

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **THE MIRFIELD FREE GRAMMAR AND SIXTH FORM**

Mirfield, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107764

Headteacher: Mrs Lorraine Barker

Lead inspector: Dr David Benstock

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 268980

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1279
School address:	Kitson Hill Road Mirfield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF14 9EZ
Telephone number:	01924 483660
Fax number:	01924 483661
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jennifer Ryan
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school. It is above average size. The number on roll is around 1279, of which 216 are in the sixth form. The number of students who leave or join the school at other than the usual time is about average. It is situated in the historic textiles town of Mirfield, in West Yorkshire. It has been awarded the status of Specialist Technology College and has gained 'Investors in People' accreditation. The socio-economic background of students reflects a mixed range of family circumstances. The school draws about half of its students from Mirfield where the proportion of families having experience of higher education is about average but many students are from deprived parts of the town and deprived areas in Dewsbury and Heckmondwike. Approximately 77 per cent of students have White British heritage, 22 per cent are known to be of Asian, Black or mixed heritage and for the remainder information is not known. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. Although the number of students whose home language is not English is higher than in most schools there are no students identified as being at the early stages of English acquisition. The main languages other than English spoken by students in the school are Urdu and Punjabi, with small numbers speaking other languages. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is average. The percentage with statements of special educational need is above the national average, mostly relating to social, emotional and behavioural problems and dyslexia. Standards on entry to the school are variable, often well below average depending on year group and subject but are currently average in Year 7. Reflecting the whole school they are below average. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is well below average since the school loses some

higher attaining students to neighbouring popular schools and admits others with a wide range of abilities.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20243	David Benstock	Lead inspector	
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector	
18676	Roy Meakin	Team inspector	Mathematics
3958	Maureen Cawdron	Team inspector	English
4922	Mike Driver	Team inspector	Science Biology (sixth form)
18453	Colin Lower	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form)
24894	Clive Petts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) English as an additional language
18076	Howard Dodd	Team inspector	ICT (sixth form)
31779	Viv Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology
31160	Iona Towler-Evans	Team inspector	Art and design and theatre studies (sixth form)
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	Music
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
22849	Ron Catlow	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship Work-related learning (WRL)
19152	Richard Merryfield	Team inspector	History
32328	Neil Donkin	Team inspector	Religious education
11838	Derek Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages and German (sixth form)
28101	Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	Business education
18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	Business studies (sixth form)

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The Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form 5

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**The Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form is a very good school with some excellent features.** It has a very good sixth form. It gives very good value for money. Overall in the school, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form, students achieve very well. Attitudes, values and personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching and learning are very good overall. They are very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. They are very good in the sixth form. The curriculum is very good, offering diverse and innovative opportunities to meet the needs of students. Support and guidance for students are very good. Very good relationships are established with parents and the wider community. Good links are in place with other schools. Leadership and management overall are very good. Governors are very supportive, offer great expertise and are totally committed, with considerable determination to the further development of the school. However, although much improved since the last inspection, the provision for religious education and daily collective worship in the sixth form is still not sufficient to meet the statutory requirement in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

#### **THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE**

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- The 'behaviour for learning' initiative is having a major impact on students' attitudes, motivation and achievement.
- Standards at GCSE are rising at a rate well above the national trend.
- Overall achievement is best in geography, physical education and religious education.
- The provision for deployment and continued support and professional development of all staff is outstanding.
- Preparation for future employment and higher education is excellent.
- Performance and other data is exceptionally well managed and utilised in the increasingly advanced and sophisticated approach to self-evaluation.
- In some aspects of teaching and personal development, students, especially in the sixth form, are not encouraged enough to take a sufficiently active and independent approach to learning.

Since the last inspection the school has improved very well overall. Issues at the time have been addressed, except that religious education and daily act of collective worship still do not meet statutory requirements for sixth form. Teaching is utilising much more effective and diverse styles of learning. The use of resources and in particular ICT to enhance learning has improved greatly. A much wider range of vocational options in the curriculum is offered. Examination results overall in GCSE have been rising at a rate well above the national trends. Results in the sixth form are improving as the impact of very good teaching in Years 12 and 13 takes hold. Partnerships with other schools have been more firmly established through Specialist Technology College Status. Leadership and management, good at the last inspection, are now very good. Accommodation has improved considerably and provides a very good environment for learning.



## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**The achievement of students overall in the school is very good.** It is at least good in nearly all subjects. It is very good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form and it is good in Years 10 and 11. Achievement in lessons is greater in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11 because there is an immediate impact of the 'behaviour for learning' initiative as soon as students join the school. Achievement is very good overall in geography, physical education and religious education. It is also very good in mathematics, English, and music in Years 7 to 9. Overall standards seen are close to average in Years 7 to 9, reflecting very good achievement from entry. Standards currently seen in Years 10 and 11 are also average but they reflect good achievement from the starting points in Year 10 for these groups. Standards in the sixth form are average but represent very good achievement for many of these students. Results at GCSE were rising markedly up to 2003 but dipped in 2004 as a result of unusually poor attitudes of a significant group of students with particular social problems outside school.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	*GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	B	C	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	C	C	

*\*Based on average point scores at GCSE. Similar schools grade reflects comparison with schools with a similar social context and schools with students with a similar prior attainment in Year 9*

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

**Students' attitudes, values and personal qualities overall are very good.** There is a very good ethos for learning in the school. **Students' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Students behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning. The excellent procedures to promote good behaviour and prevent any form of harassment result in a harmonious learning environment. Punctuality to school and lessons is good and attendance overall is close to the national average.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The overall quality of education is very good.** Teaching and learning in the school are very good overall. They are very good in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. They are good overall in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is good overall and very good in the sixth form. Planning, relationships with students and providing challenging work to match students' needs are strong features, but greater opportunity needs to be given to enable more independent learning. The overall quality and range of courses in the curriculum are very good and provision for careers guidance is excellent. Extra-curricular activities and opportunities for enrichment are very good. There are excellent arrangements for care and welfare of students. Support and guidance are very good overall. Links with other schools are good and partnerships with parents and the community are very good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management of the school overall are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has an exceptionally determined focus on securing the highest quality of education for the students and has high expectations of staff. Support for continuing professional development of all staff is excellent. The leadership of key staff is very good. The governing body provides very good support and commitment. Financial management is excellent.

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

Parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school. They say that teaching and care are very good. There are a few concerns about behaviour and information they receive about progress. Students agree strongly that teaching is very good and that they are expected to work hard.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning by placing a greater emphasis on independent learning opportunities in the teaching.

And to meet statutory requirements

- Provide religious education and a daily act of collective worship for the sixth form in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

## THE SIXTH FORM AT THE MIRFIELD FREE GRAMMAR AND SIXTH FORM

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The sixth form is very good with excellent features.** It is cost effective. It is a larger than average sixth form which has maintained its popularity over recent years in an area where there is strong competition amongst post-16 providers. Although a significant number of higher attaining students from the main school are attracted to alternative high quality providers in the area the sixth form has broadened its curriculum to meet the needs and attract students from other 11-16 schools in the area. The sixth form has developed a deservedly good reputation in the area. Teaching in the sixth form is very good, ensuring that students make very good progress. Small numbers in many subjects make comparisons between year groups unreliable. Overall results in 2004 show that girls achieve similar standards to the national average but boys' results are slightly lower.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management within the sixth form are very good and enhanced by the excellent leadership and vision of the new director.
- Consistently high quality teaching encourages students to participate in lessons and learn very well, but opportunities for independent learning are too infrequent.
- A harmonious atmosphere is created through very good attitudes and relationships.
- Excellent support and guidance ensure students study the right subjects, understand how to improve and know how to progress in future education or careers.
- Governors and the leadership team have a determination to develop the sixth form to meet the need of local students by appropriate broadening of the curriculum.
- Whilst collaboration with other educational establishments is clearly identified within the development plan for the sixth form, it is at present in the very early stages.

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

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
Mathematics	Provision in <b>mathematics is good</b> . The combination of teachers' subject expertise and their harmonious relationships with students results in a productive ethos in lessons.
Science	Provision in <b>biology is very good</b> . Very good teaching results in students learning and achieving very well. They enjoy the subject. One lesson in <b>chemistry</b> was sampled; the teaching and learning seen were excellent.
Business	Provision in <b>business studies is very good</b> . Standards attained by current students are above average. Very good teaching has led to very good achievement. Leadership and management are very good.
Information and communication technology (ICT)	Provision in <b>ICT is good</b> . ICT is the most popular sixth form subject and students achieve well.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	<b>Physical education</b> and <b>leisure and recreation</b> were sampled. Teaching was good in physical education and very good in leisure and recreation.
Health and social care	One lesson in <b>health and social care</b> was sampled. Teaching and learning were good.

Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in <b>theatre studies is very good</b> . Students in Year 12 perform confidently and achieve very well because they receive very good teaching. Achievement in the <b>performing arts</b> course in Year 13 is good. One lesson in <b>media studies</b> and one in <b>music</b> were sampled. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in both.
Humanities	Provision in <b>history is good</b> . Students achieve well as a result of very good teaching although small numbers in Year 13 limit the range of teaching methods and discussion. Provision in <b>psychology is very good</b> . Very good teaching, leadership and management result in students achieving very well. Other subjects were sampled including <b>sociology</b> and <b>law</b> ; teaching and learning were good in sociology and excellent in law in the lessons seen.
English, languages and communication	Provision in <b>English language is very good</b> . Students achieve very well from a modest attainment base because they receive very good teaching. <b>English literature</b> was sampled. Teaching and learning were very good. Provision in <b>German is good</b> . Results in A-level in 2004 were above average for a small number of students. Good teaching seen in Year 13 enabled students to make satisfactory progress.
General programmes	Two lessons in <b>general studies</b> were observed. Teaching and learning were good but students lacked motivation.

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*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.*

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Care and welfare of students in the sixth form are excellent. Members of the pastoral team have very good relationships with the students and the opportunities for them to provide guidance through timetabled sessions and through individual guidance sessions are very good. The assessment systems ensure the students know how well they are doing and that tutors have very good data on which to base their guidance. The resultant provision for support, advice and guidance in the sixth form is excellent. Many of the students entering the sixth form are new to the school but the excellent induction process ensures that they study appropriate courses and that they are given the necessary support. The provision of information about careers and about further education opportunities is excellent.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management in the sixth form are very good. The new director of sixth form has excellent vision of how the sixth form should develop and provides excellent leadership within a well-structured and dedicated team. The day-to-day management of the sixth form is very good with each of the three deputy directors having clear, delegated responsibilities and specialist areas to develop. All staff are involved in decisions and kept fully informed about sixth form matters. Finances are very well managed and as a result the sixth form is cost effective.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

All the students spoken to were very supportive of the sixth form. They are very happy at the school. They say that teachers are experts in their subjects and provide challenging and demanding work. A number of students responded in the questionnaire to say that there is not an adult in the school who knows them well. However, it was found during the inspection that there is always someone with whom they would share any problem.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, standards reached by the end of Year 9 are average but students achieve very well from their entry into the school. Standards are also currently average in Year 11 but these students are achieving well from their entry into the GCSE courses. Standards are average in Year 13 of the sixth form but this represents very good achievement as the overall attainment on entry to the sixth form is well below average. This results from higher attaining students changing to neighbouring colleges for their sixth form studies and a significant number of lower attaining students being admitted from other schools.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is consistently at least good in nearly every subject.
- Achievement is very good overall in geography, religious education and physical education.
- Students achieve very well also in English, mathematics, and music in Years 7 to 9.
- Results in GCSE have risen at a rate well above the national trend as a result of the strength of leadership in the school.
- Performance in Year 9 tests was well above average compared with schools with similar prior attainment, indicating very good achievement.
- The percentage of students gaining five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE in 2004, whilst being in line with national average, was well below the average in schools with similar prior attainment.
- Students with special educational needs achieve very well throughout the school.

#### Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 9 in 2004, the overall performance of students, as measured by their average point score, was broadly in line with the national average. These students entered the school with overall attainment that was below the national average. The average point scores in English and mathematics were close to the national average and below average in science. The overall performance of Year 9 students in 2004 was well above average compared with the results in schools where the prior attainment in national tests was similar. In mathematics and science results were above average compared with the results in similar schools and in English they were well above. Since the last inspection the overall performance measured by the average point score has risen at a rate above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.0 (32.6)	33.3 (33.4)
Mathematics	34.7 (34.3)	35.5 (35.4)
Science	32.2 (32.0)	33.1 (33.6)

*There were 211 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. In the GCSE examinations in 2004, attainment was in line with the national average. Overall results were above the average in schools with a similar context. The percentage of students gaining five or more A\*-C grades was also in line with the national average. Results for girls were higher than for boys as is found nationally.
3. Results in GCSE have risen over recent years at a rate well above the national trend but dipped in 2004 because of the attitudes of a small but significant number of students with severe social problems. The governing body set challenging targets for 2004. These were exceeded in Year 9 in English and ICT, but not quite reached in mathematics and science. Targets for overall attainment in GCSE were exceeded.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004**

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	48 (49)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	35.0 (36.6)	34.9 (34.7)

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

4. In the work seen in lessons and in the evidence of students' writing, standards are average in Years 7 to 9. Achievement overall from Year 7 to 9, where standards on entry to the school were well below average for this year group, is very good. Achievement is very good in English, mathematics, geography, physical education, religious education and music.
5. Standards of students' work seen in Years 10 and 11 are broadly average. Achievement is good considering their standards on entry to Year 10. Significantly, it is consistently at least good in nearly all subjects at this stage, and very good in geography and physical education.
6. The overall level of achievement by students with special educational needs is well monitored. Students with special educational needs achieve very well overall, because their needs are very well known to their teachers and learning support assistants. Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9, with the very good support from learning assistants, and good in Years 10 and 11. Every Year 11 student on the special needs register in 2004 gained GCSE awards in both English and mathematics.
7. Gifted and talented students are identified on entry to the school, through rigorous testing. Because there are many opportunities for extension work and activities, their achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In music, drama and physical education, teachers determine who are talented as a result of directly assessing performance according to carefully prepared criteria. In all, about ten per cent of students are assessed to be either gifted or talented. In modern languages, mathematics and music, opportunities for early entry to GCSE enable gifted students to achieve highly. Talented sports' players perform at very high levels, within international, county and district teams. The majority of gifted and talented students achieve very well across the curriculum.

8. Most students with English as an additional language have at least good language fluency; they are able to answer questions and give explanations in lessons. Many have near native fluency and are approaching secure literacy. However, some students still require literacy support to improve their understanding and quality of writing in order to achieve higher GCSE grades. Very few students require dedicated language support in mainstream lessons. Taken as a whole, achievement is in line with other students. Value added data indicates that many students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds often achieve higher than other groups. There are also a small number of Pakistani boys whose aspirations and motivation are not high enough and this, coupled with their weaker literacy skills, hinders their achievement.
9. Overall, students have average literacy skills and use these to good effect in subjects. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. They have average levels of competence in numeracy and these have notably improved since the last inspection. Students use ICT well to enhance their learning.

## Sixth form

10. In 2004 the overall performance of students in GCE A/AS and advanced vocational certificate (VCE) examinations was close to the national average. Since attainment of these students on entry to the sixth form was well below average their achievement was very good. The results were similar in the previous year but reflected a good improvement over those in 2002. The results for girls in 2004, being above average, were considerably higher than for boys, whose performance was below average. The achievement of students from minority ethnic background was higher than the average for students overall. Attainment in subjects as measured by the students average point score at GCE A-level in 2004 varied from being close to the national average to being well below average. However, because subject groups are small in size statistical comparisons with national averages are not reliable. The more successful subjects in 2004, in terms of achievement from comparisons of examination results and predictions from GCSE attainment, were English, French, German, business studies and vocational ICT. The least successful were art, human biology, mathematics and music.

### **Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004**

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.4 (84.4)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	16.0 (16.7)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	234.4 (234.2)	265.2 (258.2)

*There were 87 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. The number on roll and average point score are provided by the school and as such are not yet validated.*

11. Standards of work seen during the inspection in the nine focus subjects are quite variable depending on the particular subject. They are average in the majority of these selected subjects but well above average in theatre studies, above average in business studies and below average in German. However, groups are small and standards reflect the individual abilities of students.
12. Overall, students in the sixth form achieve very well. From work seen in lessons and students' writing, achievement is very good in English, psychology, biology, theatre

studies and business studies. It is good in mathematics, ICT and history, and satisfactory in German.

13. The small number of students with special educational needs in the sixth form achieve very well, because they are very well supported on their courses and teachers know their needs well. Gifted and talented students achieve very well, with many opportunities provided for challenge. In mathematics, for example, students can take advanced level further mathematics.

### **Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)**

Attendance is broadly average and punctuality is good. Behaviour is very good reflecting very good attitudes and relationships. The personal development of students, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements, is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent 'behaviour for learning' policy is proving extremely effective in promoting a very good learning environment.
- Staff lead by example in the excellent promotion of the very good attitudes and relationships within the school.
- Students are happy and confident and are willing to identify any bullying that occurs, which is then dealt with rigorously.
- Students work harmoniously in an increasingly multi-cultural community.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is excellent.
- The school council, whilst being effective, does not maximise the opportunities for students to take responsibility for running meetings.

### **Commentary**

14. The ethos of the school is very good and students and staff work harmoniously together. They are very supportive of all aspects of the school. Attendance is close to the national average and the school monitors it very closely and has systems in place to reward good attendance. Any lateness is efficiently monitored and unexpected absence is followed up on the same day.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	1.0
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

15. After changes in the areas served by the school a few years ago behaviour was not as good as it had been. The school adopted an innovative 'behaviour for learning' policy, which has excellent features and is proving to be extremely effective in improving attitudes and behaviour. Based on rewarding the positives and staff leading by example, students are encouraged to respect the feelings of others and to ensure the learning environment is a productive one. Sanctions for not observing the very clear expectations are displayed in each classroom and consistently applied by the vast majority of teachers. Students spoken to during the inspection all identified that they



liked the system as it helped them learn in lessons. Behaviour seen both in lessons and around the school is very good. Only very occasionally are lessons affected by lower standards of behaviour and this is when the teaching is less demanding or the behaviour for learning policy is applied too late.

16. As part of the behaviour policy, a zero tolerance aspect has resulted in the number of exclusions being high, although the number is now rapidly falling as students realise the consequences of their actions. Students are very clear that any bullying in the school is not tolerated and if it occurs is dealt with quickly and well. The school has increasingly served an area of significant deprivation where the percentage of minority ethnic students is high. Many of the behavioural problems are with students from this area and the exclusions of students from Pakistani families are higher than other groups. However, the school has very clear policies to ensure all students are treated equally, and its approach to inclusion is very good.

**Ethnic background of students****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	977	109	1
White – Irish	2		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	27	7	
Mixed – White and Asian	9		
Mixed – Any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	59		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	158	54	2
Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian background	14	3	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7	5	
Black or Black British – African	1		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2		
Chinese	4		
Information not obtained	16	8	

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

17. Student attitudes are consistently very good. Students work very well in lessons and demonstrate very good relationships amongst themselves and with the staff. These qualities are encouraged by the behaviour for learning policy and result in a very harmonious and inclusive learning environment. Students willingly take on responsibilities in lessons and in the school. There is a very good school council, which students say is effective; it is at present led by a member of staff so that opportunities are missed for students to take responsibility for running meetings. Within the behaviour for learning policy there is an appeals process, which encourages students to reflect on their actions and express their views if they think the sanction was unfair.
18. The encouragement and challenge in lessons enable the great majority of students with special educational needs to participate fully. The teachers and special educational needs support team are particularly good at building up students' self-esteem and confidence. When things do go wrong, parents are very fully consulted and involved in tackling the situation.
19. Teachers supported by 'ethnic minority achievement grant' (EMAG) staff provide good personal, social and learning security to those students requiring mainstream support. Relationships between staff and students are very good. The EMAG team also share background and language needs of students with mainstream staff. Most minority ethnic students and those with English as an additional language display good attitudes to learning and are well integrated into the school community.

20. Students' spiritual awareness is good. Students gain self-knowledge, for example through their work in drama and through collective worship. Students respect the beliefs of others and through religious education have a good understanding of them. English and religious education departments plan well for spiritual development. Students are given opportunities to further develop spiritual development in other subject areas, for example art, music and drama. In art emphasis is placed upon students reflecting on the emotions of great artists in creating works of art.
21. Students' moral and social development is very good. The school's 'behaviour for learning' practices encourage students to take responsibility for their actions. Students show consideration to one another, relate well to adults and work well in a variety of social groupings. Students are self-confident and are developing very well as responsible members of the community.
22. Students' cultural development is good. In addition to the curriculum content the school enhances students' awareness through visits and trips to the local community as well as through visits to France and Germany. The ethnic mix within the school is changing and the harmonious environment that exists demonstrates that the awareness and understanding of the beliefs of others are dealt with very well. The school has a very clear policy to promote racial harmony and this has proved to be very successful.
23. Statutory requirements for collective worship are met in the main school through assemblies and tutorial time. Both are of high quality. They give a consistent moral message, allow time for reflection and contribute strongly to students' personal development. The school has developed 'Thought for the Week' materials as the basis for this provision. They are excellent and are based on religious values and on the equal value principle that underpins the school's ethos.

#### **SIXTH FORM**

24. Students in the sixth form register on arrival and departure using a 'swipe card' system. Registers are also taken in lessons. Both attendance and punctuality are good. Students' attitudes to learning are very good and their behaviour is excellent. Students have many opportunities for responsibility within the school such as head boy or head girl or as part of the very active sixth form council. Many students also support younger students in the main school. The weekly assembly and the tutorial sessions make a strong contribution to students' personal development. They allow time for reflection. They constitute acts of collective worship but are not provided daily and so do not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning overall in the school are very good. The quality and range of courses in the curriculum are very good, with very good extra-curricular activities and opportunities for enrichment. There are excellent arrangements for care and welfare of students. Support and guidance are very good. Partnerships with parents and the community are very good and good links are established with other schools.

## Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is very good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in the sixth form resulting in very good achievement in these sections of the school. It is good in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is thorough, and used well to support learning in all years of the main school. Assessment is very good in the sixth form.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning take place in geography, religious education and physical education.
- Teaching and learning are consistently at least good in every subject so that achievement overall in the school is very good and attitudes to learning are reinforced very effectively in all areas.
- Teachers have very secure expertise in their subjects and plan lessons very carefully to match students' needs.
- Management of behaviour in the classroom is very good enabled significantly by the behaviour for learning initiative.
- The quality of homework is satisfactory overall but is inconsistent between teachers and subjects.
- Very good relationships are established in the sixth form lessons, which encourage students' participation, but a minority of students are too passive in their approach to learning.

### Commentary

25. Whilst they are overall very good, teaching and learning are noticeably better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, and they are very good in the sixth form. Teaching is particularly effective in Years 7 to 9 because the behaviour for learning management policy has considerable impact on students when they are in the earlier years after joining the school. In the sixth form there is a very strong focus on raising students' expectations. Teachers make a very positive commitment to inclusion, supporting all students irrespective of their ability or background.
26. During the inspection, 158 lessons were observed. Approximately four-fifths were good or better and two-fifths were very good or excellent. In Years 7 to 9 nearly half were at least very good. Eight lessons were excellent and one lesson was unsatisfactory. Excellent lessons provided highly appropriate tasks to meet the needs of all students and methods of teaching captivated students' interest. Weaker aspects in some lessons, including one that was unsatisfactory, included tardiness in implementing the behaviour for learning policy in the management of students.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 158 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
8(5%)	57(36%)	62 (39%)	30 (19%)	1(1%)	0	0

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

27. Overall the consistency of at least good teaching across subjects, very effective support for all groups of students and teachers' high expectations of good behaviour

supported by a consistent management policy result in very effective teaching in the school. A significant strength in the teaching is the consistency with which teachers from all departments plan and prepare good lessons. This has a major impact on the overall quality of experience of all students because they develop a very purposeful approach to learning. Teaching and learning in geography, religious education and physical education are very good. They are very good also in English, mathematics and music in Years 7 to 9. Teachers in these subjects plan the lessons with great care and engage students in interesting activities, use resources very skilfully and manage behaviour very well so that the students are very well motivated. In many lessons, in a range of subjects, the pace of work is brisk, and the behaviour for learning techniques are rigorously applied so that students maintain their interest, but in some the variety of style of teaching is limited. Behaviour management in physical education is excellent.

28. In the majority of subjects, the teaching method supports the needs of all students well, so that achievement is generally good irrespective of ability or background. The use of homework is generally good and is used well to promote independence in learning and extended tasks. However, in a minority of cases homework is not of sufficient quality to be worthwhile. This was a concern expressed by a number of parents.
29. All students with special educational needs are very well integrated into lessons and withdrawal from class is minimal. A range of very good support strategies results in students being fully involved in their work. Consequently, the majority of students overall make very good progress in their lessons. Teachers are very aware of the needs of individuals because of the very well written individual education plans. The majority of teachers use these very well, particularly in English, mathematics and science where the subject-based teaching assistants are involved in lesson planning, including the adaptation of materials for students with special educational needs. However, the quality of planning to match the needs of students with special educational needs varies from teacher to teacher and teaching assistants do not always have time to plan before sessions begin.
30. Teaching of students with English as an additional language is good. Support staff are well-qualified. A part-time teacher and community social worker collaborate well with class teachers in lessons. As a consequence, most students needing support are approaching fluency and are able to undertake similar tasks to those of other learners. However, limited bilingual support prevents the useful sharing of language and culture in lessons. In addition, restricted first language use during support limits the development of enhanced understanding and extended support of the development of English.
31. Gifted and talented students' work is very well matched to their needs in most subjects, but the high quality work in modern foreign languages, physical education, art and drama is of particular note. Tasks are very well planned to extend the students' learning to higher levels. The animation workshops in art, the production work in drama and the talented players coaching their peers in physical education provide a high level challenge to which these students have responded exceptionally well.
32. Assessment is good overall. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in assessment procedures and practice. The school now makes

systematic use of a wide range of data from a variety of sources to analyse potential and set targets for improvement. Departments use cognitive ability test (CAT) data well to predict performance and use data well to suit particular purposes. Teachers mark work regularly using a common grading system, although inspection evidence showed that this was not always clearly understood by some younger students and the school is currently reviewing its marking policy.

33. Good progress is evident on the 'Assessment for Learning' strand of the National Strategy for Years 7 to 9, which places an emphasis upon familiarising students with assessment criteria in order that they might evaluate their own and their peers' work as a precursor to raising achievement. There is some inconsistency between departments, in the extent to which assessment is used. In modern languages assessment is excellent and students are regularly involved in evaluating their performance in lessons whereas in religious education and citizenship further work is required.
34. Assessment of students with special educational needs is good. Procedures enable good tracking of progress. Information in individual education plans is of high quality. All teachers are provided with information that identifies gifted and talented students, enabling them to plan activities to address the needs of these students more appropriately and to measure their performance against targets. There is however a lack of rigour in tracking the progress of these students across their whole curriculum on a regular basis.

## **SIXTH FORM**

35. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall in the sixth form. In most subjects students are very well motivated and demonstrate exemplary attitudes that are features of the sixth form teaching. Teachers have a strong command of their subjects and use this to extend students' learning. Teachers form very good relationships with students and encourage active participation. However, in some subjects such as psychology, business studies and biology the opportunity for independent study is too infrequent and students rely too much on the teacher.
36. Nine subjects were inspected in full as a focus in the sixth form. Teaching and learning in biology, business studies, theatre studies, psychology and English are very good and in the other focus subjects, mathematics, ICT, history and German, they are good. Other subjects were sampled and in general teaching in these was at least good. ICT is used well in many areas, for example in biology for modelling. Group sizes are small in some cases, for example in German, and this impacts on the opportunity for discussion.
37. Assessment in the sixth form is very good. Students are kept very well informed and receive regular and clear advice. There is a solid base of recorded data and students' progress is very well documented. Students' work is very well marked and help is given to students on how to improve. However, as in the main school there are inconsistencies between departments.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good in Years 7 to 11. There is a very good range of enrichment opportunities. The school has a good match of teachers to its needs. Resources and accommodation are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very broad and well-balanced curriculum has a very good impact on learning.
- Preparation of students for further study, employment and the responsibilities of living in a modern society is outstanding.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances and consolidates learning.
- Students' participation in sports is exceptional.
- Provision for religious education and daily collective worship in the sixth form does not meet statutory requirements.
- Very good accommodation makes a positive impact on students' attitudes and achievement.
- Students in the sixth form feel that courses offered meet their aspirations very well.

## **Commentary**

38. The school offers a very good range of subjects at all stages and all statutory requirements, including the daily act of collective worship, are met in Years 7 to 11. Quality is assured through regular review of provision at both school and departmental level. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is enhanced by separate lessons for drama, building students' self-esteem, and many students take two European

languages. Dance is fully incorporated into girls' physical education and boys can take it out of class. In modern languages and music in particular, the 50-minute lessons constrain teaching styles. Setting supports very good achievement, despite Year 7 lower sets entirely comprising of boys.

39. In Years 10 and 11 a very good range of GCSE and vocational courses meets the needs of students. Well-planned 'Taster' days in Year 9 help students to make informed choices for options in Year 10. Supplementing English, mathematics and science (the core subjects), one design and technology subject is taken by all students. While this limits the choice of option courses, every effort is taken to ensure that options meet students' aspirations. A very good range of science options enables students to work to their strengths. Students who are taking two languages to GCSE are extended by taking one early, in Year 10.
40. Citizenship, religious education and work-related learning (WRL) are very effectively built into the integrated studies course. ICT pervades the work of all departments well, as expected with the school's technology college status. The influence of science and design and technology in other subject areas is less well established. Some subject departments, notably ICT, art and music, liaise well with other educational institutions and feeder primary schools to enhance opportunities and raise standards.
41. Arrangements for careers guidance are excellent in both the main school and the sixth form. A very effective partnership with Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Service and Connexions ensures a high level of information and guidance at each stage of education, including option choices and careers interviews. Management within the school is excellent, and trained specialists teach all careers lessons. The Connexions learning resource centre has an exhaustive range of documentation as well as providing a drop-in centre for counselling. Particular advantage is taken of vocational options in Years 10 to 11. Innovative policies and practice in preparing students for later stages of education and employment are outstanding, especially for students who have difficulty coping with the usual certificated courses. Strong links to 'Connexions', housed in the school, complement excellent careers guidance.
42. Students with special educational needs have very good access to the full curriculum appropriate to their needs. The two sessions where students are withdrawn for specialist multi-sensory work are very well planned to limit disruption to other lessons. Where students have very specific problems with working within the mainstream curriculum, they are very well identified and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualification and alternative curriculum routes are extremely well used to address their needs. This programme is developing very well in Years 10 and 11 for a small number of students. Provision and planning ensure that the gifted and talented are given work, which stretches them intellectually in the majority of their lessons. Very good provision for these students in modern languages and physical education was observed.
43. Overall, students with English as an additional language are provided with good access to the curriculum. Particular advantage is taken of vocational options in Years 10 to 11. However, access to the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 could be further enhanced if the difference between students whose main need is to develop their language and consolidate literacy skills and those who have learning difficulties is clearer and better understood by all staff.



44. The school provides a wide range of activities for students outside of lessons. All subjects offer extended study, catch-up sessions and other support. Participation in sports is outstanding and in the arts it is good. A very good range of other activities, especially those linked to vocational and charitable action, complements provision impressively. Senior students play a significant role in coaching youngsters in many of these activities. Exchanges with schools in France and Germany, as well as residential trips, enrich modern languages provision. Urdu classes are successful. Visiting speakers, such as from the Salvation Army, the Police or the Brethren of the Community of the Resurrection, enliven integrated studies. Extra-curricular activities are very well co-ordinated and regular publications inform students, parents and staff of what is on offer.
45. The provision of extra-curricular opportunities for gifted and talented students is very good in music, citizenship, art, textiles and physical education. There is a wide range of activities available to interest and challenge the gifted and talented in the weekly programme available, but they need to take up the challenge for themselves. This was particularly the case in the citizenship 'magistrate's court' competition and in many of the physical education clubs.
46. Accommodation is very good and improved since the last inspection. This makes a very positive impact on students' learning in teaching areas, which are pleasant and well furnished. The learning resource centre and several ICT areas effectively promote independent learning and reading. The sports facilities are very good including a sports hall and an all-weather sports area. Year 11 now have their own common room. There are very good displays around the school celebrating students' work. Some laboratories in need of refurbishment and cramped rooms in design and technology and music restrict teaching styles. The premises are well maintained and graffiti and litter free.
47. The school has experienced and well-qualified teaching staff and very good support staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. Resources for learning are very good, with ICT equipment, including interactive whiteboards, well deployed in departments. The learning resource centre is well used to promote independent learning and there are several other areas where students can use computers.

## **SIXTH FORM**

48. A very good range of vocational and academic courses systematically builds on and extends the curriculum of the main school, helping students play to their strengths and aspirations. Where courses, such as further mathematics or music technology, cannot be timetabled, they are offered off timetable. The general studies course, which embraces religious education, does not command the respect of many students. Given technology college status, relatively few students take design and technology courses: the only A-level course running is product design. Considerable care is taken to ensure that students starting in the sixth form are matched to appropriate courses. However, the provision for religious education and a daily act of collective worship in the sixth form does not meet requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
49. The curriculum and enrichment programme in the sixth form are very good. A very good choice of enrichment activities, rotating termly, is offered and engages students

very well. Spanish GCSE is also offered. Almost half of the students commit themselves to leading activities for younger students, contributing strongly to the co-operative ethos of the school. Many students pursue their sporting activities to county level. There are very good links with local clubs, public bodies and academic institutions.

50. General studies is offered as an A-level or general education course and includes the study of morality, values and religious experience. It contributes to religious education. However, insufficient time is given for it to make satisfactory provision of religious education and so statutory requirements are not being met. Preparation for employment and higher education is excellent. Art and ICT have dedicated sixth form accommodation. The learning resource centre is well used. Arrangements for careers guidance are excellent in the sixth form as in the main school.
51. The sixth form students have their own social and private study area. There is also a refectory especially for use by the sixth form. There are separate art studios for the sixth form and ICT drop-in areas. Students also use the facilities of the main school as needed. The learning resource centre is well used by sixth formers. The school has a very good match of staff to its needs, and very good resources and accommodation.

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

The school takes excellent care of its students. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good in the main school and excellent in the sixth form. Systems to involve students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures for health and safety and for child protection are excellent.
- Induction systems for new students within the pyramid of schools are excellent.
- Guidance on careers is excellent.
- Pastoral system provides very good support and guidance.

### **Commentary**

52. The school has very good procedures in place for child protection and very good arrangements to ensure that all staff are aware of requirements. The child protection officer is experienced and named in procedures. The school works very well with external agencies to support those students who have additional needs and also has very good procedures to support the one student currently in the care of the local authority. The health and safety policy is exemplary, containing exactly how the principles are carried out and giving full details of responsibilities. All risk assessments and safety checks are carried out diligently. First day contact with parents for unexpected absence is carried out to confirm the safety of the student.
53. Welfare provision in the school is very good with supervisory and support staff available at all times. The trained first aid staff have good facilities within a dedicated medical room. The school has good links with external agencies to support the pastoral staff.

54. Tutors and heads of year are becoming increasingly involved in the academic monitoring of students. The very good relationships they have with students and the good opportunities for individual discussion as part of the review process ensure that there is very good support and guidance. The good assessment systems in the school provide a good database for tutors to access student information. In addition to the guidance from the tutor, students have other contact points including the learning mentors, the school nurse and the Connexions centre which has a drop-in facility every lunchtime. The target-setting process is well embedded and students are very clear on how well they are doing and what their targets are.
55. The majority of students in Year 7 join from one of the primary schools with which the school has an excellent partnership. There are very good curriculum links, which, together with the arrangements for prospective students to start visiting the school and getting to know the staff beginning in Year 5, contribute to what is an excellent induction process. Within the process there is a well-planned induction day and a good range of written information provided for both students and parents. The behaviour for learning policy has high expectations that all students will act maturely and with care for others, and has had a very positive effect on students.
56. The excellent links with the numerous feeder schools are highly appropriate for students with special educational needs and provide very good support as they enter from the schools. Positive working relationships between the teacher, teaching assistants and students ensure that they are very safe and secure in the school environment, particularly at break and lunchtimes. The additional needs support team is extremely effective in developing multi-agency support for students and its work is an exemplar for other schools to develop.
57. Personal support for students with English as an additional language is very good. The racial equality policy is in place and effectively protects the rights of all groups in school. The school monitors the progress of all minority ethnic students closely. This has resulted in the identification of both enhanced and under- performance of groups of students and individuals. Increasingly, English language issues are being thoroughly explored in the drive to raise standards.
58. Careers guidance is extremely well provided and uses external specialists as an integral part of the overall careers education provision. The Connexions office is well used by students who can visit it any lunchtime to consult staff. All students spoken to had made use of the advice facility and all Year 11 students had had an individual interview. There is excellent guidance given to students about their options in Year 10 and about the courses available to them in the sixth form.
59. Students are able to express their views through a series of year and school councils, which are well managed and also provide feedback opportunities during tutor periods. Students are aware that they are listened to and, for example, their views have influenced the introduction of a one-way system in the school corridors.

## **Sixth form**

60. The welfare systems available to the sixth form are common to the main school. Many of the students joining the sixth form are new to the school but they receive excellent

guidance as part of the induction process and this is reflected by the fact that very small numbers change courses. Students have excellent access to support and guidance from teachers and personal tutors who provide individual guidance. Students receive excellent careers advice including guidance on universities. The information they receive enables them to visit universities in plenty of time to make informed choices.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school has very good links with parents and the community. There are good links with other educational establishments.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An excellent partnership exists with the primary schools.
- Excellent communications are maintained between the school and parents.
- Very good information is provided for parents about the school and their child.
- The Specialist Technology College status makes a very good contribution to the community.
- Students benefit from very good links with industry.
- The school has very good links with many other schools in the area.

### **Commentary**

61. Responses to the parents' questionnaires and from the parents' meeting indicate that parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school. They are extremely pleased with the high expectations staff have of students, the induction arrangements and the good teaching. Many parents say that their children like school and are encouraged to become mature people. The only areas where some have concerns are about the behaviour of some students, the amount of homework, the degree of consultation with them and the amount of information they receive about progress. A number of parents made individual comments about the school, which were considered by the inspection team and contribute to the findings of the report.
62. The information provided for parents is very good and forms part of an excellent communications system with parents. There is termly contact with parents through progress reports and an annual report. There are also regular newsletters sent home and there is a good website for parents to access. The governors' annual report and the prospectus are very good informative documents which fully meet their statutory requirements. All parents have at least one parents' meeting a year with extra ones for new parents and at transition stages. As part of the behaviour for learning system there are frequent phone calls and letters to parents praising their child or keeping them informed of any concerns. It is school policy to involve parents at an early stage to work with them over any issues. As part of involving parents staff at all levels are encouraged to telephone parents.
63. The school provides a number of evening sessions for parents to help them assist their child to learn and also consults them well about the school. Consultation is done through individual contact and also through a governors' consultation committee

questionnaire. The key document in communications is the planner, which is very well used by parents and teachers.

64. The school has technology college status and has developed strong links with the community. As well as excellent links with primary schools, which benefit greatly from technical and staffing support, there are links with other establishments such as sharing expertise with another local secondary school and supporting students at a nearby special school. The school has hosted events such as European Languages Day and training days involving other schools within the local education authority area. The school sends a few students to other establishments as part of an alternative curriculum but this is at present limited. Support is also provided for local nurseries. Local universities are involved with the school, for example by providing speakers and presenting prizes.
65. There are very good links with industry which support the curriculum through such projects as joint design or marketing projects. All students have the opportunity for work experience and the school hosts an annual enterprise/industry day. Other links include visits and visitors from industry to talk about the practical aspects of science or about health and safety.

### **Sixth form**

66. Students are benefiting greatly from the partnerships associated with the main school. Whilst the development plan for the sixth form, supported by the vision of both the headteacher and the director of the sixth form, identifies a commitment to broaden the curriculum through collaboration this is at the early stages as the director of sixth form has only recently been appointed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Leadership by all key staff including heads of department is very good and highly focused on raising students' achievement. Governance is very good. Governors provide a very good level of support to the school and have been instrumental in strategic planning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent leadership of the headteacher reflects a very clear vision and high aspirations for the development of the school.
- Leadership group members are highly focused on raising the quality of education.
- Leadership and management of departments are very good overall ensuring very strong focus on improvement.
- The arrangements for staff professional development are excellent.
- EMAG staff have a limited role in strategic planning for minority ethnic groups.

### **Commentary**

67. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school. Her energy and relentless determination to raise achievement and the quality of education are exceptional. An important feature of the

headteacher's leadership is the commitment to ensure effective teams are established. The senior staff provide very good support to the headteacher and have very clear goals in their specific responsibilities. The quality of strategic planning is excellent. Senior leaders are highly respected for their exemplary commitment and provide excellent role models to other staff and students. The leadership of heads of department is very good overall. Leadership in mathematics, design and technology, geography, modern languages, physical education, business studies, theatre studies, psychology and religious education is very good.

68. Governance of the school is very good. Governors are highly committed to support and are led by an excellent chair. Governors, as a group, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide very good support to the senior staff. They have been actively involved in the significant developments at the school, for example the successful bid for specialist technology college status. The governors have ensured that statutory requirements are met in the majority of aspects, including daily act of collective worship in the main school. However, religious education and collective worship are not provided adequately for sixth form students.
69. Management of the school is very good. The leadership group are highly focused on self-evaluation and use performance and other data extremely rigorously to monitor the effectiveness of the school against national expectations. Monitoring of the teaching and learning is sophisticated, rigorous and highly effective. It is used to identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals' teaching and the impact on learning. The importance of ensuring that the gifted and talented students achieve at the higher levels is well understood by the leadership team. There is a drive to ensure that curriculum provision fully extends each child to his or her full potential. Recruitment and retention of staff have been excellently managed and are underpinned by the very good support for new staff. Workforce remodelling is very well established and has been a key aspect of efficient staff deployment for several years.
70. Leadership and management of the small EMAG team are good. There is a clear push to continue to strengthen both the vision and practice for the benefit of students with English as an additional language. The school is working very hard to consolidate good quality links with the community and its leaders to ensure that unsettling events outside of school have little impact on the daily life of the school. However, EMAG staff do not play a full enough strategic role in school, for example providing a detailed insight on the needs of more advanced learners to ensure that they work at their own intellectual level.
71. The arrangements for staff professional development are outstanding. The use of staff development to improve the quality of education for all students permeates every feature of the school and is contributing significantly to improving standards. The leadership and management of the monitoring of teaching and learning, performance management, continuous professional development and induction are excellent. Guidelines and training for the effective monitoring of teaching and learning are excellent.
72. Performance management arrangements are in place for all staff and are extremely effective. The latest audit for the renewal of Investors in People status identified no areas for improvement. The continual professional development of staff follows a whole-school training plan, which is tightly linked to the school development plan. School training days are of very high quality and concentrate on current initiatives that are designed to improve teaching and learning. Induction programmes for all staff are

thorough and include weekly after-school training sessions. Induction arrangements ensure that all staff new to the school or to a particular post receive the necessary support, so that they are fully effective in their roles as soon as possible. The school has not focused on teacher training for the last few years. However, five trainees commenced their teacher training last term and five started in the Spring Term. Well-considered planning has taken place in conjunction with Bradford College to ensure that the students have access to high quality training.

73. The school's finances are totally linked to planned developments. Governors scrutinise the annual budget in detail. Expenditure is closely monitored. The carried forward contingency fund is relatively high because governors have identified significant equipment costs in terms of school transport and ICT. The contingency in the previous year was low. Good use is made of comparative data when evaluating the school's patterns of expenditure and ensuring best value. The sixth form is cost effective since staffing costs are met entirely out of income.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4888228	Balance from previous year	81756
Total expenditure	4723079	Balance carried forward to the next	246905
Expenditure per student	3692		

## Sixth form

74. The leadership and management in the sixth form are very good. The director of sixth form has excellent clarity of vision for the sustained growth and development of the sixth form. He provides excellent leadership. The day-to-day management of the sixth form is very good with staff having clear, delegated responsibilities. Teachers are urged to be very focused on raising achievement. Finances are very well managed and as a result the sixth form is cost effective. Staff professional development in the sixth form is excellent. It is very effective in improving the rigour of self-evaluation and the quality of teaching and learning.

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### Work-related learning (WRL)

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made an audit of its work to assess whether it meets statutory requirements prior to implementation.
- Work-related learning has been well co-ordinated since its inception.
- The school provides ready access to vocational subjects for its students.
- The work experience programme is of very good quality.
- The sixth form are given opportunities both for vocational subjects and for work shadowing.
- The school does not sufficiently explore links with other schools.

## Commentary

75. The school carried out an audit of WRL to assess what it was doing and see what additions it needed to make to meet statutory requirements. WRL has been very well co-ordinated to ensure that it makes a contribution to and is supported by other parts of the curriculum. The work experience programme is of very good quality, giving students a direct experience of the world of work. The school endeavours to provide students within its citizenship programme with an activity that increases their enterprise and employability. This is further enhanced by an enterprise day held within school.
76. While subjects contribute to WRL in varying degrees, modern foreign languages provides a vocational language course for some students and business studies encourages enterprising activities. The design and technology department organises several visits to industrial locations and in vocational design and technology students have an opportunity to take part in a developing vocational unit award scheme. Opportunity has been created for some students to take vocational-related subjects such as science, technology, business. Provision is made for students at risk of failing to attend school. This allows access to core subjects, extended work experience and work related courses provided by external agencies. The school plans industrial days for Year 10 with the help of the Industrial Society and a work life skills day and an extension of mini-enterprises.
77. Preparation for employment and higher education is an excellent feature of the school and is recognised both inside and outside as being exemplary. Careers guidance is a strong component and Connexions support is extensive. Many opportunities are created to enhance students' knowledge of the world of work and links with industry are wide.
78. In the sixth form the school offers intermediate level general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses in ICT, business education and health and social care and advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE) in leisure and recreation, ICT, business and health and social care. Furthermore, students have access to the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.



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

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

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching in Years 7 to 9.
- Successful implementation of the National Strategy has helped to raise standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Good classroom relationships and students' very positive attitudes contribute to their good learning.
- Some higher attaining students are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Middle and lower sets do not have enough practice for extended writing and students' writing is not developed consistently in other subjects.
- Good leadership has created a cohesive, committed team of teachers.

##### **Commentary**

79. Results in the Year 9 tests in 2004 were average, but well above those in similar schools, an improvement on those in 2003. Results overall have risen since 1999 at a greater rate than the national trend. Students perform better in English than in mathematics or science. Girls perform slightly better than boys. Standards seen during the inspection confirmed this picture. Many students are articulate, prepared to talk at length. In Year 9, many students produce fluent, mature writing, showing competent analytical skills and use of literary vocabulary. Few examples of extended writing, however, are seen in the work of middle and lower sets.
80. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are also in line with national expectations. GCSE results in English in 2004 were average. The GCSE English literature results were also average in 2003, but fell in 2004, an atypical result caused by the underachievement in coursework of a small group of disaffected students. Work seen during the inspection was better than the literature results suggest. Students show a genuine response to texts, and considerable insight into character and theme. They also produce some very good analytical work in media, with sophisticated use of specialist terminology. Weaker students, whose general understanding is often good, lower their standards by poor presentation, lack of paragraphing and careless spelling and punctuation.
81. Overall achievement in Year 7 to 9 is very good. It is good in Years 10 and 11. Students respond positively to thorough, well-planned teaching and to a climate in which they are expected to work hard. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers because they receive good flexible support in class and skilled teaching appropriate to their needs. Those who have English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. Gifted and talented students achieve as well as other students, although there is limited special provision for them.

82. Boys' attainment in both Year 9 tests and GCSE was lower than for girls but the gap between their results was less than the national one, and has narrowed considerably since 1998. There is no significant variation in the work of boys and girls seen in class.
83. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 7 to 9 enabling students to learn very well in these years. It is good in Years 10 and 11. The successful implementation of the National Strategy has improved teachers' planning and ensures that lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and that there is a clear focus on learning. This has helped to raise standards in Years 7 to 9, and has had a favourable impact on boys' achievements. Classroom management is usually very good and reflects the effectiveness of the behaviour for learning policy, especially in Years 7 to 9. Teachers make their expectations for behaviour very clear, and quietly but firmly ensure that classrooms are orderly, maintaining good-humoured relationships at the same time. Most questioning is skilled and used to drive learning, but occasionally teachers fail to engage all in the class and do not challenge the more able. Some teaching in Years 10 and 11 does not encourage students to take enough responsibility for their own learning. Detailed marking, linked to the drafting process, leads to improvements in the quality of writing.
84. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is a very good role model and has created in a relatively short time a team of committed teachers with a co-operative approach. The monitoring of students' coursework has been strengthened. Appropriate priorities for development, such as the promotion of independent learning, have been identified. Issues from the previous inspection have been resolved, and improvement is good.

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

85. Standards of literacy are in line with expectations, and support student achievement well in all subjects. Students show particular strengths in speaking and listening. Their reading comprehension is at least satisfactory and information retrieval skills are good in subjects such as design and technology. There is not a consistent approach to the encouragement of higher standards of writing. In some subjects, such as art and drama, writing frames are provided to help students, but few subjects, apart from English, offer opportunities for students to write at length.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving throughout Years 7 to 11. Well below average results in French at GCSE in 2004 were not typical and were influenced by discontinuity in staffing.
- Effective matching of work to individual needs enables all students to achieve well.
- Assessment procedures are excellent and information is used very effectively to set targets and amend provision.
- Leadership and management are very good. A committed team of teachers responds effectively to enthusiastic and imaginative direction.

- Students' generally positive attitudes support their learning. However, the negative attitudes of a minority impede their progress.

## **COMMENTARY**

86. Results in French at GCSE were average in 2003 but declined in 2004 to be well below average. This reflected deterioration in attitudes in response to discontinuity in staffing. Girls did better than boys, by less than the national difference. A small number of candidates taking German achieved average results. There were very few high grades in either language.
87. Students' standards are above expectations by the end of Year 9 and their achievement from entry to the school is good. Higher attainers learn both French and German. They begin to write accurate accounts and descriptions including opinions and varied tenses. Average attainers also write extensively, with less accuracy. Very effective support and choice of tasks enable lower attainers, including those with special educational needs, to communicate at an acceptable level. Most students recall vocabulary sufficiently well to understand much of what they hear and read. Students are often less confident in oral class work, especially in producing language from memory. Because work is very effectively adapted for individual needs, all students achieve well, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or prior attainment.
88. By the end of Year 11, standards seen are broadly average, and much improved compared to 2004 GCSE results, reflecting new stability in staffing and improved attitudes. This indicates good achievement in Years 10 and 11. All students continue to learn French, and a small number also take German. The improvement derives partly from the decision to change GCSE courses, with the structure of written coursework enabling all students to display their knowledge at their own level. Many students show more confidence in speaking, showing the benefit of work with foreign languages assistants. Comprehension skills are generally satisfactory. In Year 10, some lower attaining students have embarked on a suitable ASDAN course, further indicating how well work is matched to individual needs and abilities.
89. Teaching and learning are good. There is some very good teaching in Years 7 and 10, and none that is unsatisfactory. Outstanding knowledge and application of National Curriculum and GCSE criteria, allied to excellent assessment procedures, including very constructive marking, help students to understand the purpose of learning and their progress towards their targets. Consequently their attitudes have improved, and this helps them to learn. There is much fun in learning, and teachers make effective use of competitive activities and ICT, which improves boys' performance. Planning is very effective. However, the use of ICT by students to accelerate their acquisition and understanding of new language is at an early stage of development. Classroom management is very good. Strong relationships underpin learning. However, a minority of students make less progress than they should because they are unwilling to participate. Homework is generally well used and, together with role-play and coursework, contributes through open-ended tasks to students being increasingly successful as independent learners.
90. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department conveys her enthusiasm to both teachers and students and has created a very cohesive team, all of whom contribute to outstanding review and planning. Excellent assessment,

monitoring and self-evaluation procedures underpin much innovative practice to improve aspects of provision, for example in fast-tracking gifted linguists in Year 9 with a view to early entry at GCSE, and in changing GCSE courses. Staffing, accommodation and resources support learning very well. Staff commitment is evident in the provision of residential visits and exchanges with France and Germany, and time spent outside the school day to provide extra courses and revision sessions. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection, with very good capacity for further improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The leadership of the head of department provides the subject with clear educational direction and a shared commitment to raising standards amongst the team of mathematics teachers.
- Teachers have high expectations of students' work and behaviour, and plan lessons with great care.
- Some lower and middle attaining students have difficulty with retaining their knowledge and do not set out their written work well enough.
- There is mutual respect and very good relationships between teachers and students and this results in a harmonious and productive atmosphere in lessons.
- Assessment of students' work is not sufficiently frequent, especially in Years 10 and 11, to speedily identify any underachievement.

### **COMMENTARY**

91. In 2004, results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 were average compared to the overall national picture and in line with students' prior attainment. The trend of improvement is similar to that seen nationally and there was little difference in the performance of boys and girls. The 2004 GCSE results were below the national average and students performed at least as well in mathematics as in their other subjects. Boys' results were slightly higher than girls' results and every Year 11 student obtained a grade within the A\*-F grade range. Although there was a dip in results in 2004 the upward trend in results is well above that seen nationally.
92. Current standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are above the national average. This indicates very good levels of achievement. This very good achievement is because of improved and developing schemes of work and a wider and more effective range of teaching and learning strategies. Students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress and achieve well. Analysis of students' written work and observation in lessons indicates an increase in the number of students on track to obtain GCSE grades A\*-C. Overall there are no discernible differences in the attainment of boys and girls and between those from minority ethnic groups. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers.

93. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work and this is reflected in the very good relationships between teachers and students. As a result lessons are conducted in a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. Learning with understanding is fostered in most lessons because teachers involve students in the application of their prior learning to the investigation of new ideas. Thorough preparation and planning, which include the promotion of correct vocabulary, are characteristics of all lessons so that work is well matched to individual needs. The use of ICT resources as a teaching aid is good and supports students' learning. The combination of all these factors enables students to achieve at least well, have a positive attitude to the subject and sustain good levels of interest and concentration.
94. In a minority of lessons, mainly in Years 10 and 11, there is limited involvement of students during questions and answers so that learning is too passive. This difference mirrors the variable degree of successful implementation of national strategies for enhancing teaching and learning. Lower and middle attaining students have difficulty with retaining their learning and this is further exacerbated by a lack of structure in the setting out in written work.
95. Assessment procedures and performance data are used well to set targets for individual students. However, the quality of marking and grading students' work varies and though students know their targets the period between recorded assessments is too long to readily track instances of underachievement.
96. The leadership of the department, by example and enthusiasm, is very good. There is a clear sense of direction and strong leadership has engendered a shared commitment to raising standards among the team of mathematics teachers. Appropriate targets and plans are in place and thorough evaluation of performance is used effectively to identify strengths and areas for development. The monitoring of day-to-day provision is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency in provision. The very good quality of resources and accommodation has a positive impact on standards and ethos. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

97. Students' competence in mathematics and its contribution to other subjects of the curriculum are average and have improved since the previous inspection. Except for some weaknesses in graphical work in history, there are no instances of weaknesses in mathematics impeding progress in other subjects. In some subjects mathematical competency significantly contributes to attainment. For example, mathematical skills make a good contribution to standards in ICT, art and physical education. Overall, although teacher training has heightened awareness of the potential for using mathematical skills across the curriculum, the promotion of these skills does not have a high profile in every subject.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and management are helping to raise standards.
- Teachers insist on good standards of behaviour.
- There is good curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching styles have been broadened but there is insufficient open-ended, extended investigative work, independent work, problem-solving activities and use of extended writing.
- Opportunities are not always found to provide higher levels of challenge.

## **Commentary**

98. Results in Year 9 were below average in 2004 but were above those in similar schools. Overall GCSE results in 2004 were average and were in line with those in similar schools. In double award science students' results were significantly higher than in most of their other subjects. In the three separate sciences students' achievement was in line with that in their other subjects.
99. Standards currently seen in Year 9 are average. From entry to the school this represents very good achievement. Standards in Year 11 are average, for example in the evidence of students' understanding of the genetics of Huntington's chorea and calculations involving moles and Boyle's Law. Students learn well and make good progress throughout the school. Their achievement over the time in school is good. Students with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented show good achievement because materials and tasks are tailored to the need. Those with English as an additional language and from different ethnic groups also show good achievement as a result of the good support.
100. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well structured and planned, with a variety of activity. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, usually with clear, demanding time-scales. The school's behaviour code is implemented effectively and there are good relationships, which promote a positive working environment. Students respond well, working independently or collaboratively, making good progress.

Teacher explanation is clear and questioning is used well to check students' understanding and in some cases to make them predict or explain experimental results using theory. There is a core of very good and sometimes excellent teaching. For example, in a lesson with a middle Year 9 set students interest was engaged with a quick starter activity relating to key words for the topic and followed up with them calculating speeds from distance/time information. They then carried out a practical activity to find the effect of the slope of a ramp on the speed of a trolley. The lesson was concluded with a brisk quiz involving calculations of speed, distance and time.

101. Whilst teaching is never less than satisfactory, in some weaker lessons opportunities are not taken to provide higher levels of challenge. For example, in some practical and written work, some parts of the lesson lack pace and some teaching is too teacher dominated. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language.
102. Whilst there is an increasing range of teaching and learning activities there is insufficient open-ended, extended investigative work, independent work, problem-solving activities and use of extended writing. The 50-minute period is tight on time for practical science and the conclusion of some lessons was rather rushed. Students' progress is tracked thoroughly and a new 'traffic-light' system is about to be introduced to highlight students who are underachieving. There are good systems in place to inform parents about good work, as well as students who are not performing at the expected level. Yearly targets are set in the lower school and students are aware of these. Good progress has been made in implementing new assessment practices. Students are increasingly being made aware of criteria for different levels of performance. Work is regularly marked using the school system, but does not yet consistently give students specific feedback on how to improve. Little evidence was seen of the use of more open questioning where students articulate their ideas at greater length.
103. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear emphasis upon developing teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There are good procedures in place for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, with professional development feedback to staff. There is also a system of peer observation. Schemes of work are being revised to take account of the National Strategy for Science and assessment procedures have been improved. There is good curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11 with three separate sciences (triple award), double award science and a vocational GCSE (applied science) being offered. The applied course is proving motivating for the lower attainers. The proportion of higher A/A\* grades obtained by triple award students in 2004 was lower than nationally. The time for teaching triple award is very demanding as the time allocation is the same as for double award.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Over the last five years, GCSE results have been consistently above average with good achievement across all ability groups.
- The good and very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 is leading to improved achievement.
- Expectations of attitude to learning for a small number of immature students in Years 7 and 8 need to be higher.
- Insufficient use is made of teaching strategies to probe understanding and exploit skills.
- Innovative curriculum initiatives in collaboration with feeder schools are having a positive impact on ICT standards on entry to the school.
- Excellent technical support successfully contributes to the development of ICT capability.
- Students' ICT skills are applied effectively in other subjects.

## Commentary

104. GCSE results in 2003 GCSE were well above average with over half of students gaining A\* to B. However, 2004 applied GCSE results revealed a fall although standards remained above average. Girls performed better than boys but there is no clear trend over time.
105. All students study ICT throughout the school. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are average. This represents good achievement as students enter school with a below average range of skills. By the end of Year 9 students use word processing and software packages to present databases, use spreadsheets to process information and are confident users of the Internet. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are above average and achievement continues to be good. Minority ethnic students achieve as well as other students as do students with special needs. All students confidently explore and develop ideas, and exchange, share and present information using a wide range of ICT tools.
106. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and also in Years 10 and 11. Following a year of very unsettled staffing, a committed team of specialist teachers and talented support staff, are successfully using their expertise to extend student understanding and skills. This is leading to good achievement in all years. Explanations and demonstrations are clear and there is a good match of task to student need. In very good lessons, students are challenged to explore, speculate and develop ideas using ICT tools. However, teachers' expectations of a small number of immature students, mainly boys in Years 7 and 8, are not high enough. Insufficient use is made of teaching methods and techniques to challenge, probe and fully exploit understanding and skills of students of all abilities. Very good opportunities are provided for students to use facilities outside of lessons.
107. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear vision for improvement. Drive and determination are demonstrated in the support of a team of specialist staff to consolidate and further raise standards. Effective implementation of the national strategy, together with innovative collaborative work with the main feeder primary schools, is raising standards in Years 6 and 7. Self-evaluation is very well used to inform planning, although the focus on priorities that can raise standards more quickly is not sharp enough.



108. Good improvement has been realised since the last inspection. Accommodation has been systematically refurbished to a very good standard and a very good range of up-to-date hardware and software is provided for student use.

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

109. Competence in using ICT across the curriculum is good. A very good level of equipment and software is provided in all subject areas, including interactive whiteboards and projectors. Students successfully use ICT to enhance their work and effectively explore, develop and interpret information. Interactive whiteboards are well used throughout the school to present information to students. Very good access is provided to facilities through a school-based online booking system. The Internet is well and appropriately used by students and there is a very effective system in place for the monitoring of Internet use in all locations. ICT makes a significant contribution to the learning of the gifted and talented, students with special educational needs and students with English as an additional language.
110. Specialist software and applications are used in a range of subject areas; for example, in sport very good use is made of software to analyse video recordings and improve performance. Students are provided with very good access to a range of resources before and after school. Competence in ICT enables most students to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. All staff are equipped with a laptop, memory stick, student report writing software and e-learning access. In addition, all curriculum areas have a dedicated professional base for Internet access and electronic home/school links are provided. As a consequence, ICT makes a significant contribution to the promotion of a technological and vocational culture in school.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in response to some very good teaching.
- Innovative teaching styles inspire and enthuse students.
- Fieldwork enhances what is learnt in the classroom.
- Very positive attitudes contribute well to student learning.
- Application of the school's behaviour for learning policy can be too late in a few lessons.
- The quality of marking in Years 10 and 11 is not always sufficient to inform students how to improve.

#### COMMENTARY

111. In 2004, the percentage of students gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE was above the national average. The boys' results were marginally higher than those of the girls and students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieved results generally higher than other students.
112. In the work seen during the inspection, standards in Year 9 are above national averages. Students of all abilities achieve very well and demonstrate in their work a good understanding of the geographical processes and the impact on the environment. Students engaged confidently when there were practical activities and were able as a consequence to complete their diagrams and writing well; they also responded similarly to songs and the use of a poem to demonstrate the reasons behind migration. This form of stimulation was a key factor in improving understanding and student writing about their ideas. The use of key words was constantly emphasised, building their geographical vocabulary. In the work seen, students are working above national averages in Years 7 to 9. This represents very good achievement when compared with the attainment on entry to the school. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are above average and achievement of these students is very good from entry to the course. Students make very good progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. Students are able to link very well previous work on population with geographic theories on the impact of food shortages. Students speak and listen well using their thinking skills to advantage in discussions between themselves and with their teacher.
113. Students with special educational needs make very good progress towards their targets particularly when supported. Many students who speak English as an additional language are making equally good progress but there are a few whose progress is slower. The achievement of both boys and girls is very good. The gifted and talented make good progress but would benefit from a more refined method of identification.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. The lessons generally have very clear learning objectives, which are shared with students. Very good ranges of stimulating activities engage students' thinking and help with their learning. Questioning is skilful and teachers encourage extended answers with students being rewarded by good oral assessment. Teachers apply the 'behaviour for learning' policy well to maintain very good attitudes and behaviour but on occasions this application is left too late. The use of ICT, for example the use of computers by students with their research work and the use of interactive whiteboards by teachers, is advancing quickly. The use of 'assessment for learning', an initiative within the National Strategy for Years 7 to 9, is beginning to impact although there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking to inform students on how they can improve further. Students work very well in lessons and benefit from the opportunities given to take some responsibility for their learning.
115. Subject leadership and management are very good. The vision and direction are evident as is the desire to maintain standards while a colleague is absent. Schemes of work have been regularly reviewed and the use of fieldwork extends what is learnt in the classroom. Monitoring is in place and is having considerable effect in raising standards. The monitoring of examination data is good as is self-evaluation. The subject has dealt with the key issues mentioned in the last report and improvement since then has been very good.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' source analysis and evaluation skills are unusually well developed and they achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- GCSE results have been above average in recent years and were well above in 2004.
- Work set is sometimes insufficiently closely matched to students' ability levels to enable them to realise their full potential and develop independence in their learning.
- Marking is not always comprehensive enough to give students clearer targets for improvement and spelling mistakes are not rigorously corrected.
- Positive attitudes and very good behaviour make a significant contribution to learning.

## **Commentary**

116. In the 2004 GCSE examinations almost four-fifths of candidates gained A\*-C grades, well above the national average and reflecting a mainly rising trend since the last inspection.
117. Students' attainment in history on entry to the school is below average and they achieve well to reach standards in line with expectations by Year 9. There is no significant variation in the achievement of students of different attainment levels, or of those with special educational needs or English as an additional language because support is appropriately given. Students acquire well-developed skills of source analysis and evaluation and they are confident in explaining conflicting interpretations of historical figures such as Oliver Cromwell.

118. In Year 11 standards of work seen during inspection are in line with expectations and achievement is good. Students express themselves clearly and present their work well although lower attaining students are sometimes insufficiently precise in their use of subject-specific terminology. Evaluation of sources with regard to provenance is firmly embedded. Higher attaining students complete some outstanding extended writing on challenging topics such as "Why the 1960s has given rise to such conflicting interpretations". A significant role in their good achievement is clearly played by students' very good behaviour and their positive attitudes.
119. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, detailed planning, careful preparation and a wide range of materials enable students to learn very well. Students clearly benefit from the consistent approach to behaviour management adopted by all teachers and respond accordingly. Good provision is made to support those with special educational needs but tasks are not always matched well enough to students' varying abilities to ensure that all reach their potential. Progress is less good when the pace and nature of the occasional lesson preclude students being active participants thereby reducing their motivation and undermining their independence in their learning. Books are marked regularly but factual and spelling errors are sometimes overlooked and diagnostic comment on work does not always help students to identify scope for improvement.
120. Leadership and management are good. The new head of department only joined the school in January but has already had an impact in terms of her vision for future development and progress on revising schemes of work. She is well supported by a strong team of teachers who collaborate closely for the benefit of students. In view of several changes of leadership since the last inspection the school has done well to maintain standards and improvement has been satisfactory.

## **Religious education**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Very good teaching engages students and their learning is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes to religious education.
- Assessment procedures inform students of their levels but do not indicate sufficiently what they need to do to improve them.
- Students are often too dependent on teachers for their learning.

## **Commentary**

121. Standards seen at the start of Year 7 are well below expectations and students achieve very well to reach the standard expected in Year 9. Almost all students take the short course GCSE at the end of Year 11 and results in 2004 were above the national average. In Years 10 and 11, standards seen are above average and these students are achieving very well from their starting point in Year 10.
122. Teaching and learning overall are very good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to engage students and to

appeal to their preferred learning styles. Teachers are skilful in questioning and in providing knowledge. They create an atmosphere where students confidently take part in oral work. This enhances their knowledge and understanding. In Years 10 and 11, teachers provide three levels of workbook to ensure that students have work appropriate to their attainment. This helps students to achieve very well. However, they are more dependent on their teachers than they need be. The positive approach by teachers is mirrored by the positive attitudes of the students. Students engage willingly in the activities set for them. They enjoy their lessons and work actively on the tasks set and, as a consequence, their learning is very good.

123. The leadership and management of religious education are very good. The head of department has a clear vision and has introduced the full GCSE course in Year 9 for all students. She has built a strong team and her documentation supports teachers. She monitors the team's work through lesson observation and the analysis of standards. This has led to excellent departmental self-evaluation and a focused development plan. The department uses high quality assessment materials well to ensure that students know their level of attainment. As yet, students do not have enough information to know what they need to do to improve that level.
124. Religious education makes a very good contribution to students' personal development. It provides a moral message, which staff exemplifies and explains consistently. Students relate very well to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is very good. Teachers provide opportunity to consider the awe and wonder of creation. For example, in one lesson, students talked about the miracle of a baby being born.
125. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Provision is now very good and meets statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11. The headteacher and senior team have given full support to the department in achieving this improvement.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership enables a cohesive team approach to the subject.
- Good teaching contributes to good student achievement.
- Good relationships promote a positive response from students.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well with support.
- ICT is not always used to the best advantage to improve presentation.
- Tasks are not always matched well enough to the attainment of students.

### **Commentary**

126. The 2004 GCSE results were average overall and improved from 2002 and 2003 where they were below average. Results were above average in textiles and average in other specialisms. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. A large number of students exceeded their target grades in 2004.
127. Current standards in Year 9 are average. Attainment on entry is below average. This represents good achievement. Much of the work includes good research, good use of

the Internet, good use of colour and two- and three-dimensional drawings and sketches and photographic evidence. The Year 9 textiles work in a design and make hat project was of a very good standard. A small proportion of work is not as good as it shows poor line quality, weak hand-written work, drawings in pen and some work incomplete. There are spelling errors in work across the range of attainment.

128. Current standards in Year 11 are average overall. Achievement of these students is good in relation to their standards at the start of the course. Projects often use colour, annotated diagrams, good research and development of ideas and good use of ICT. The educational toy project for a young child in textiles was of a very good standard. Where the work is weaker it is mainly due to insufficient development of ideas, poorer presentation, and work not completed. Students with special educational needs, and students with English as an additional language, make good progress especially when support is available, and achievement is good overall. Literacy skills are well supported with good use of technical language in all lessons. Numeracy skills are satisfactory. The use of ICT is generally satisfactory but more use could be made of drawing packages to help presentational skills, particularly for middle and lower attainers.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Learning is good because teachers have very good subject expertise and good planning, make good use of time and resources and have high expectations. In a Year 9 lesson students' design and make skills in the mirror project were developed well, with some imaginative ideas for the frame decoration being seen. In a Year 10 vocational technology lesson students' learning of computer-aided design was developed to a good level and self-confidence and self-esteem also increased. In a few lessons teaching was not as good, being rather hurried and teacher-led. Occasionally teachers were not always aware of the different ability levels of the class. All lessons have good starter activities and plenary sessions to reinforce learning. Students' attitudes to the subject are always good and most students respond well to the expectations placed upon them.
130. The faculty is currently under the direction of an assistant headteacher following the recent promotion of the previous post holder. Leadership and management are very good. The improved examination performance, development planning, record keeping, monitoring of teaching and learning and student progress are strong features. Assessment procedures are good including student self-assessment and target setting. Most students know how well they are performing and how to improve their work. Marking is helpful and supportive but at times can be over-generous. There is a good system for tracking student progress in Years 7 to 9 and data is used well from entry to school to GCSE performance. Staff in the faculty share ideas and support each other well. However, work is not always matched well enough for different attainment levels. Technician support is good and display of work including students' projects is of a good standard. Accommodation and resources are good. A safety audit has recently been undertaken and all equipment met requirements.
131. Improvement since the last inspection is good. A faculty data booklet has been introduced containing grades and targets for individual students to improve examination performance. In-service training has focused on standardisation of coursework. Product design and textiles have been introduced in Years 10 and 11. There are strong partnerships with neighbouring schools and strong industrial links

with local companies. The faculty contributes to several local education working parties.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

The focus subjects were art and design and music. Drama was sampled.

### **Drama**

132. Results in drama have varied, showing improvement in 1999 and 2000 and a dip in 2001, and indicating a downward trend from 2002 to well below average in 2004, as a result of staffing issues.
133. Standards seen are average in Year 9 and well above average in Years 10 and 11. GCSE students are able to sustain engagement and good quality performance in their work on play texts, evaluate work in process and apply strong group negotiation skills. Students' achievement is very good because of teacher expertise and positive relationships. In Year 9 students' achievement is good where students demonstrate a secure application of dramatic conventions in practice and show an understanding of character motivation. Teaching and learning in drama were very good in Years 10 and 11, and the Year 9 lesson observed demonstrated some good elements.
134. The head of the department is new but is already having an impact on standards and achievement through 'in house' training. There is little evidence at this stage of rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All teachers show good subject knowledge.
- Teachers' knowledge of individuals encourages a good personal response.
- A good range of media and processes is used.
- There is good integration of own work with that of different artists.
- Limited opportunities are provided for students' independent learning and for using ICT.
- Assessment of students' levels in Years 7 to 9 is regular but does not always give enough guidance to students as to how to improve.

### **COMMENTARY**

135. GCSE examination results were below average in 2004. They were rising from 1998 to 2003 but dropped in 2004. However, standards seen are average in Year 9 and above average in Year 11 and this represents good achievement, given below average attainment on entry.

136. Students in Year 7 to 9 show good understanding of pattern and composition but limited skill in analysing artists' work. Students in Years 10 and 11 work through a range of media and have well-developed skills in their handling of colour, mixed media and design. More able students study the work of different artists to develop their own work. For example, they review Barbara Kruger and Georgia O'Keefe, identifying their use of the environment as metaphors for inner feelings. This interpretation of meaning is less evident in Years 7 to 9.
137. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Teachers draw well on students' personal experience. Good subject knowledge and demonstration result in students' good use of proportion and spatial awareness in composition and design, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have high expectations of standards and behaviour. The use of effective visual resources and good quality examples supports students' learning. In a very good lesson in Year 8 the teacher used very effective questioning and exhibited students' work on pattern where they identified the effect of the design process on the work. Teaching, however, sometimes limits students' opportunities for talking about their own work and developing independent learning.
138. Leadership and management are good in building an effective team where teachers work to their strengths and share good practice. Collaborative work with other schools is encouraged. For example, the primary school link to 'artist in residence' week and weekly sessions at Dewsbury College offer good opportunities. Issues from examination analysis are translated into action well through a focus on raising standards at Year 9 and Year 11. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is regular but does not always clarify for students how to improve. Improvement in the department since the previous report is good. Good teaching is maintained and behaviour management improved. There is still limited use of ICT in computer-generated images.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **very good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Students achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 due to very systematic teaching.
- Very good links with Kirklees Music Centre enhance opportunities for pursuing individual interests.
- A below average proportion of students opt for GCSE music.
- Singing is underdeveloped beyond Year 7.
- Learning is better in Years 7 to 9 because in Years 10 and 11, lack of musical demonstration and insufficient teaching of listening skills prevent students from making progress as well as they could.
- Marking of notebooks helps students improve their knowledge of music but does not consistently address grammatical and spelling mistakes to support development of literacy.



## Commentary

139. In Year 9 standards are well above expectations. Students achieve very well, given that standards are below average in Year 7. Students perform readily at keyboards using staff notation, reading pitch more strongly than rhythm. They compose with a sense of structure. Higher attaining students use chords creatively. Students' attitudes in collaborative projects are very good, enjoying making music. Girls perform better than boys, corresponding to the picture nationally. There is no significant variation in achievement between students of different ethnic groups, those with special educational needs or those at early stages of learning English.
140. Small numbers of students opting for GCSE make comparison with national statistics unreliable. Standards seen in Year 11 are above average and students achieve well. Students compose extended pieces, using ICT well to develop interesting textures. They have a good knowledge of musical concepts, but are less secure in aurally identifying these.
141. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9. Lessons are very thoroughly planned with very well devised course booklets for both class work and homework, helping students to develop their knowledge, understanding and practical skills in a systematic way. Very good management of behaviour and routines secures very good learning. Flexible project materials ensure students of different ability all achieve very well, but talented students only achieve well, as tasks are not tailored precisely enough to fully challenge them. Learning support assistants are very well used to support students with specific learning needs. Occasionally teachers' explanations are too long, limiting practical activity, an issue aggravated by the time allocation in Years 7 to 9 being limited.
142. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good, rather than very good. A weakness is the limited musical demonstration. Teaching of listening skills tends to be in a 'compartmentalised' fashion, which prevents students grasping aural concepts as quickly as they are able. Good assessment practices help students to improve and students have good exposure to technical vocabulary, but monitoring of notebooks does not consistently correct misspelled words.
143. Leadership of the subject is good. Liaison with primary feeder schools and the community is strong and the various extra-curricular groups, some led by senior students, are enhanced by the provision offered by the Kirklees Music Centre, based in the school. An average proportion of students take instrumental lessons. The second teaching room is too cramped to use the good musical resources to best effect and learning resource centre stock is dated. Management is very good. Staff are very well deployed and monitored. Provision is robustly reviewed on a regular basis and has improved well since the previous inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students thoroughly enjoy their lessons and achieve very well because they are very well taught by a lively and highly committed team of teachers.
- Excellent use is made in lessons of the talented performers to lead skills sessions.
- Extra-curricular sports provision is excellent with a wide range of activities in which nearly all students take a regular part.
- Teachers involve their students in planning and leading warm-up activities in every lesson, so that students' knowledge and understanding of this aspect are well above expectation for their age.
- Tasks in GCSE theory lessons are not always sufficiently matched to the needs of the students.

### **Commentary**

144. Students' knowledge and understanding of performance are above average in Years 7 to 9. The standards in performance are also above average. Students' achievement is very good from entry to the school.
145. GCSE results in 2004 were above the national average. The current Year 11 students were below average at the start of Year 10 but are now above expectation for their age. They therefore have achieved very well. The overall knowledge, skills and understanding of a significant number of the students taking the GCSE are well above average and talented sports players' skills are high.
146. Teaching and learning are very good. Extremely well planned lessons are clearly focused on developing the students' sports knowledge and understanding as well as their skills. The pace and challenge of practical lessons are consistently very good. The high level of enthusiasm and commitment of staff to their students leads to vibrant learning. Students have very clear targets, which are well explained at the start of each session and self-evaluated at the end. They lead their own warm-ups with skill and understanding. Talented students coach fellow students with considerable skill and extensive knowledge and understanding of their sports. Excellent use of ICT software to analyse movement in lessons has greatly increased all students' abilities to describe good performance confidently. The consequence of this is that students, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are more aware of how they can develop their own work. However, the very well organised GCSE theory lessons are sometimes less effective because tasks, such as copying notes, do not match students' needs. Students have a very clear idea of their progress in practical skills work which is very well assessed and they clearly know what they need to do next in order to improve their skills.
147. Leadership and management are very good. There is strong emphasis upon teamwork. The considerable commitment of the staff to the excellent programme of extra-curricular sports provides outstanding opportunities for all students to participate regularly. Very good use is made of team teaching to monitor and develop work in all areas. The excellent work on assessment for learning and behaviour for learning has been very well led. The day-to-day organisation is very good and underpins the very good improvement since the last inspection.
148. National Curriculum requirements are now met in full. The Year 8 outdoor course and the Junior Sports Leader Award (JSLA) are particularly strong developments. Extra-curricular sports activities are excellent. The numbers taking part are high and early morning sessions for students an excellent feature. A significant number of students compete at national and county level. Specialist coaching opportunities are also available. The many links organised through the school sports co-ordination scheme are impressive.

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

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in GCSE examinations rose significantly in 2004.
- Students achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good; teachers use stimulating resources and a good range of approaches that capture students' interest.
- The leadership and management of the department are good; the head of business studies provides very good support for colleagues, although monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Use of ICT is not developed enough to enhance the understanding of business applications.

### **Commentary**

149. Results in GCSE examinations were average in 2004. This represents a significant rise since 2003 when they were well below average.
150. In Year 11, standards of attainment in the work of students currently studying the subject are average. Students of all attainment levels know about the role of stakeholders in a business, can interpret a firm's organisation chart and understand how legislation affects the rights of employees. Most of them are able to explain the key terms associated with break-even charts and can correctly predict the impact of price and wage rises on break-even points.
151. Therefore, the achievement of students is good. They make good advances in developing their knowledge and understanding of the subject and in acquiring business skills. An examination of Year 10 project work demonstrated their increasing ability to analyse the level of consumer satisfaction in a local bowling alley.
152. Students achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives, a variety of stimulating resources and a good range of approaches, including presentations and business case studies that capture students' interest. Good subject knowledge is used to check students' understanding of business topics, particularly in questioning sessions, although occasionally there is insufficient time allowed for students to reflect on what they have learnt. Whilst there is some application of ICT in business studies lessons, particularly in completing coursework assignments, this is an area for further development. Students demonstrate good attitudes and behaviour because teachers have effective classroom management skills and always promote good relationships.
153. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of business studies provides very good support for a small team of specialist teachers. Clear priorities for future development have been identified, including making further links with business, and there is very good departmental documentation. Monitoring of teaching is not yet developed rigorously enough to identify strengths and weaknesses or share skills widely. The head of department is relatively new and is having a considerable impact. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. GCSE results, together with the quality of teaching and learning, have improved well since then.

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

Personal, social and health education was sampled. Citizenship was inspected in full.

154. The provision for **personal, social and health education** in the curriculum is very good. It covers a very good range of issues, includes many opportunities for discussions and input from visiting speakers. Drugs, sex and relationship education meets statutory requirements within the integrated studies programme. In one lesson sampled, concerning euthanasia teaching and learning were satisfactory and students gained opportunities to have a meaningful debate. Four other lessons, combining PSHE and citizenship, on crime and punishment were seen. In these teaching and learning were at least good.

## **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Much of what is taught helps students to become responsible citizens.
- The citizenship curriculum includes many activities that involve community partners well.
- The school council gives students a very good opportunity to take part in a democratic election.
- Assessment provides good evidence for parents of the standards achieved by students.
- Subjects do not raise awareness of citizenship sufficiently in their schemes of work.

## **COMMENTARY**

155. Standards seen in citizenship are average in Year 9 and 11. Achievement for students is good overall. Citizenship is taught as part of an integrated studies course in cross-curricular themes and also includes personal, social and health education. During the inspection three lessons were observed but other lessons in integrated studies were seen as part of the combined course with religious education. There was also evidence in form tutor time of citizenship themes. Other subjects could and do offer citizenship elements but do not always raise awareness that they are a citizenship element.
156. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9. Because of timetabling, specific citizenship lessons could be observed in only these years. They were well planned with shared objectives and students had positive attitudes to what they were learning and were confident in discussions with both the teacher and between themselves. They have achieved well in Years 7 to 9 as a result of the good teaching. From the written work seen and in short interviews with students, including some in Years 10 and 11, students showed that they have gained a good understanding of what citizenship is and what it means to be a responsible citizen. As it was not possible to observe lessons in Years 10 and 11, an overall judgement on teaching and learning in this stage is not given.
157. Assessment procedures are good. While the school produces its own assessment materials they are not levelled clearly; they do provide a structure for assessing students' progress. Assessment is also good in that it includes assignments of

citizenship themes and includes both peer and self-evaluation. Achievement is reported to parents. The school provides some opportunities for students to become active citizens. The school council provides students with a very good opportunity to take part in a democratic election and body but could now consider letting older students chair it.

158. While the leadership is very good the management of this subject is good. The teacher in charge has a clear vision of where the subject fits into the school curriculum and is guiding its development very well. Audits have been carried out to establish what was already being taught before developing the course but subjects could identify citizenship lessons more explicitly in schemes of work. Monitoring is carried out well within the integrated studies umbrella, in that books are checked, lessons are observed and ideas shared.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

*In the inspection, nine 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 2004, as provided by the school.*

### **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
Art and Design	5	100	78.3	0	21.6	22.0	28.5
Biology	11	63.6	63.5	0	10.4	14.5	19.8
Business Studies	3	66.7	75.3	0	15.4	20.0	25.7
Chemistry	9	33.3	70.3	11.1	13.2	10.0	23.0
Communication Studies	8	100	87.2	25.0	24.9	40.0	32.8
English/English Language	2	100	85.3	0	16.1	25.0	29.0
English Literature	1	100	86.2	0	17.4	30.0	29.7
French	2	100	79.8	0	19.4	30.0	28.2
Design and Technology	2	0	72.6	0	13.9	0	24.3
General Studies	9	55.5	73.6	11.1	16.9	18.9	25.5
Geography	3	100	75.5	33.3	20.4	33.3	27.0
German	1	0	81.6	0	18.8	0	28.8
History	3	100	82.2	0	20.8	26.7	29.2
Information Technology	5	40.0	66.6	0	8.8	8.0	20.6
Mathematics	9	22.2	59.9	0	14.1	6.7	20.5
Music	1	0	79.8	0	16.9	0	27.5
Other Sciences	17	64.7	67.4	0	14.8	20.0	22.8
Other Social Studies	1	100	67.8	0	15.1	30.0	23.2
Physics	2	0	66.4	0	14.8	0	22.4
Sociology	6	100	72.1	16.7	19.6	31.7	25.9

**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
Art and Design	2	100	98.3	0	50.2	60.0	87.1
Biology	7	100.0	96.6	14.3	40.0	71.4	79.3
Business Studies	4	100	98.9	25.0	39.4	80.0	81.8
Chemistry	3	100	97.7	33.3	50.0	73.3	85.7
Communication Studies	15	100	99.2	26.7	40.4	82.7	83.5
English/English Language	14	100	99.2	28.6	36.4	78.6	81.1
English Literature	12	100	99.4	25.0	44.9	76.7	85.5
French	1	100	99.0	100	53.1	120.0	88.9
Design and Technology	2	100	97.8	0	35.0	70.0	77.9
General studies	42	100	94.9	7.1	30.5	58.1	72.9
Geography	7	100	98.8	42.9	46.4	68.6	85.2
German	2	100	98.6	50.0	49.6	90.0	86.3
History	4	100	99.0	50.0	45.6	95.0	85.1
Information Technology	15	100	96.3	13.3	25.7	65.3	71.1
Mathematics	3	100	96.8	0	56.6	60.0	89.5
Music	2	100	98.2	0	37.1	40.0	79.5
Psychology	27	100	97.4	25.9	44.2	71.8	82.5
Physics	2	100	96.7	0	45.3	60.0	82.6
Sociology	14	100	98.5	42.9	45.3	74.3	84.6
Sports/PE Studies	8	100	97.8	0	30.9	55.0	75.4
Business VCE	16	81.3	91.6	25.0	24.1	62.5	67.9
Health and Social Care VCE	12	100	93.5	25.0	24.9	76.7	70.0
Information Technology VQ	36	100	88.3	11.1	26.9	69.4	67.8
Leisure and Recreation VCE	8	100	90.7	0	18.3	67.5	64.6

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subjects were English language and German. English literature was sampled.

Results in English literature suggest that standards are in line with expectations. One Year 13 lesson was sampled. Students achieved very well as a result of very good teaching. The teacher's skilled questioning and wide-ranging subject knowledge promoted a discussion of considerable intellectual quality.

### English language

Provision in A-level English language is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well on a challenging course from a modest attainment base.
- Teachers' excellent command of their subject is a significant aspect of their very good teaching.
- Students appreciate the opportunities provided by the course for pursuing their own interests.
- The standard of writing of some students is lower than the quality of perceptive discussion seen in class.

#### Commentary

159. Results at A-level have improved generally since 2002, although they have varied considerably. They were very high in relation to all schools in 2003, but broadly average in 2004. Standards in the work seen are average. Students in Year 12 work hard to absorb unfamiliar linguistic concepts. They take advantage of the opportunity for creative writing to develop their own writing talents. By Year 13 it is clear that they use specialist terminology confidently and have developed high order analytical skills. Many coursework investigations produced in Year 13 are varied in scope and are of a high standard, showing good research skills and competent use of ICT. The standard of writing of some students is below the quality of the perceptive comments they make in class. A few fail to use sufficient detail in their analytical writing to support the points they wish to make.
160. Students achieve very well from a below average attainment base. They find the course more intellectually demanding than their other advanced level studies, and rise to the challenge very well. All but one of the present Year 13 met or exceeded their targets in last year's AS-level examinations. Students recognise that the course has changed the way they look at language use in all aspects of life. More girls than boys take the course, but boys achieve relatively well, gaining a higher average points score. Students with English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. Gifted and talented students also achieve very well; the creative writing module and the coursework investigation provide good opportunities for such students to develop their talents.
161. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' excellent command of the subject means that their exposition and explanations are clear, a factor appreciated by their students. The course is well structured so that learning progresses in manageable



steps, and teachers provide a wealth of background materials, often building on students' own linguistic experiences. Very good relationships mean that students feel free to contribute their ideas and test their developing understanding of new concepts. Marking is analytical, detailed and helpful. Very occasionally, teachers' questioning lacks sufficient challenge to develop students' understanding.

162. Leadership and management are very good. As in the main school, the head of department is a very effective role model. He has developed a particularly tightly-knit team of mainly very experienced teachers who are mutually supportive and professional in their approach. Procedures for assessment are rigorous; data is used very well to monitor achievement and to review the curriculum. Evaluation is thorough, making a very good basis for future development.
163. The department is constantly striving to improve. Since the last inspection there has been successful implementation of new syllabuses and new assessment arrangements. The introduction of A-level media studies has widened students' choice. Recruitment and retention are good. Beneficial links with local primary schools have been established. Students' discussions with young children provide an excellent practical basis for the language acquisition module. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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

164. Standards of literacy are average for A-level courses although there is no formal accreditation in communication skills. Students' discussion skills are strong in most subjects, but there are few opportunities for formal presentations. In most subjects, students' research skills are good, but there is a lack of wider reading in business education. Writing skills are satisfactory overall. Provision for strengthening standards of literacy is good in most subjects, with planning for the development of key skills clearly evident in subjects such as English and business education, and communication skills actively developed in mathematics and psychology. There is, however, a lack of coherent planning in history and insufficient emphasis on independent learning in biology.

### **German**

Provision in German is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieved at least as well as expected at A-level in 2004. One student gained grade A.
- Good teaching, supported by excellent assessment procedures, encourages students to do their best.
- The AS and A-level courses are very well led, managed and resourced.
- The department has great difficulty in attracting well-qualified students.
- Students do not achieve the confidence and fluency expected at the stage in the course.

### **Commentary**

165. A-level results for very small numbers of female students in 2004 were above average and included a grade A. Targets were reached or exceeded. Neither AS-level student achieved a grade. Despite good results over time, the department finds it difficult to attract students, largely due to local competition. Currently there are no students taking German in Year 12. In Year 13, two students are following the A-level course. A further two are taking the AS course, not having done German in Year 12.
166. Inspection evidence shows standards are below average in both groups. However, due to very good attitudes and the impact of good teaching, students achieve satisfactorily. In the A-level group, work seen in files shows good recent improvement in written work, although this is not consistently the case since careless errors in the application of basic rules detract from the impact of the inclusion of more complex structures. Students make earnest efforts in oral work, but do not achieve the confidence and fluency to build and defend arguments that are expected at this stage of the course. Too much time is spent searching for words and grammatical accuracy is poor. Similarly, the narrow knowledge and retention of vocabulary cause difficulties in listening and reading comprehension although there is again evidence of improvement as the course proceeds. Standards in the different skills in the AS group are very similar although one student is making significantly better progress towards an above average grade.
167. Teaching is good. Teachers use German effectively and have very good knowledge of the examination criteria. Learning is satisfactory and does not match the quality of teaching because students do not participate as fully as they should. Although teachers make strong efforts to give students the tools with which to work independently, for example to access articles from German newspapers from the Internet, they remain too dependent on teachers in class and require a good deal of support in all tasks. Although relationships are clearly very good and students are encouraged to do their best, there is an occasional tendency to drift into irrelevant discussion, often in English, which detracts from the impact of subject expertise. Planning and resourcing of tasks are good, and very good use is made of authentic materials, including the effective deployment of the foreign language assistant to provide individual oral practice.
168. Leadership and management are very good. Work is shared between subject specialists, with very good diagnosis of outcomes leading to adjustments in provision, where necessary. Consequently, work is well adapted to the abilities and needs of students while sustaining appropriate challenge. The development plan correctly identifies the priority to attract well-qualified students, and contains suitable and thoughtful strategies. Students receive very good feedback on all their work. Very good assessment procedures are built around progress charts that map outcomes of each important piece of work. A very positive aspect of provision is the opportunity to participate in work experience in Germany with its attendant linguistic, social and cultural advantages. Improvement since the last inspection is good, but the number of students choosing the subject remains low.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' thorough subject expertise results in well-structured lessons and this is reflected in the skilful formulation of questions that promote students' understanding and learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good so that lessons are conducted in a studious atmosphere.
- Current provision meets the needs of a range of students.
- Assessment of students' work does not speedily identify those students at risk of not attaining a pass grade at AS-level.
- The learning and retention of many students are impeded because of a lack of rigour and structure in the presentation of notes and solutions.

## Commentary

169. AS-level results in 2004 were well below the national average. Results spanned the grade range but a significant proportion of students failed to meet their expected levels. At A-level the small number of students makes comparisons with national averages statistically inappropriate. In 2004 all three candidates obtained pass grades at C, D and E. A-level results in 2002 and 2003 were in line with and well below national averages respectively.
170. The number of students currently studying mathematics in Year 12 has risen significantly. Two groups have been introduced to meet the needs of diverse attainment levels on entry to the course. Retention rates are satisfactory and students who are successful at AS-level continue their studies to A-level in Year 13. The balance between the number of male and female students is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
171. The standard of work of current Year 12 students is higher than indicated by previous AS results and is average, overall. Their work spans the grade range. Standards in the present Year 13 are in line with the average. Work is sufficiently rigorous to challenge students with the potential to attain the highest A-level grades. One student is on target to attain an A grade and the remainder are on target to obtain B/C grades next summer. Achievement in both Year 12 and 13 is good. There are no discernible differences in the achievement of male and female students. Minority ethnic students make similar progress to their peers, and students who joined the school from other institutions are well integrated in their groups.
172. The most able students demonstrate that their learning is with understanding and they confidently apply their prior learning to the development of new knowledge and skills. The quality of students' written exercises shows that most students are achieving well. However, written work often lacks structure and rigour and, particularly for weaker students, does not help in establishing the necessary routines for presenting solutions. This is a significant factor for those students who have difficulties with retention and recall. Some average and lower attaining students are less confident and competent with the increasing demands of algebraic manipulation and a minority of these students exacerbate this weakness by producing less consolidation work than their peers.
173. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is mainly because of the teachers' thorough command of the subject and the very good relationships that have been

established between teachers and students. Lessons are thoroughly prepared with carefully prepared resources. These characteristics are complemented by the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and are reflected in students' positive and mature attitudes. Students are particularly appreciative of the extra help that is readily available when required. Teachers' subject expertise is demonstrated in the skilful formulation of questions that illuminate understanding and isolate misconceptions. Students sustain good levels of concentration. Teaching strategies encourage independence and this is exemplified by many students compiling their own good quality notes that they annotate to meet their individual needs. The marking and assessment of students' work are good and include detailed analysis and correction of inaccuracies, with supporting comments and guidance on what action is required to bring about improvements. However, formal assessment of students' work in the early stages of the AS course is not sufficiently frequent to speedily identify those students at risk of completing the course without a grade.

174. The leadership of the department is very good and management is good. A particular strength in the leadership is the adaptability of courses to meet students' needs and changing circumstances. For example, the creation of additional groups to meet diverse needs and the introduction of a further mathematics module reflect the breadth and depth of available expertise in the department. There is a clear vision for improvement and staff are very well supported. The management of sixth form courses is good but the monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice is largely informal. There were no specific sixth form issues from the previous report but the number of students studying mathematics in the sixth form has significantly increased in line with improved performances at GCSE.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

175. Students' competence in mathematics in subjects across the curriculum is above average. There are no curriculum areas in which standards are being adversely affected by a lack of numerical skills. The contribution of mathematical skills is good and promoted in media studies, biology, business education and psychology. Students' progress in these areas is enhanced by their mathematical skills and includes the competent use of increasingly demanding statistical analysis. Provision to meet the needs of students who wish to enhance their GCSE grades is good.

## **SCIENCE**

The focus subject was biology, and chemistry was sampled.

One lesson of AS-level chemistry was seen. This was excellent. This was a fast-paced introductory lesson on thermochemistry with excellent interactive teaching and efficiently organised short practical activities, which the students had to interpret in terms of enthalpy diagrams.

### **Biology**

Provision in biology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and management promote high standards of achievement.
- Very good teaching results in students learning and achieving very well.
- Students enjoy the subject and feel they are well supported.
- Teaching styles are being broadened but are still too restricted.

## **Commentary**

176. A-level results were average in 2003, the last year for which there is validated data. Results dropped in 2004 and were well below average. A quarter of the students failed to gain grades A-E.
177. However, standards seen in Year 13 are broadly average, for example in students' understanding of the steps in aerobic respiration including processes of glycolysis, oxidative decarboxylation and oxidative phosphorylation. Students have well below average standards on entry to the course and as a result their achievement is very good. Students' attitudes to their learning are very good and contribute significantly to the very good progress made.
178. Teaching and learning are now very good. Lessons are very well structured and planned and there is a clear impact of the National Strategy for Science. Learning objectives are made clear. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and explanation is very clear with good progressive development of concepts. These are reinforced and developed well with a variety of activities including practical work, group discussion, student presentations, Internet research, past questions, modelling (for example making a model of the DNA double helix using sweets) and field trips. There is some very good use of ICT by teachers, for example to show structures of different molecules, but more training is required, as planned, if all teachers are to make the most effective use of interactive whiteboards. There is a good emphasis upon learning skills. For example, in a Year 13 lesson students had to work in pairs to prepare key revision notes on different topics which were then shared with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. There is, however, too little emphasis upon independent work and problem-solving approaches. Homework is marked regularly, with good feedback to students on how to improve and regular tests give students grade-related feedback.
179. Leadership and management are good and leaders place a good emphasis in planning on raising the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is not yet sufficient rigour in the monitoring of the teaching and learning, and schemes of work do not at present give sufficient detail to share examples of good practice. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good range of courses available to students helps to make ICT the most popular sixth form subject in the school.
- The good subject knowledge of teachers contributes strongly to the good teaching.

- Assessment is very good and enhances students' understanding of their learning.
- Teachers and students enjoy very good working relationships.
- Some students are too often absent from the AVCE lessons and the level of student retention on this course is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

180. Results at A-level, AS and in the AVCE examinations in 2004 were all broadly in line with national averages and this has been the consistent pattern over the last three years. The standard of work in Years 12 and 13 during the inspection was close to average for the majority of students but there was a wide spread of ability in some groups. The department operates an inclusive recruitment policy so that even students with modest GCSE grades are given the opportunity to start the AVCE or AS course. Students' positive attitudes in lessons supported by good teaching enable the great majority of them to achieve well.
181. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to challenge and support individuals. Both the AS and the A-level courses are well structured with a supportive framework of good resources, both written and online. Students following the AVCE course and the one-year GNVQ intermediate course are also well catered for having the same well-planned online format. Teacher support is very good with detailed monitoring and assessment of students' work. The system of giving detailed feedback on students' first-draft assignments ensures that they understand what they need to do to improve. All students strongly appreciate this support and enjoy the very comfortable learning conditions. They are generally well motivated and most take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, the majority of students, including those with whose first language is not English and those with other learning difficulties, learn well and make good progress. The only group of students who underachieve are those who fail to attend lessons regularly. This affects the AVCE course most and may explain why a significant number of students do not complete this course.
182. The head of department provides good leadership and management. Detailed schemes of work are in place and a very good system has been implemented to monitor the progress of the AS and A-level students. The quality of the teaching and learning in ICT lessons is closely monitored with each teacher being formally observed by the head of department at least once a year. A full analysis of the performance of the department takes place annually with action plans being drawn up to improve standards. The head of department is fair in the way she organises the curriculum and allocates teachers to classes. Her hard work and commitment to the ongoing development of the department set an exemplary standard. As a consequence, she leads a dedicated and unified team of staff who are supportive of each other. A very good team of technicians help to ensure the smooth running of the department and the ICT resources across the school.
183. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The number of students opting for post-16 ICT courses has risen from six in 1999 to over 120 in 2004! Resources and accommodation for ICT are now very good and there is much greater use of ICT across other subjects in the school.

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

184. The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is very good. Students show good skill and confidence in using computers and much good use is made of Internet research, word processing and spreadsheets to develop and present coursework.

## **HUMANITIES**

The focus subjects were history and psychology. Sociology and law were sampled.

One Year 13 lesson in sociology was seen where students achieved well as a result of very good teaching. A Year 12 lesson in law was observed. Because of examinations taking place at the same time there were only two students present but they benefited from excellent teaching.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching is a major factor in the good achievement but limited opportunities for developing skills of independent learning hinder progress.
- Source analysis and evaluation skills are well developed.
- Sixth form students feel very well supported through advice from teachers and very good assessment procedures.

### **Commentary**

185. In 2004 all candidates passed the A-level examinations, as they did in the previous two years. In terms of average points score, results were significantly above average in 2004, although the small number of candidates makes it unwise to draw any firm conclusions from this data. The proportion of candidates achieving the higher A and B grades was average.
186. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are in line with expectations. Achievement is good from entry to the course. Students analyse sources well, commenting knowledgeably on how provenance affects reliability. They explore issues well in some detailed essays, which offer well-constructed arguments supported by appropriate evidence. Their written English is not always as succinct and accurate as it might be and their use of subject-specific terminology sometimes lacks precision. They do not develop independent learning sufficiently and do not read widely enough around the subject.
187. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very detailed subject knowledge, which they deploy effectively to guide and enhance students' learning. Lessons are very well planned and structured to meet students' needs. However, the small size of the Year 13 group impacts on achievement and restricts the opportunities for analysing, commenting on and assessing each other's work, skills which students need to be able to master if they are to accept responsibility for their individual

learning and further raise their achievement. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to set targets and monitor students' progress, which is regularly reviewed. Classroom relationships are very good and students appreciate the extent and availability of the advice on topics such as preparation for examinations, which teachers have to offer.

188. Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed head of department has already had an impact through her vision for the future development of the subject and is very well supported by a team who combine enthusiasm and experience. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **Psychology**

The overall provision for psychology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and students achieve very well as a result.
- Very good leadership and management provide very good conditions for learning.
- Students are very positive about the subject and work very well.
- Students' knowledge about what they need to do to improve is very good and enables them to set meaningful targets for improvement.
- Successful relationships, centred on teaching and learning, contribute well to students' enjoyment of the subject.
- Students' independent research skills are underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

189. The 2004 GCE A-level and AS-level results were below average but generally students achieved what was expected of them based upon their GCSE grades at the end of Year 11. The results have been similar for the last three years with girls doing better than boys. The standard of work seen during the inspection was average in Years 12 and 13. Students know and understand a range of methods used in psychological research and the advantages and disadvantages of employing different designs. Students are now achieving very well as their attainment levels on entry to the course were well below average based upon their Year 11 examination performance. There is no difference in achievement between boys and girls. High quality teaching, very effective assessment methods and curriculum reorganisation have brought about this overall improvement in achievement.
190. The quality of teaching overall is very good. An example of excellent teaching was seen during the inspection. Lessons are planned very well and involve thorough preparation of resources. Students are generally guided through a variety of tasks by the use of well-constructed activity sheets. The tasks are challenging and address different learning styles. As a result, students work and learn very well. However, opportunities to develop students' independent research skills are limited. The teacher delivers the subject with enthusiasm, relationships are very good, and so students are well motivated and enjoy the subject. Students are given opportunities to develop their communication skills through identifying and explaining key concepts such as modelling and reinforcement in a variety of contexts. Thorough assessment of assignments and examination work enables students to gauge their progress.



Students know their predicted grades, the grades at which they are working and what they need to do to improve and use the teacher's detailed diagnostic comments to formulate actions for improvement.

191. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department's vision for raising standards and making the subject more enjoyable for students is already being realised although he has only been responsible for the subject for just over one term. Very effective departmental self-evaluation has been carried out and has resulted in an action plan designed to improve student performance. The course structure has been changed to a format that is meeting the needs of the students. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

No lessons were observed during the inspection.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The focus subject was theatre studies. Media studies and music were sampled.

Media studies is a relatively new course, but recruitment is healthy and results in 2002 and 2003 were above average. Students enjoy the practical aspects of the course, such as film-making. One Year 12 lesson was sampled, in which teaching and learning were satisfactory overall.

One lesson of music was observed in Year 12. Students' musical perception is broadly average. In the lesson observed, students' achievement was satisfactory. Teaching was satisfactory, encouraging initiative, but not consolidating learning rigorously through musical illustration. Students share a positive working relationship with teachers.

### **Theatre studies**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students perform confidently because the teacher demonstrates performance skills well.
- Students interpret practitioners' theories in their own work well because of very good teaching strategies.
- Teacher's very good subject knowledge encourages students' good critical evaluation.
- Excellent relationships encourage very good group negotiation skills.
- All students achieve very well as a result of very good formative assessment, particularly in Year 12.
- Teacher dependence limits students' self-evaluation and their sustained discussion on texts, particularly in Year 13.

### **Commentary**

192. Theatre studies is a new A-level course started this year in Year 12. Performing arts has been run for several years but is no longer offered after the current Year 13 students have completed their studies.
193. Examination results in 2003 in A-level performing arts were in the range of B-D and in 2004 more modest with all students nevertheless gaining grades C-E. Statistical comparisons with national averages are not meaningful as the number of students was small.
194. Standards seen are well above average in the theatre studies course in Year 12. Students demonstrate a very good understanding of the subject, which allows them to work independently. Their achievement so far in the course is very good. All students bring very good personal response to the work and perform confidently. Students use subject-specific vocabulary well to evaluate the work of professional actors. Group negotiation skills are excellent. A weakness is that students tend not to evaluate their own achievement independently of the teacher.
195. Standards in the performing arts course in Year 13 are above average and this marks a good improvement over recent examinations. Achievement of Year 13 students is good, but the small group of students require greater teacher support to make progress and are less confident in sustaining discussion on texts.
196. Teaching and learning are very good in Year 12 and good in Year 13. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and questioning inform and challenge students' thinking and critical evaluation. Excellent relationships, behaviour and attitudes in both years create a secure atmosphere where students feel able to take risks and experiment. During the rehearsal process the teacher brings focus to the work through skilful direction and performance skills. Consequently, for example, Year 13 students identify the political effect of irony and juxtaposition on the audience of *Oh what a lovely war*. The greater dependence on the teacher in Year 13 lessons results in less independent thinking and investigation than is apparent in Year 12. Assessment is very good. Procedures are very clear and good use is made of evaluations to raise standards.
197. Leadership and management are very good. Analysis of data informs planning. The emphasis on acting skills in the newly introduced course is raising standards for students whose prior experience of drama is variable. A number of enrichment opportunities are in place and Years 12 and 13 students take on directing roles with younger students. Monitoring of other staff is underdeveloped as the head of department is new to the school. However, she has provided training for colleagues in order to ensure higher attainment in drama on entry to the course.
198. Improvement since the last report is good. Accommodation has improved offering a very good rehearsal and performance space for students and visiting theatre companies. Strong performance skills have been maintained and the new theatre studies course is raising standards. ICT is applied through video technology for reviewing students' and professionals' work. The Internet is used well for research. Literacy skills are very good, offering students a range of language experiences.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

There were no focus subjects in this area. Physical education and leisure and recreation were sampled.

One lesson of A-level physical education was observed with Year 13 students. Teaching and learning were good in a well-structured course. Students were very focused and demonstrated good standards.

One Year 13 lesson of leisure and recreation was seen where students had good attitudes to the subject and learnt very well as a result of very good teaching.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus subject was business studies.

### **Business studies**

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

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

- Very good teaching leads to very good learning.
- Very good value is added and students achieve very well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- A lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject impacts on students' performance in both class work and examinations.

## **Commentary**

199. Results in 2004 business studies A-level were mixed with the few students gaining a range of A-E grades. The standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are above average. The strength of the students' class work is their basic understanding of such underpinning business concepts as organisational functions and structures. Higher attaining students effectively evaluate evidence; make reasoned judgements and present appropriate and well-supported conclusions. Lower attaining students demonstrate clear understanding of key business concepts but the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data still remain weaknesses.
200. Standards at AS are in line with national norms. Higher attaining students apply relevant theory and show a good grasp of business concepts. However, they do not always develop an explanation into a fully substantiated view. Lower attaining students often make assertions which are unsupported, and they present evidence which is not always evaluated.
201. Results in AVCE are in line with national figures. Work seen is above national norms. Students' projects and written work are interesting, well produced and professionally presented. At the intermediate level of GNVQ, results last year were in line with national standards. Current standards seen in class are above standards in similar schools. Work is thorough and covers the requirements of the assessment evidence grid in a broad way. Relative weaknesses are the students' failure to retain the knowledge and understanding over time.

202. Given the levels of prior attainment at entry to the sixth form, achievement in all courses is very good. Examination results in 2004 in all advanced courses were above average. However, students' progress is often hindered by the lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject.
203. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have excellent rapport with students and their expert subject knowledge underpins discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. Lessons are carefully planned, and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. Students are very well supported academically. Teachers often endeavour to ensure that students have enough practice in the kinds of analysis that will enable them to become more independent learners. Key skills in mathematics and ICT are enhanced well within lessons. Students respond well in lessons. Higher attaining students maintain intellectual rigour. Their attitudes are mature and they sustain interest. However, some students are happy to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning.
204. Resources are good. The students use the good supply of computers effectively to undertake research and to prepare reports for coursework. There is good appropriate specialist accommodation. The department's sixth form curriculum is broad and balanced and offers opportunities for success.
205. Leadership and management are very good. The recently appointed head of department gives very effective and very efficient leadership to the subject. Under her leadership, the department checks and analyses results carefully to identify areas of courses in which learning can be improved, and sets clear targets for action as a consequence. She has a clear vision for the future of the department which sensibly encompasses plans to strengthen both the academic and the vocational aspects of the department's provision to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of future cohorts of students. In all of this, she is well supported by her colleagues, whom she in turn supports. She is an excellent role model for a department committed to raising standards in, and the profile of, the subject
206. Business education in the sixth form has made very good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in the establishment of a rigorous regime of assessing and monitoring students' progress.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

There were no focus subjects in this area.

Health and social care was sampled. In the one Year 13 lesson observed students' attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject were very good and they learnt well as result of good teaching.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

There were no focus subjects in this area.

General studies was sampled. Two Year 12 lessons were observed. In both lessons numbers of students were low due to examinations taking place at the same time. Although teaching and learning were good the students lacked motivation but did behave very well.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Sixth form grade*

### *School grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	3	4
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well pupils learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	2	3
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	2	2
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		1
Support, advice and guidance for students	1	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	2

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