not challenge students to apply knowledge and make judgements. Too often writing is limited to recording or re-phrasing. Marking does not identify what students achieve and how to improve so they are not confident about what history does for them.
131. Improving certain areas of teaching has been a priority and new procedures for involving students in assessment and improving marking are being tried. Leadership and management are satisfactory because improvement since the previous inspection, although satisfactory, has lacked the dynamism generated when colleagues meet regularly to develop best practice and share the responsibilities of the department.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

#### **Main strengths and areas for improvement**

- Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
- There is effective use of ICT, by both teachers and students.
- The broad subject knowledge and expertise of the teaching team promote students' enjoyment and success.
- Assessment practice in Years 7 to 9 does not provide students with sufficient information about their progress.
- Teaching strengths within the department are not shared enough to raise standards further across all areas.

#### **Commentary**

132. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 are above average, in line with recent teacher assessments. This represents good achievement, as although students enter the school with above average core skills they have very variable knowledge and skills in this subject. Well-planned projects ensure they are able to produce specifications and make effective use of prepared plans to make various products. Practical skill levels are deepened in Year 9 through having more time in two chosen project areas. Students investigate different food ingredients well through projects. When making a candleholder they apply knowledge of the properties of different plastics and are confident in choosing and accurately using the most appropriate tools for the task. Health and safety awareness is secure, team skills are developed and computers are used confidently to analyse research tasks. The most able students are challenged through more open-ended activities and those with special needs are well supported by teachers, other adults and sometimes classmates to make equally good progress.

133. In 2003, students gained results in their GCSE examinations which were well above average at the higher grades A\* to C. Results were well above average in textiles and food; above average in resistant materials and graphic products; in line in engineering and below average in systems and control. In 2004, provisional results show a similar strong pattern in textiles food and graphic products, and upward trends in engineering and systems and control, while results in resistant materials and the recently introduced manufacturing course are well below average. Despite variations in performance, trends are upwards.
134. In Year 11, standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average, making overall achievement good. Knowledge of industrial practices is strong and students use ICT with confidence. Where detailed analysis of design briefs has resulted in the choice of products linked to students' interests, motivation and commitment are high. In less well-planned projects, students' technical knowledge, time management, sketching and evaluation skills are weaker. The most able students are appropriately challenged to achieve their potential. There are differences in the achievement of girls and boys. Although boys achieve better than boys do nationally, they do not achieve as well at the highest grades. This is in stark contrast to girls' results. Where there is regular feedback on progress, tight monitoring of coursework deadlines, frequent use of computers and emphasis on practical work, boys do better.
135. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. At best, teachers use their specialist knowledge to plan projects containing a variety of stimulating activities, like team product analysis of video packaging, opportunities to gain certificates and visits to observe factory production. This results in high levels of motivation and tasks completed with pride. Teachers' enthusiasm is evident in high quality planning and displays. Challenging tasks, explained well through showing examples of previous work, and the provision of varied resources, enable students to achieve well-made and thoughtfully-designed products. Examination students are mostly able to work independently because over time they have been taught a wide range of planning and making skills and techniques. All students are encouraged to use relevant ICT to improve their work. Marking, feedback and tracking of older students' progress is very well done but younger ones do not yet receive this detail. In the minority of less good lessons activities lack challenge and insufficient thought has gone into considering what and how students should learn.
136. Both leadership and management are satisfactory. Individual responsibility holders within the team are inspirational role models, but this expertise is not harnessed to create a strategic plan for future improvement. Sharing of best practice within the team is inhibited because monitoring of teaching, through regular classroom observation, is underdeveloped. Recently established systems to analyse data and track the progress of younger students provide information that will allow the department analyse the performance of individual students. There has not been time yet for them to make an impact. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Technology College status has improved accommodation and resources, there is a stable teaching team and standards have been maintained. Technician support is inadequate in the very popular food technology area and schemes of work need further refinement, to raise their quality to those of the best. The department has many strengths and the potential to be a model of good practice.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

137. **Drama** is taught as an examination subject in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Since the previous inspection the drama requirements for the English National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9 have been integrated satisfactorily into the programme of work. Now all students at this stage have the opportunity to study some drama. In two Year 7 lessons seen the teaching and learning were good. Using drama to study the first chapter of *The Hitchhiker*, students read and acted the parts of the main characters with confidence and conviction. The standard of reading from three boys who also made good attempts at spontaneous dramatisation was very high. In a Year 11 GCSE lesson, students rehearsed a moving presentation of *Dulce et*

*Decorum Est* using drama and music. Students showed that they are responsible and mature in their attitudes to the subject. The initial rehearsal was very well led by a student, and all of them had a worthwhile input into planning and execution of the presentation and they worked very collaboratively throughout. The teacher's very good intervention was just right, using her own expertise and experience to help with dramatic projection. This enhanced their performance and students made very good progress.

138. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average with 20 of the 21 students taking the subject achieving a grade between A\* and C. All students achieved a grade. Although not so many boys as girls took the examination they were equally successful. In 2004 10 of the 13 students achieved grades between A\* and C with three students achieving the highest grade of A\*. There were too few students this year to compare reliably with national averages. Considering that these students received little or no input lower down the school their achievement is very good and highly commendable.

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pace in some lessons is steady, rather than brisk.
- There has not been enough improvement since the previous inspection.
- The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual and moral development.
- Three-dimensional work is well made and highly expressive and colour work is careful and considered.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to experience the world of art at first hand.

### **Commentary**

139. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Students' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory, and they make sound gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in this subject. Their colour work is careful and considered, and group displays, based on a study of butterflies, are bright and attractive. Three-dimensional work is well made, and masks are lively and humorous. In their pattern work, students effectively use bright yellows and greens to contrast with deep reds and blues. However, they do not have enough opportunities to study the world of art at first hand, for example by visiting galleries or taking part in workshops. As a result, they find it difficult to talk for long or in greater depth about the topics they have studied.
140. In 2003, numbers taking the GCSE examination were too small reliably to compare their results with those achieved nationally. In 2004, numbers rose. Half the students taking the examination gained the higher grades at A\*-C. This is below the national average for 2003. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 11 are below average. However, students' achievement is satisfactory, considering the standards at the beginning of the course in Year 10 of the small number of students who choose to take the subject. Their colour work continues to be strong, and figure and portrait studies in chalk pastel are vibrant and very attractive. Three-dimensional work is often carried out on a large scale, and sculptures are well made and highly expressive. However, students lack the confidence to experiment freely when drawing and painting, particularly in their sketchbooks.
141. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Strengths of the teaching include teachers' good subject knowledge, and the good individual advice that they give students. Relationships between teachers and students are also good. These strengths are often seen in lessons. However, in a small number of lessons, the pace is steady, rather than brisk, and methods

and materials are not exciting enough to excite or inspire students. These factors restrict learning to a level that is satisfactory overall.

142. Course leadership and management are satisfactory, and development planning is sound. As a result numbers taking the subject are growing. The subject also makes a good contribution to students' spiritual and moral development, and themes exploring a wide range of human emotions are often tackled. Improvement since the previous inspection, however, is unsatisfactory. While some progress has been made on the weaknesses identified then, there are still not enough opportunities for students to study the work of art and design at first hand, and sketchbook use is still not widespread enough in Years 7 to 9.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 9 and well above average by the end of Year 11.
- Students achieve well at all stages because of good teaching and learning.
- Procedures for assessment are not good enough yet to enable students to understand their strengths and weaknesses.
- Provision for ICT is now very good for all students.

### **Commentary**

143. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are above average. Students play the keyboard well. This is sufficiently good for them to enjoy playing melody and chords very successfully together with bright and lively rhythm, listening carefully. Many students improvise confidently and rhythmically. A few use a wider pitch range including colouring notes. More modest improvisations use just a few given notes but they maintain a good sense of rhythm. As students start the school with average standards, their achievement through Years 7 to 9 is good. The subject is accessible to students with special educational needs and they achieve as well as other students.
144. GCSE results for several years have been among the best in the school. In 2003 all students achieved a grade between A\* and C. In 2004 results were not quite so strong as usual, but these may have been affected by staff absences in the department. There are too few students taking the course to compare reliably with national averages. Standards of playing in Year 11 are high. Some students in this pleasingly large group are advanced players. Their compositions are competent and imaginative. Those sampled on tape show clear command of compositional techniques and in the best case, style and panache. Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good and by the end of the GCSE course they reach well above average standards.
145. Good teaching and learning and students' very good attitudes are the reason why these standards are achieved. Students enjoy music and the teachers' enthusiasm and expertise in their subject have a positive influence on the students. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good because there is a mixture of inexperienced and experienced teachers in the department. Where teaching is experienced students achieve good standards of performance particularly when rehearsal in lessons is focused and demanding. The lessons are conducted at a very good pace but in one lesson this was at the expense of finesse in playing and singing. Less experienced teaching is more tentative and tasks are not always made clear with the result that students cannot use their time so well.

146. In Year 11, students are now assessing the quality of their own and others' work using the examination marking scheme. This is beginning to give them clear information on how to improve and is a promising strategy. The whole area of assessment is currently being overhauled, particularly the kind of assessment that will help students learn more effectively. However, assessment is not yet sufficiently familiar or consistently used to make an impact on the progress of all students in the school. Students in Year 9 for instance do not know what their National Curriculum level is so that it is difficult for them to take control of their own learning and progress. Face-to-face advice from teachers to individual students in lessons is good though.
147. Leadership and management of the department are good. Teachers share their good practice but only informally. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because high standards have been maintained and the department now uses ICT in all its work. The resources for this are very good.
148. The department is busy and lively after school with a wide range of good instrumental lessons and extra-curricular groups and bands. The school choir, which sings regularly in the Cathedral, rightly enjoys a high reputation. The choristers are highly competent and produce moving and expressive performances. Such activities make very good provision for students' personal development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership and management is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their work.
- Good teaching contributes to good standards.
- Opportunities outside lessons are very good.
- Lack of on-site playing fields limits learning in some areas.

### Commentary

149. Standards of work are above average by the end of Year 9. From Year 7, students show good skills in performance. A significant strength is their ability to plan and lead warm-up sessions and to explain and lead practices to develop particular skills, for example in rugby. In both dance and gymnastics, students can plan, practise and modify both simple and challenging sequences of movement. They can identify strengths in their performances and those of others and suggest means of improvement.
150. In 2003, GCSE results were well above average, with all achieving grades and the proportion achieving A/A\* grades being twice the national average. Provisional results for 2004 indicate continuing improvement. There are no significant differences between the performances of girls and boys. Standards of work seen by the end of Year 11 are above average. In a mixed gender hockey lesson, standards were well above expectation. Strengths developed in earlier years are extended particularly in the areas of planning and performance. Writing of those taking examination courses shows good development of understanding and recognition of the detail required in full answers.
151. Students achieve well because they enjoy their work and because teachers are skilful in helping students of all abilities to make good progress. Students with specific difficulties such as those affecting hearing or behaviour are able to succeed because teachers meet their needs. Students enjoy their work. They sustain effort and concentration throughout lessons.

152. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is often very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers link work to earlier and future lessons so that students understand their relevance. They use questions well to confirm and develop understanding. Teachers are skilful in ensuring that all students understand tasks and receive additional help when needed. Lessons are less effective when some students are inappropriately challenged or when the very poor condition of the field adversely affects the pace at which the lesson has to be conducted. Students contribute well to their own learning because they have been encouraged to do so from the beginning. Despite the best efforts of teachers, transporting students to grassed playing surfaces significantly reduces the time available for learning.
153. Leadership and management are very good. Staff form a very good team with very effective sharing of responsibilities. Students' learning also benefits from the very good support given by non-specialist teachers.
154. There has been very good improvement since the previous report. Teaching and learning are better. Well above average standards have been maintained in spite of the shortcomings in the facilities. Teaching areas and changing rooms at the main site have been considerably improved. Criticisms in previous reports of difficulties linked to off-site playing fields have led to thorough exploration of possible means of improvement but no solution has been found.

### **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

155. The quality of provision in government and politics is good. There is a lively reciprocal relationship with history that students recognise in terms of both complementary knowledge and issues and the skills of accessing sources and writing at length. Students are enthusiastic to explain how confident they feel in their understanding of contemporary politics and their ability to trace the long-term influence of former prime ministers and policies. Teaching is good because it challenges students to use their study findings in whole-class and paired discussions to tease out issues and question each other's viewpoints. These skills were very evident at the local meeting about regional assemblies when they were conspicuous for their intelligent questioning of Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. They were equally proud (as were their teachers) to make the most of an opportunity to sit and talk with Jack Straw in his Downing Street office.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

The school has a well-planned programme of personal and social education. Time in registration periods is used well to supplement the work in full lessons. The citizenship aspect was inspected in depth.

#### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the best lessons, citizenship elements are clearly indicated, and students learn well.
- In a number of subjects, including religious education and geography, citizenship elements are well planned.
- Students are not sure how well they are doing or how to improve.
- There are not enough opportunities for all students to take part in practical citizenship activities.
- The student councils are not fully effective in achieving change, and students do not know enough about their workings.



## Commentary

156. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 are average. Students' achievement is satisfactory, and they make sound gains in the skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. They have a broad knowledge of the justice system, and consider the effects that imprisonment has on those who are imprisoned and their families. They raise money for various charities, including a local hospice. They discuss human rights and responsibilities, and the need for rules in society, and are keen to express their views. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to take responsibility for planning activities themselves. In addition, the school councils are not fully effective in achieving change, and most students do not know enough about their workings to feel fully involved.
157. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 11 are average, and students' achievement continues to be satisfactory. They investigate and discuss controversial topics, such as capital punishment, or the differences between peaceful and violent protest. They realise the importance of combating prejudice and discrimination. They also have a sound knowledge of the global community, and explore the relationship between developed and developing countries. However, there are not enough opportunities for all students to take part in practical citizenship activities, either within the school or in the wider community.
158. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is infectious, citizenship elements are clearly indicated and explained, and students are keen to answer questions. These factors create a good pace and high levels of interest, and learning is good as a result. However, in a small number of lessons, teachers talk for too long, without giving students enough opportunities to be active in the lesson. In addition, students' knowledge and understanding of assessment are weak, and they are not sure how well they are doing, or how they can improve.
159. Course leadership and management are satisfactory, and development planning is clear. The subject also makes a good contribution to students' spiritual and moral development. For example, they consider the diversity of religious and ethnic identities in our society, and investigate the importance of community living. However, the good practice seen in subjects such as religious education and geography, where citizenship elements are well planned, has not yet been spread across all other subjects. This is limiting students' achievement overall to a satisfactory level.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English language	8	100	82.9	0	17.5	36.3	28.7
Mathematics	3	100	61.9	0	17.1	23.3	22.1
Biology	15	86.7	65.2	13.3	11.1	25.3	20.6
Chemistry	6	83.3	72.7	50	13.9	41.7	24.1
Information technology	11	81.8	67	9.1	10.9	25.5	21.4
Geography	17	70.6	74.3	5.9	19.8	23.5	26.5
History	8	100	80.7	37.5	19.5	33.8	28.6
Sociology	11	81.8	71.8	27.3	18.4	31.8	25.4
Psychology	16	56.9	70.1	26	12.6	56	18
Product design	3	66.7	74.9	66.7	15.1	33.3	25.3
Business studies	6	100	76.4	33.3	16.3	38.3	20.6

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English language	37	100	99.4	35.1	36.3	81.6	80.9
Mathematics	31	100	96.7	64.5	55.6	96.8	88.8
Biology	22	100	96.4	36.4	39.2	75.5	78.6
Chemistry	7	100	97.6	14.3	49	74.3	84.9
Information technology	19	100	95.6	21.1	24.6	71.6	69.5
Geography	24	100	98.7	37.5	44.5	84.2	84
History	15	100	99	46.7	44.6	88	84.6
Sociology	17	94.1	98.2	23.5	44.3	76.5	83.6
Psychology	41	91	96.1	17	36	78	77.1
Design and technology	8	100	97.6	12.5	35	77.7	77.9
Business studies	13	100	98.7	30.8	36.8	83.1	80.1

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English language was the focus subject. German, French and English literature were sampled.

Teaching and learning are good in **English literature**. Standards are average with students achieving satisfactorily in relation to their GCSE grades. The number entering this subject at A-level has been very small and it is difficult to make valid national comparisons.

In both **modern foreign languages** current standards are in line with the national average. Good teaching and improved attitudes have ensured that learning is now good. Achievement is satisfactory. In 2003 results at A-level were below average in French but well above average in German. In both subjects the number of students was low. In 2004 there was a slight improvement in the number of higher grades achieved in French. German results were similar to 2003.

### English

Provision in English language is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results are lower than expected from students' GCSE performance.
- There is some excellent and very good teaching where the teacher's love of subject transmits to the students.
- Some students are accepted onto the course without enough background knowledge.
- Teachers' comments on students' work are helpful but are not focused enough on A-level requirements.
- The department does not analyse its performance rigorously enough.

### Commentary

160. In 2003 A-level results were above the national average although students did not reach the standards expected as based on their performance at GCSE. Boys' standards were higher than those of the girls. In 2004, results were lower than in 2003 with students again failing to reach the standard expected. The 2003 AS results showed good achievement by students, who attained results above expectations. In 2004, students did less well than expected at AS-level.
161. In work seen during the inspection students show a sound grasp of aspects of English such as language acquisition and the history of the language. Standards are average and students are achieving in line with expectations. Few students have entered the course with high GCSE grades. Consequently there is little work which shows a deep enough understanding to reach the highest A-level grades. Students' files show satisfactory progress through the course. For example, in the study of children's acquisition of language they understand the theoretical background provided by the theories of Skinner, Piaget and Chomsky. They do not always fully understand the functions of parts of speech and sometimes they do not even identify parts of speech correctly. This inevitably leads to difficulties in study at this level even with good teaching. They are adept at annotating texts using the correct terminology when examining linguistic features. Standards in discussion are at an average standard for an A-level course but some students are less successful when expressing their ideas in writing.
162. Teaching overall is good. In the very best lessons the teacher's enthusiasm, humour and love for intellectual pursuit transmit to the students, who make excellent progress because learning is fun. Expert subject knowledge allows the teacher to build upon students' ideas and answer their questions. In a lesson in which texts from Chaucer and the sixteenth century were analysed the teacher led the students through the features to look for and then elicited from them a rank-order of importance that they would be able to use in an examination. Where,

however, the teacher's subject knowledge is less secure there is more reliance on the textbook or notes. Lessons are accordingly conducted in a less exciting way and students progress at a slower, although satisfactory, pace.

163. Teachers plan lessons well and sometimes make good use of a range of resources such as appropriate examples of children's literature or tape recordings of mediaeval speech. On other occasions, however, lessons lack materials which would improve learning. Teachers ensure that students are expected to work independently as was seen in a lesson where they were developing a script aimed at a teenage radio audience. Students welcome this kind of opportunity. They do, however, complain that finding space for private study can sometimes be a problem. They also welcome the fact that the comments they receive on their assignments are full and helpful. Thus they know in general terms what they need to do to improve although teachers' comments do not focus closely enough on A-level assessment objectives.
164. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. . Although the head of department is a very good role model as a teacher, the department does not have a system for ensuring that good practice is shared. It does not analyse its strengths and weaknesses enough to take appropriate action, nor does it make enough use of the data available in the school. It is not possible to draw full comparisons with the time of the previous inspection, as there is not enough evidence. However, results are now better and teaching has improved.

### **Literacy skills across the sixth form**

165. There is good provision for literacy in the sixth form and standards are above average. Students receive good opportunities to discuss or make presentations across a range of subjects. For example, in physical education they discuss confidently although in sociology they were observed reading from their notes rather than presenting. Written work is good and teachers pay due attention to ensuring that standards are high enough. Students on the communication studies course produce written assignments that are convincing and technically accurate.

### **MATHEMATICS**

The focus of the inspection was on AS and A-level courses in mathematics. Most students continue their studies into Year 13

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve very well and standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students enjoy mathematics and have very positive attitudes to their work.
- There are currently no further mathematics courses.

#### **Commentary**

166. Students' standards on entry to Year 12 are generally average. Results in Year 13, in A-level examinations, fluctuate from year to year depending on the capability of each cohort; usually standards are either above or well above average. In 2003, standards were well above average. In 2004 all students passed and two thirds got A or B grades. These results were very much better than the predictions based on GCSE results.
167. The standard of work seen in Year 13 was well above average, with some students reaching very high standards. The proportion of males and females studying mathematics varies in

different year groups but there was no significant difference in work seen in attainment or in achievement by gender. Students' achievement is very good. As in the main school, this is due to very good teaching, students' hard work and very positive attitudes to mathematics. The achievement of higher attainers, although still very good, is not quite as good as average and lower attainers, as there is not currently a further mathematics course to challenge them to the same extent.

168. Higher attaining students begin advanced level work with a strong foundation in mathematics. They are able to build quickly on this, using their algebraic skills effectively, developing a high level of critical thinking and analysis. These students are able to assimilate new ideas rapidly and choose what is appropriate for a particular situation. Lower attaining students find the transition to post-16 mathematics difficult at times but due to very good support from teachers and their own hard work they develop a good range of skills. They are not as skilled at applying these to more complex unfamiliar situations. Students use a number of possible methods accurately to integrate algebraic or trigonometric functions. Students suggest mathematical models as a basis for mechanics coursework. The speed of recall and mental agility in finding these strategies for solution is much quicker among higher attainers; lower attainers need some prompting.
169. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is knowledgeable and well structured, and sets high expectations in terms of the quality and quantity of work expected from students, both in and out of the classroom. Students respond very well to this and their learning is very good. Teachers adapt their methods well to the particular needs of each group, with an emphasis on developing reasoning skills and the ability to communicate mathematically, both orally and in writing. Support and guidance for students are very good, both in and out of the classroom.
170. Leadership and management are very good. There is a very clear, forward-looking approach to course development and very good use is made of staff expertise. As in the main school, good practice is shared very well. There were few detailed comments about post-16 mathematics in the last report. However, on those points such as development of ICT and oral skills, improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

#### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

171. Students' mathematical skills are very good and contribute well to their progress in other subjects. In chemistry, students can carry out a wide range of calculations, including treatment of errors. They can present and interpret data given in graphical form. Students in psychology and sociology have good skills of statistical analysis, which helps them with experimental data.

#### **SCIENCE**

Biology and chemistry were inspected in full and physics was sampled.

In **physics**, A-level results were above the national average in 2003. In 2004 results improved to well above the 2003 average. In the Year 12 and 13 lessons seen, teaching and learning were good and students were enthusiastic about the courses. They are confident and carry out investigative work with curiosity and rigour.

#### **Biology**

Provision for biology is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and develops students' independence as learners.

- Lessons are well structured with different activities to help students learn.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and students.

## Commentary

172. In 2003 students' results and average point scores at A-level were average. Boys attained more A and B grades than girls. All students gained a grade. In 2004, there was a significant drop in the number of students who achieved higher grades but two thirds of students attained above their predicted grade. At AS-level in 2003, average point scores were above national expectation with all the higher grades attained by boys. There was a slight drop in AS results in 2004 but three quarters of students attained above their predicted grades. Students achieved well at both AS and A-level in relation to their starting points at GCSE.
173. Standards of current work seen in Year 13 are average. In one Year 13 lesson, students worked well in pairs to develop a 'mind map' of the influence the work of the kidney has on other processes in the body. Good learning took place because the teacher then used skilful questioning to explore their previous knowledge to build a picture of the complex systems which regulate blood sugar levels, introducing and reinforcing new vocabulary. Achievement is good.
174. In Year 12 some students work at a high level of understanding, talking confidently in lessons about the microscopic structure of cells. In other groups some students experienced difficulty in relating previous knowledge of protein structure to explain how enzymes work. Files are generally well kept with completed work and notes made to extend class work.
175. Teaching is good and students learn well because methods are used to develop independence and confidence in their learning. The five specialist teachers all have very good subject knowledge and present the work in a variety of ways. Students have many opportunities to work independently or in groups to research, present findings or plan practical investigations. Sometimes the tasks set do not provide sufficient intellectual challenge but usually teachers check students' understanding by probing questions throughout the lesson or by setting challenging homework tasks. All students demonstrate very good application to work and relationships are very good between teachers and students. Several students who have joined the school in the sixth form are already well integrated. Students are very appreciative of the help teachers give them, both in and out of lessons.
176. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Several teachers are relatively new to teaching A-level and at the moment there is no formal system for sharing good practice and exchanging ideas. An effective system has been devised to monitor files, and students' individual work is well marked. Improvement is satisfactory since the last inspection and standards have been maintained.

## Chemistry

The provision for chemistry is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching and high expectations ensure students achieve well in chemistry.
- Target setting and tracking procedures for students are very good.
- ICT is increasingly used and students become confident independent learners.
- There is insufficient liaison between the three sciences to share good practice in developing teaching skills.

## Commentary

177. Only a small cohort of seven students took A-level examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003. Results were below the national average. All gained grades but there was only one high level grade. In 2004 there was a much larger cohort and unconfirmed results were much better. Again all gained grades and 40 per cent obtained A or B grades. Generally, grades were better than expected, given students' GCSE grades two years earlier.
178. Results in the AS-level examinations at the end of Year 12 in 2003 were well above average. Almost half of the students gained the highest A or B grades, and most achieved grades. Unconfirmed results for 2004 are even better with almost two-thirds of students achieving A or B grades.
179. Standards seen in Year 13 are above average. Students have a mature and broad understanding of their studies and discuss their work with confidence and accuracy. Study skills are good and their designing of individual investigations is thorough and well documented. Realistic but challenging targets are set early in Year 12 based on their GCSE record. Students' very positive and mature attitudes towards their studies contribute considerably to their good achievement. The standards of most are at least in line with their target grades and a significant number exceed them. Standards in the current Year 12 are above average. Students have a good understanding of the mole concept and use it effectively in a wide variety of situations. In their early work in organic chemistry they understand how to display structural formulae and apply nomenclature rules to name compounds. Students achieve well.
180. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have very good command of their subject, have high expectations and challenge students to think for themselves and develop their ideas. Students respond very well. They enjoy the stimulating rapport, use the support materials very well and become effective independent learners. Teachers regularly review progress with students and clear guidance is given for improvement.
181. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum is designed to stimulate and challenge students, and provides good opportunities for them to develop independent learning skills. Students are very well supported by the very good assessment and tracking procedures. The lack of clear liaison between the three sciences, however, limits the sharing of good practice and the development of creative and imaginative teaching skills.
182. Since the previous inspection there has been good improvement. Student numbers and standards are rising, and almost all students complete their courses. Arrangements for monitoring students' progress have become very effective, and the quality of the accommodation and resources has improved significantly.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

AS and A-level ICT was inspected in detail. Intermediate GNVQ ICT and AS and A-level computing were sampled.

A-level computing students understand assembly language and computer architecture. Students taking intermediate GNVQ courses are learning how to customise data base entry forms. Teaching and learning observed were good with students achieving well. Standards seen were average.

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good, and students achieve well.

- There are excellent relationships between teachers and students.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Students are very interested in the subject and value it as a career pathway.
- There is a good range of courses for sixth form students.

### **Commentary**

183. In 2003 AS and A-level results in ICT were above the national average. In 2004, similar A-level and AS results were achieved compared to 2003 national data. . Students achieved well in relation to their predicted grades.
184. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are in line with those expected for students of their age. Students taking the AS course have good understanding of qualitative and quantitative information, and how information can be used. They are able to use more advanced formulae in spreadsheets and know how to create macros. In the A-level course students have completed a major project where they use a wide range of higher level skills. Currently students are making use of more advanced relational databases to provide solutions for real business situations such as golf shops, landscape gardening and libraries. Their achievement is good in view of their prior attainment.
185. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which is most effectively used in explaining technical uses of software and examination requirements to students. Lessons are well planned, and students are intellectually challenged through tasks set, particularly in a real situation reviewing the school ICT security system. Students have excellent relationships with each other and with teachers, and the working atmosphere in all lessons contributes to the very good progress students make. However, there is less student interaction with each other in some lessons than might be expected. The department written coursework guides for the A-level course are excellent, and provide students with a valuable resource as well as clear information about course requirements.
186. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Since the last inspection there has been very good progress. The range of courses provided for sixth form students is wide and meets the needs of all students. Standards have risen significantly; they were below average at the time of the previous inspection. The accommodation, resources and the network have been significantly improved in the new building. The virtual learning environment and the digitalbrain are paving the way to the further development of e-learning. Students value the subject, and many intend to use it as a career pathway or to support other subjects they will take in higher education.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

187. Sixth form students make good use of ICT skills in many subjects. In design and technology and in music technology the use of ICT leads to good standards of work. In all subjects students make extensive use of the Internet for research purposes, and where they are required to complete projects they make effective use of word-processing skills in the presentation of their work. Students are very competent users of the technology and make effective use of the e-mail facility provided by the school to transfer work between home and school.

### **HUMANITIES**

Geography, history, sociology and psychology were inspected in full. Government and politics was sampled.



188. In **government and politics** students are well informed about contemporary politics. In the lesson observed teaching and learning were good and students achieved well. Teaching challenges and students tease out issues and question each other's opinions.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and rising.
- Leadership is very good and the curriculum is well planned.
- Students achieve well and their attitudes to learning are extremely positive.
- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject.

### **Commentary**

189. A-level results have been above average in most recent years. In 2003, students achieved better results than expected from their GCSE results. Male students did significantly better than girls. Girls' average point score was well below the boys'. In 2004, results were also above the 2003 national average. Students achieved well in relation to predicted targets. As in 2003 boys' results were significantly better than girls'. AS-level results in 2003 were average.
190. For students, standards are well above average and their achievement is good. Students have a very good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of physical and human geography. Year 13 students, for example, can explain and evaluate the major implications of enlargement of the European Union. They also show a thorough understanding of tectonics. Good mapping techniques enable most students effectively to represent geographical data. They use technical language and case studies well to illustrate their views. In their coursework assignments, which are of a high standard, students successfully apply a wide range of techniques to collect, analyse and present data. Many students use ICT very well in their work.
191. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very a good knowledge of the subject which supports students' learning because teachers give good quality explanations and ask challenging questions. They give good guidance in essay writing and in examination techniques. In the very good lessons students are fully challenged and teaching methods are imaginative. In one Year 12 lesson, for example, students made good, thoughtful presentations on glacial processes and resulting landforms. In some lessons the range of teaching and learning styles is more limited. Students' work is assessed carefully and they receive good feedback. Relationships are very good and students have very good attitudes to learning. They are attentive and work well, both independently and collaboratively.
192. Leadership is very good and management is good, with strong teamwork. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by residential fieldwork in Year 12, including field study in the French Alps. Teachers' expertise is very well matched to the curriculum. Subject planning is very good but there is only limited formal monitoring of teaching and learning. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. With its very good leadership and committed staff the department has good capacity for further improvement.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging teaching and expert subject knowledge inspire students.
- Students' very good study techniques and excellent attitudes support learning.
- There is no history teaching base for formal and informal study.

## Commentary

193. In 2003 A-level results were above average, particularly at the highest grades, where boys did very well. AS results were equally impressive. A-level results fell in 2004 but all students did better than expected. The fall in AS results was attributed to an unusual document paper and strategies are in place for successful re-sits. This was the first substantial increase in numbers choosing history and they have continued to A-level. Several students now arrive from other schools.
194. Standards of work seen are also above average because students intensify note making and essay-structuring skills previously learnt. They rapidly develop active reading/highlighting and annotating to cope with the vastly increased amount of knowledge and research. They automatically apply well-tried techniques to critically analyse text, Internet and visual sources of all kinds including difficult symbolic political cartoons. They visit Preston Records Office to study the range and potential of primary sources as preparation for personal studies and Manchester University for lectures on Civil Rights and mid-twentieth century Germany. Their commitment to learning is impressive therefore achievement is good.
195. Teaching and learning are both good and although their styles are different the students recognise how their teachers complement each other. Lessons move fast because of good planning. Time is used best when students take responsibility in pairs for targeted research. As they feed back new knowledge, teachers' expert subject knowledge supplements and paints in the wider context, bringing the period alive. Students are encouraged to speculate and apply cause and effect principles, making comparisons across wide sweeps of history. Higher attaining students spontaneously ask questions and some are highly articulate with appropriate terminology. Students appreciate the excellent, sensitive, individual support they receive about the personal study, which enhances their chance of success. Too few opportunities exist for developing extended talk where students exchange and challenge each other's well-illustrated and reasoned theories.
196. Increased numbers of students, good decisions about staff deployment and resources and rising standards indicate good leadership and management contributing to satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. However, there is no history base where students can study extra resources or magazines, use ICT, formally and informally consult teachers and be stimulated by the challenge of studying at this high level.

## Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good innovative teaching.
- Large groups of students work conscientiously and with enthusiasm.
- There is good and improving leadership and management.

## Commentary

197. Standards at A-level in 2003 and 2002 were above the national average. Point scores have been in line with the national level of performance over the last two years. Most students achieve the grade predicted for them. The unconfirmed results for 2004 are lower in both A and B and overall A to E grades. Results at AS-level in 2003 were below the national average but in 2004, standards improved.
198. The standard of current work in Year 13 is generally above average. Students are performing well in relation to expectations. Their written work is very well organised and makes frequent use of note frames, case studies and highlighted notes. Frequent assessments lead to constructive feedback and targets for improvement generated by students. The better students in both years reflect on the subject matter and make constructive interventions in class. Some students provide accurate answers but find it more difficult to explore a topic in depth. The standard of oral contribution is sometimes disappointing; students experience difficulty in projecting their voices and struggle with the pronunciation of technical vocabulary.
199. Teaching is good overall with some very good and occasionally excellent practice. Knowledgeable and lively teachers establish excellent rapport with their groups. Objectives for each lesson are clear. Ample opportunity is provided for exploration of topics through a wide variety of group and whole class activities. Revision of knowledge through questions or short written answers and tests is frequent. Lessons are designed to strike a balance between involving students in activities which reflect their preferred learning styles and making sure they note and learn the key information necessary for examinations. Teachers make sure students are aware of how they will be assessed and what is required to achieve a good standard in the examination. They do not, however, always press students to develop answers beyond the basic facts. But in one excellent Year 12 lesson this was achieved in the context of looking at assessing questions on attachment. Learning is usually good. The quality of teaching ensures an enthusiastic response and good attention to the tasks in hand. Students can generally recall earlier work accurately. Their conscientiousness and level of attention are exceptional.
200. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision and capacity to raise standards. The very recently appointed learning coordinator of social sciences has a good grasp of what is required to improve results and her action plan focuses on more systematic target setting and monitoring of teaching and learning styles and the improvement of male performance. An innovation is a two-year AS programme for those who do not wish to progress beyond this level. A good book resource is available in the teaching area but base rooms are not provided with interactive whiteboards or projectors. The teaching rooms are small and arranged too formally for interactive teaching for the numbers now taking AS-level. Guidance is provided on future courses and careers, and there is useful material on this in the classrooms, but no direct use is made of professional psychologists in the area to supplement the input of teachers.

## Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-organised teaching leads to above average results.
- The variety of learning tasks build on students' learning styles.
- There are not enough opportunities for stretching students' understanding and their use of analysis.
- Students' oral skills are not as well developed as their written work.

## Commentary

201. Results at A-level were below the national average in 2003, but above in 2002. The unconfirmed figures for 2004 suggest similar results to those achieved in 2003, with a slightly larger proportion achieving the higher grades. Most students achieved satisfactorily in relation to their predicted grades. In 2003, results at AS-level were above average. Unconfirmed figures for 2004 confirm a continuation of this trend.
202. Standards in the current Years 12 and 13, in class and in written work, are at least in line with expectations and sometimes better. Standards observed suggest better achievement than in the past, so that achievement is good in relation to students' prior knowledge and attainment. Written work shows good organisation, clear targets and regular monitoring of notes that are well written and accurate. There is frequent emphasis on key words and on appropriate use of Internet sources. Sometimes students mark each other's work, thus reinforcing their knowledge of what is required in the examination.
203. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers are enthusiastic, know their subjects and are well organised. For example in one Year 13 lesson students were effectively involved setting up a complex but very worthwhile 'hot-seat' role-play exercise to consolidate learning about Marxist and functionalist views of religion. Year 12 students considered the Marxist view of education and the concept of the 'ideal student'. This involved flipchart presentations of a teacher's and student's views of such a person; the results were quite similar. Both groups approached the stimulating range of tasks with application and enthusiasm.
204. Those students who have taken the subject at GCSE have an initial advantage in knowledge and skills. They do not always take opportunities offered to question teachers or their peers and hence develop their learning beyond the initially presented facts. Similarly, they do not always take notes when information is being presented or discussed although sometimes this is covered by the teacher's handout or by those made by students themselves as part of presentations. Their written presentations are often clear and informative; their oral presentation skills are less polished.
205. Leadership and management are good. The subject involves the same team of teachers as in psychology and the operation and development of sociology are similar and are being carried through with the same enthusiasm. Hence many of the general comments on standards, teaching and learning are applicable across the two subjects. There is a firm subject base at GCSE level, which helps secure large groups at AS and A-levels. There are regular development opportunities focusing in particular on school teams looking at teaching and learning and assessment of learning. The extensive induction programme common to both subjects provides good opportunities to confirm choice of subject and for students to be clear about what is involved. This is also reflected in the clear and full written information in student folders.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Product design was inspected in detail. Design and technology food and AVCE<sup>3</sup> manufacturing were sampled.

206. Standards reached in Year 12 **AVCE manufacturing** are above average and are closely related to students' previous Year 11 examination performance. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and learning is good, though too much focus is directed at outcomes rather than the learning process. Challenging research assignments lead to greater understanding of energy sources and impact on the environment. In **design and technology food** the quality of teaching and learning was good. The induction problem-solving assignment led to some

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<sup>3</sup> Advanced vocational certificate of education  
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exciting investigations and outcomes into types of bread. The team-teaching approach is well managed and useful in establishing standards of assessment.

## **Product design**

Provision in product design is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ethos for learning and teacher-student relationships are good and students achieve well.
- The very good use of ICT in students' project work improves the standard of presentation and quality of manufactured outcomes.
- Teachers are well qualified with good teaching expertise, though they need to plan and monitor and evaluate units of work more rigorously.
- Planning for future development is limited. It does not include short, medium and long-term strategic planning with clearly identified and measurable outcomes to monitor progress.

## **.Commentary**

207. The 2003 A-level results were average but below average for A and B grades. However, all students were successful at gaining a grade. In 2004, one student achieved the highest grade A, but overall A-level results were below the provisional national average. Entry numbers have been small but are increasing steadily. At AS-level, results at the top grades A and B have improved and compare favourably with those nationally but entry numbers have been inconsistent and fell by half from 2003 to 2004. In 2004 two of the four students achieved high grades and have continued their studies into Year 13.
208. Standards of work in lessons and in work seen are above average in both Year 13 and Year 12. Given students' standards on entry to the course, this represents good achievement. Current standards of coursework also support this judgement. The range and creativity of students' work are wide and are promoted through stimulating teaching and students' positive attitudes to the course. Two good examples seen included a flat-pack storage box in the shape of a 'boot' suitable for a child, and a device which fits onto an existing stage light to provide remote controlled adjustment.
209. Students generally show independence in their work and are self-motivated; they make suitable intellectual, physical and creative efforts in producing their work. There is evidence that students analyse problems to innovate, create and take risks when designing, but their understanding of construction techniques and materials technology is less well developed, in particular by those who have not followed a similar course at GCSE. The use of computer-aided-design and manufacture supports development of project work in all areas.
210. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers possess good subject expertise in their particular areas to develop and expand ideas, resulting in an increase in students' learning and understanding. The inter-personal relationships between students and teachers are good and with small group sizes, students receive individual tuition. The two students working towards A-level spoke highly of the support they received.
211. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The scheme of work and self-evaluation within the department however are unsatisfactory. All teachers involved in the delivery of the course meet to plan units of work but these meetings are not recorded and therefore lack rigour in terms of monitoring progress and practice. Resources are very good and accommodation of high quality encourages good achievement across all specialist areas. Links with industry are good. Guidance for students contemplating industrial design at university is limited. Very little reference was made to the sixth form in the last report; all examination courses have changed

and any comparison therefore would be unfounded. With all of the areas for improvement fully addressed, the department is well placed to improve even further.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

No subjects were inspected in detail. Music, music technology and art were sampled.

212. There is good provision in **music**. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching and positive attitudes on the part of the students. A-level results in 2003 were below the national average. Challenging and expert teaching in **music technology** results in students achieving well.
213. In AS **art and design**, a new course, students are enthusiastic and are achieving better than their GCSE results would indicate. Teaching and learning are very good. Current standards are above average and painting techniques are vigorous and exciting.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The school does not teach hospitality, and none of the other subjects were inspected in detail. Lessons were seen in AVCE leisure and recreation and physical education. The school teaches Health and social care but this was not inspected.

214. In 2003, results in **leisure and recreation** were well above the national average. Results in 2004 were not as good at the higher grades but still above the average for 2003. Teaching is satisfactory.
215. From a cohort of 12 students in 2003, standards in **health and social care** were well above the national average. Results in 2004 compared to 2003 were lower but still above average.
216. Teaching and learning in the **physical education** lesson seen were very good. Students have adapted quickly and well to the challenge of AS work. They respond intelligently to their teachers' questions and are confident in their relationships with each other. Standards achieved at A-level in 2003 were average. Results improved in 2004.

## BUSINESS

Business studies AS and A-level were the focus of the inspection. AVCE business studies was sampled.

At **business studies AVCE** level results were at the national average in 2003. Girls performed better than the boys. Similar results were achieved in 2004 with students gaining grades above predictions. In the current Year 12 standards are average and students are achieving satisfactorily.

Provision in business is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the subject vary widely year on year.
- Appropriate and realistically challenging tasks are provided in the good lessons.
- Relationships are very good and students have very good attitudes to learning.
- The subject is not taught in a business-style environment.
- There is insufficient use of visits to and speakers from the world of business.

## **Commentary**

217. A-level results were above the national average in 2003. Students achieved better results than expected from their GCSE results. Girls achieved a greater percentage of higher grades compared to boys. This was a complete reversal of the situation in 2002. In 2004, results at the higher grades fell below the 2003 national average. While all students obtained a grade overall they did not achieve their predicted grades. AS-level results in 2004 were below average and well below predicted grades.
218. In the current Year 13, standards are average and students are achieving satisfactorily. When given the opportunity students can work independently and collaboratively. In a lesson on the external factors affecting business, for example, students worked in groups to explore external influences on a business. Students have a satisfactory understanding of ratio analysis and the use of financial data to a range of stakeholders in a business. Files show satisfactory levels of understanding in relation to marketing and human resource factors in business. Similar standards and achievement were seen in Year12. Students' attitudes are very positive and this impacts well on learning.
219. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good practice. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and most lessons are planned in a satisfactory way. Some lessons, however, are too closely directed by the teacher and this hampers the development of both team working and independent learning skills. Students make good use of ICT for research. Case studies are used effectively in some lessons to relate theory to practice in the real world of business. Teaching puts appropriate emphasis on the correct and regular use of specialist business language. Marking and assessment are thorough, and an effective tracking system to monitor students' progress is in place.
220. The subject is soundly managed within the ICT department. The department analyses student performance thoroughly and development planning is good. Procedures are clear and leadership is competent and committed. There is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching or sharing of good practice. There are not enough opportunities to visit and meet people from business in order to help students to relate theory to practice. Business studies is taught in a number of general classrooms, which makes the creation of a business environment very difficult. Business was not reported in the last inspection.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

Two lessons of AS general studies were sampled. In both lessons the quality of teaching and learning was good and students achieved at least satisfactorily. Results at AS-level in 2003 were well above the national average for both higher A and B grades and average points scored.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	3	3
<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>		<b>1</b>
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	1	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	2	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	3	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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