

INSPECTION REPORT

THE NORTH HALIFAX GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107574

Headteacher: Mr G P Maslen

Lead inspector: Ms J Jones

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th January 2005

Inspection number: 268982

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Grammar (selective)
School category: Foundation
Age range of students: 11 to 19
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1052

School address: Moorbottom Road
Illingworth
Halifax
West Yorkshire
Postcode: HX2 9SU

Telephone number: 01422 244625
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Allan Naylor

Date of previous inspection: 1st March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

NORTH HALIFAX GRAMMAR SCHOOL IS AN AVERAGE SIZED SELECTIVE SCHOOL ON THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF HALIFAX. IT TAKES STUDENTS FROM A LARGE SURROUNDING AREA. MOST STUDENTS TRAVEL TO SCHOOL BY BUS; MANY MAKE LONG JOURNEYS. A SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF STUDENTS JOIN IN THE SIXTH FORM. THE SCHOOL HAS FEW STUDENTS FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES AND NONE WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH FLUENTLY. THE SCHOOL BECAME A SPECIALIST SCIENCE COLLEGE IN 2004. THE PROPORTION OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS IS WELL BELOW AVERAGE. THE PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IS WELL BELOW AVERAGE. THERE ARE A FEW STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES. STUDENTS' ATTAINMENT ON ENTRY TO THE MAIN SCHOOL IS WELL ABOVE AVERAGE, AND TO THE SIXTH FORM IS ABOVE AVERAGE.

The school holds the following awards: Artsmark, Investors in people, Careers Education and Guidance Quality Mark 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12460	J Jones	Lead inspector	Work-related learning
19743	A Taylor	Lay inspector	
2928	W Baxendale	Team inspector	Latin (11 – 16)
27050	V Blackburn	Team inspector	Science (11 – 16) Biology
1819	R Crowther	Team inspector	Business education (sixth form)
19026	B Downes	Team inspector	Citizenship (11 – 16) Geography (11 – 16)
21971	J Glennon	Team inspector	Religious education Media studies Provision for students with special educational needs
8756	P Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics
20287	D Harris	Sixth form co-ordinator	Modern foreign languages (11 – 16)
22906	B Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (11 – 16)
19915	P Hooton	Team inspector	History
3943	D Innes	Team inspector	English
22524	S Innes	Team inspector	Design and technology
27665	A Lees	Team inspector	Music
18453	C Lower	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form)
31680	P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design
14446	B Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education (11 – 16)
22985	J Sparkes	Team inspector	Chemistry (sixth form)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. Students are very well taught, and as a consequence they learn and achieve very well. They are given, and accept enthusiastically, many opportunities to develop wider interests and to think critically. Leadership is very good and management is good and the school gives good value for money. The ethos of the school and the attitudes of the students are excellent. The sixth form is cost effective.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching and learning means that students achieve very well and standards are very high in most subjects and in sport, music and other activities.
- Students' attendance and attitudes to the life and work of the school are excellent.
- GCSE results are rising faster than the national trend, mainly through improvement by girls. Boys' standards are being maintained.
- Provision in mathematics is excellent in Years 7 to 11 and in music throughout the school.
- The school makes good use of its unsatisfactory accommodation.
- Students underachieve in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 9 and the course in Years 10 and 11 does not provide students with sufficient challenge, nor with a sound base for further study.
- The religious education curriculum in Year 11 does not meet statutory requirements.

CHANGES SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching methods are now more varied and teaching has improved. High standards have been maintained and GCSE results are rising faster than the national trend. Provision for ICT has improved greatly, but there is more to be done. Provision in religious education has improved but there is still a breach in statutory requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	C
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

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

Students' standards on entry are well above average, and results when they leave are very high. This is evidence of very good achievement. Results are in line with those of other grammar schools. Standards in English and science are well above average, and in mathematics standards are very high in Years 9 and 11 and well above average in the sixth form. While there is little difference seen in lessons between standards of boys and girls,

girls' GCSE results are better than those of boys. In work seen during the inspection, students were reaching well above average standards in most subjects, both in Years 9 and 11 and in the sixth form.

Students achieve **very well** overall. In most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, achievement is very good, in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Only in Year 9 in ICT is there any underachievement, and this is because students have only one short ICT lesson a week. Achievement is satisfactory in ICT in Years 10 and 11 but the course students follow does not give them the opportunity to achieve more highly. Achievement is good in geography, art and physical education in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. In citizenship in all years in the main school achievement is satisfactory. This is because the subject is only just beginning to take its place in the curriculum and the contribution of other subjects is not fully acknowledged. Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and in Year 10 in religious education but overall in Years 10 and 11 it is unsatisfactory since it is taught only to the students taking the GCSE course in Year 11. There is no difference in overall achievement between students in ethnic minorities and the rest. Students identified as being gifted or talented also achieve very well.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. Standards of behaviour are very good and attendance is excellent. Students' attitudes to their work and to school life are excellent. Their personal development is very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** and students' work is assessed well. The curriculum is broad and provides students with a very good range of opportunities for developing wider interests such as sport and music to a high standard. However, it does not fully meet statutory requirements as most students in Year 11 do not study religious education. In spite of improvements to the school accommodation it is still unsatisfactory in a number of respects. Resources are sufficient in most subjects, but the resource centre, though very well run, is too small and has too few books. Students are very well cared for and advised, and links with the community and other schools and colleges are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **very good**. The headteacher is very clear about his ambitions for the school. His thoughtful and well-organised approach enables him to carry the school community with him to realise these. The school development plan has identified the weaknesses in the curriculum and there are well-formulated plans for improvement. Management is **good**. Senior managers monitor the work of the school well and governors give effective support. However, the governors have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements fully.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both at parents' meetings and through surveys, parents expressed strong support for the school and are very pleased with the quality of education their children are getting. They feel their children are well taught and treated fairly. While most find communication with the

school effective and helpful, a small number feel it could be better. Pupils think very highly of the school and appreciate the high degree to which their views are taken into account.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Eliminate the difference between standards achieved by boys and girls at the end of Year 11.
- Improve the ICT curriculum in Years 9, 10 and 11, and that of citizenship in Years 7 to 11 so that students are able to reach the high standards of which they are capable in these subjects.
- Improve ICT in sixth form subjects because in too many subjects provision is inadequate for the needs of the course.
- Continue to press for improvements to the accommodation.

and, to meet statutory requirements: ensure that all students receive their entitlement to religious education and provide a collective act of worship for all students

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a very good education for its students. Standards at A-level are well above average and have improved since the previous inspection. Through very good teaching and a broad appropriate curriculum students are enabled to achieve very well overall. They receive excellent support and guidance and have numerous opportunities outside the curriculum to widen their interests and take responsibility. The sixth form is very well led and is cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards at A-level are well above the national average and have risen since the previous inspection.
- Very good specialist teaching and students' mature, hardworking attitudes lead to good achievement in most subjects.
- Leadership of the sixth form, and of most subject departments, is very good.
- Students receive excellent support and guidance. Their personal and academic progress is very closely monitored and they develop strong independent study habits.
- There is a broad range of academic courses and opportunities to develop interests and take responsibility which meet students' needs and enhance their personal development.
- Students would benefit from more opportunities outside their subjects to deepen their understanding of social, political and moral issues, or to take part in sport if they wish to.
- Space for students both to study and relax is inadequate for the numbers who need it; students have too little access to ICT to help them in their studies.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	<p>Good in English literature. Students achieve well because of good teaching and their own very positive attitudes.</p> <p>Very good in media studies. Standards are well above average. Students achieve very well because of very good teaching and excellent guidance and support.</p>
Mathematics	<p>Very good in mathematics. Standards are well above average. Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and their own hard work.</p>
Science	<p>Good in chemistry. Good teaching and very positive attitudes of students are leading to good achievement.</p> <p>Good in biology. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching, but there are insufficient ICT resources to enhance students' learning.</p>
Humanities	<p>Very good in history. Achievement is very good. High standards reflect excellent support and monitoring of progress. Very good teaching develops independence and effective learning techniques.</p> <p>Very good in psychology. Students are achieving very well because of very strong teaching, but they have too few opportunities to use ICT in psychology.</p>
Engineering, technology and	<p>Very good in design and technology. Students attain well above average</p>

manufacturing	results and achieve very well as a result of very good and some excellent teaching.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good in art and design. Standards are above average and students are achieving well. Teaching is good and helps to develop students' independent thinking. Excellent in music. Students are achieving very well as a result of very good teaching and learning, and their own excellent attitudes.
Business	Very good in business education. Very effective teaching is continuing to produce results well above average with enthusiastic and motivated students. Achievement is very good

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Support and guidance for sixth form students are **excellent**. Students enjoy friendly supportive relationships with their form tutors and subject teachers. Tutors know their students very well and track their progress very closely through frequent monitoring reports, shared with parents. They encourage students to take a full part in school life. Guidance on careers and university entrance is very good. Students are highly appreciative of the support they receive and of their teachers' hard work on their behalf. Students who joined the sixth form from other schools have been fully accepted and integrated.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. There is a clear sense of direction and high expectations of what students can achieve. The strong team of tutors is led with great purpose and works efficiently as a unit. Curriculum planning is innovative and sensitive to the needs of students. The leadership and management of subjects are at least good and in many cases very good. Space for students both to do private study and to relax in spare time is inadequate in its size and quality. Students have too little ready access to computers to help them in their studies.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students, including those who joined from other schools, are very positive about the sixth form and are pleased to be part of it. Newcomers feel they have integrated quickly and students say they were very well prepared for the sixth form. They appreciate the wide choice of courses and other activities available and the many opportunities to involve themselves and take responsibility. A good number of students, most of them boys, say they would like the opportunity to play sport during the week. Students feel that staff listen to them and take their views seriously. Many are concerned about the pressure on space in the social and private study areas in the sixth form centre.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are well above average in Year 9, Year 11, and in the sixth form. Achievement in all years is very good. Girls' GCSE results are better than those of boys.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well but at the end of Year 11 girls achieve higher results than boys overall.
- Standards of work seen are well above average in most subjects. Standards are very high in mathematics in Years 9 and 11 and in modern languages in Year 11.
- Standards in ICT are above average and achievement is satisfactory but students do better in other subjects.

Commentary

1. Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are well above average. Very good teaching, students' own keenness to work hard, and the support of parents lead to very good achievement overall, and results in tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examinations in Year 11 are very high. Girls make particularly good progress and the rising GCSE results, that are improving faster than the national trend, are due mainly to girls. Since 2000 boys' results have not changed much, but girls' average point scores have risen significantly. Results are broadly similar to those of other grammar schools.
2. Standards seen in lessons are well above average and achievement is very good overall. Standards are very high in mathematics, both by Year 9 and by Year 11. Students develop analytical skills and confidence in using algebra so that they can solve complex problems in all the required branches of mathematics. Standards are well above average in English, both by Year 9 and by Year 11. Students' very good command of language enables them to appreciate literature and express their views clearly. They are skilled at analysing texts and they themselves write well, using increasingly sophisticated arguments and vocabulary. Standards are also well above average in science and achievement here is very good because students' interest and curiosity are stimulated by very good teaching.
3. Standards in modern languages are well above average in Year 9 and students build so well on these that by Year 11 standards are very high. Achievement overall is very good. Achievement in music is also very good and standards are very high. This is evident not only in students' work in class but also in the very high quality of the extra-curricular activities.
4. Standards in art and geography are above average in Year 9 and Year 11 and achievement is good. In design and technology standards are above average by Year 9 and well above average by Year 11.

5. In ICT, although there has been a big improvement since the previous inspection, and standards reached by Year 9 are above average, most of the gains in skills and knowledge occur in Years 7 and 8. Students in Year 9 are underachieving because they have only one 35 minute lesson a week. This barely gives them time to log on and open the required application, so that there is little difference between students' work in Year 8 and that in Year 9.
6. Standards in citizenship are average. Students have a good understanding of the concept of good citizenship and are aware of the rights and responsibilities within society. They apply this knowledge to situations in subjects such as geography when discussing such topics as the impact of humans on ecosystems but not all subjects yet indicate clearly enough where aspects of citizenship are being taught.
7. Standards in religious education are well above average in Year 9 and for those who take the GCSE in Year 11. Achievement is very good up to Year 10. However, only the GCSE students take the subject in Year 11, so that overall standards by Year 11 are below average, and achievement over the Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. This situation will change next year because all Year 10 students are taking the GCSE short course that continues into Year 11.
8. The school is rightly concerned about the difference in progress between boys and girls, particularly in Years 10 and 11. In most lessons inspectors found little difference in the involvement and engagement between boys and girls. However, in the few lessons in which teachers used more traditional teaching methods, for example in a few modern language lessons and a few science lessons, boys were clearly less enthusiastic. Another factor that seems to affect results is the amount of coursework required to complete the GCSE course. In history, where no coursework is needed, boys are doing as well as or better than girls, and the school is looking to reduce coursework in other subjects where possible. Overall average point scores are also affected by boys' lower grades in design and technology. A higher proportion of girls than boys achieve the highest grades, and this is partly influenced by their different choices within the subject and the difference of provision. Resistant materials is a popular choice for boys but the lack of technical support means that they cannot be offered the range and complexity of projects appropriate to their ability, and as a result they are less inclined to make the same commitment to the subject that girls do.

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	96 (95)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	59.9 (56.8)	41.4 (40.6)

There were 152 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

9. Students with special educational needs achieve very well. They do as well in public examinations as all other students. Results for students from minority groups are analysed and no evidence of underachievement is found. Students identified as being exceptionally gifted or talented achieve very well.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the sixth form are well above average and the trend since 2001 has been upwards.
- Students achieve very well in the sixth form.

Commentary

10. Students' A-level results in 2004 were well above average. These results were not as strong as those in the previous two years, but they were part of the broad upward trend in the school's A-level performance since 2001. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades of A and B was also well above average. Girls did better than boys, in line with the difference found nationally, although the results of both were well above average for their gender. Almost all students complete the course they have started and a very large proportion carries through from AS to A-level.
11. In the work seen during the inspection standards in Year 13 are well above average. Students achieve very well in relation to their attainment when they entered the sixth form. Of the 11 subjects inspected in detail, standards are well above average in mathematics, product design, history, media studies, music, psychology and business studies. Students are achieving very well in these subjects because the quality of teaching is very high, and at times excellent. Standards are above average in English literature, biology, chemistry and art and in these areas achievement is good on account of good teaching. In all subjects students' achievement is enhanced by an exceptionally mature attitude to their work combined with excellent support and guidance from teachers through careful assessment and frequent tracking of students' progress. For this reason male and female students, as well as the small number with learning needs, are achieving similarly well. Students have been entered for the Critical Thinking Advanced Extension Award examinations and history and English are doing so this year.

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	95.1 (95.4)	92.4 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	43.3 (48.8)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	316 (326)	265 (258)

There were 112 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

The ethos of the school is excellent. Students' attitudes are **excellent** and their behaviour is **very good**. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is **very good** overall. The attendance rate is one of the highest in the country and is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of students of all ages towards learning are exemplary and they behave very well. They have a thirst for knowledge and are very keen and enthusiastic.
- Their attendance rate is one of the highest in the country. They rarely miss a day and love coming to school.
- There is a myriad of opportunities available, encouraging their moral, social and cultural development.

- Spiritual development has improved and there are some good opportunities for spiritual reflection.

Commentary

12. Students have an uncompromising thirst for knowledge and a passion to succeed to the best of their ability. The presence of intellectual stimulus and excitement in learning is a key reason why standards in the school are high. Students offer a spirited response to challenging teaching and really thrive on pushing the boundaries of their knowledge and understanding. In a Year 8 first ever German lesson, the excellence of the teaching combined with students' eagerness to learn meant that by the end of the 35 minute lesson, students were able to confidently offer each other greetings and introductions!
13. Students behave very well; they cope extremely well with the challenges of some unsuitable accommodation, such as cramped conditions, lack of social areas and narrow corridors. Through various charity committees and groups, they raise a considerable amount of money for others, and the school encourages this kind of commitment from them. The small numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated and the school has appropriate policies to back this up.

Exclusions

14. There was a higher than usual number of fixed term exclusions last year. The inspection team investigated these and found that there were exceptional circumstances, mainly unrelated to the school, which made the exclusions necessary. In the judgement of the inspectors the school acted fairly and appropriately and offered suitable support to excluded students.

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	971	17	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	21	2	1
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	18	0	0

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

15. The school takes its role in being a pivotal point for students' development extremely seriously. It understands it is the key social focus in many students' lives. This is why the provision for personal development is very strong. School serves as an important meeting point for students, some of whom live many miles away. There is a big emphasis on helping

students to make friends and work together, characterised by the many residential visits, to places like Haworth for Year 7 and Normandy for Year 8. Music trips and sports fixtures are regular features of life here.

16. There is a strong moral element to school life, particularly characterised by themes in assembly, for example using the parables in the New Testament. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Teachers speak movingly of the spiritual quality of the Normandy trip, where students visited the American War Graves, carefully timed at midday so they heard the bugler play *Glory, Glory Halleluiah (The Battle Hymn of the Republic)*. The quality of lessons generally has improved and so good opportunities for spiritual reflection are more prevalent.
17. Exciting curriculum focus weeks, involving visits and special events, add an extra dimension to learning, for example the history week, where visitors spoke about medieval life, the Home Front in the Second World War and the life of Native American Indians. Life here is full of music, drama performances, poetry workshops and visiting authors, the latter two during book week.
18. The school has an enviable reputation for the quality of its musical performances and gives a lot to the community in this respect. There is even an annual school disco in a nightclub in town where staff and students see each other in a different light! There is a richness in the arts and there are boundless opportunities for students to develop their cultural appreciation and understanding.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sixth formers play a full part in the life of the main school and both they and the younger students benefit from joint activities.
- Students in the sixth form have excellent attitudes to learning.

Commentary

19. Students are mature, hardworking and committed to doing well, taking an active part in lessons and enjoying the many opportunities for discussion and debate. In both Year 12 and 13 students are becoming – and many already are – independent learners, using their private study time sensibly, completing work on time and conducting research with very little intervention from adults. Beyond the classroom, students play an unusually active part in school life and are involved in a wide range of activities that require both responsibility and commitment. Many students, for example, raise money for charities, run a Young Enterprise project, visit local primary schools to help young children in their reading, take part in musical events, direct plays with younger students or carry out key duties in their role as prefects. There is much for students to do if they wish to be involved, and a significant number of them take full advantage of what is on offer. These rich opportunities make an important contribution to students' personal development. Attendance and punctuality are both very good. Students themselves are very positive about the sixth form. Newcomers say they have been welcomed and they now feel part of the school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0	School data	0.1
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.

20. Students' attendance has improved steadily since the previous inspection, reaching a rate which is one of the highest in the country. They really do enjoy school and want to attend. They enjoy meeting their friends and relish the interesting lessons and endless other enriching opportunities. Parents value the importance of a good education and ensure their children attend regularly. The school has good procedures ensuring reasons for absence are quickly investigated. There are virtually no unauthorised absences, because most parents contact the school and those who do not are reminded of this by staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning within a broad academic curriculum are very good and students' work is assessed well. There are excellent opportunities for enrichment, students are very well guided and supported and links with parents and the community are very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and although the school provides a safe environment, the inspection team brought some minor matters of health and safety to the attention of the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching in all years is very good and as a result students learn very well lesson by lesson and achieve very well in tests and examinations. Assessment is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall and there is more outstanding teaching than is usually seen.
- Teachers use innovative methods that enthuse students.
- The use of ICT as a teaching tool is effective, but access to computers is insufficient to support learning fully in English.
- Boys are less enthusiastic about completing coursework than girls.
- Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are very good.
- Assessment is good but not as good as classroom teaching and assessment in music at the end of Year 9 is inaccurate.

Commentary

21. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. During the inspection teaching and learning in just over half the lessons observed were very good or excellent. Just over

nine out of ten lessons were at least good, and no unsatisfactory teaching or learning was seen. This is significantly better than the teaching and learning in most schools. The previous report criticised the amount of teaching that was pedestrian and unexciting – there has been considerable improvement.

22. Students are keen to learn, and teachers enjoy teaching. The students are so bright and able that it would be easy for teachers to settle for unimaginative methods, but this rarely happens. Teachers look for methods that will engage students and challenge them to want to know more.
23. Latin, for example, is a very popular subject, available to all, not just those in the highest sets. Students speak with enthusiasm about the lessons and enjoy the lively manner, the well-planned lessons and the intellectual challenge of lessons in which the teacher treats them as fellow scholars exploring a language that is anything but dead. Year 8 students confidently translated a passage that included several tenses, systematically seeking the verbs and appreciating the structure of the sentences.
24. Teachers prepare lessons with great care to make the most of the available time, which, in 35-minute lessons, is too short for comfort. Year 8 students, in their first ever Spanish lesson listened to a contemporary Spanish song, followed simple instructions in Spanish, heard an audio tape of several Spanish speakers greeting and responding to each other, identified the difference between formal and informal speech, and practised greeting each other.
25. The growing use of ICT by teachers is helping to speed up lessons and help students to understand new ideas. In a science lesson students grasped the difficult concept of constant velocity through the use of interactive software that enabled them to investigate the forces acting on, for example, a parachutist, and explore the effect of changing the mass of the parachutist or the size of the parachute.
26. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and tasks are interesting. In a few lessons, the pace is not so fast, or the tasks are routine, and in these lessons boys are inclined to be less interested, and although they complete the work they do so with less enthusiasm than girls.

Assessment

27. Assessment is good, but not quite as good as teaching. Most departments are beginning to use more assessment by students of their own work and to use assessment for learning techniques such as effective questioning, but there are some missed opportunities to ask more taxing questions to help students and teachers discover, for example, parts of an explanation which are not fully understood. Most students have a good idea of how well they are doing, and most subject areas use National Curriculum levels to help them see what they need to do to improve. There is however, scope to increase this, for example in ICT. Teachers' assessment is usually accurate, though there was some overestimation in music last year. Books are usually marked well, but in science there is a need to improve the consistency of the quality of feedback to students.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 176 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
12 (7%)	77 (44%)	67 (38)%	20 (11%)	0	0	0

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

28. There is very good provision for students with special educational needs. Teachers receive training in strategies to use in support of specific needs. In lessons teachers are fully aware of students' special needs and provide very good support although individual education plans are sometimes not precise enough. Students always have whatever specialised equipment they need to assist their learning.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the sixth form is very good and because of this students learn very well.
- Teachers have very good command of their subjects.
- Although ICT is used very well in mathematics, there is not enough use of computers in some other subjects

Commentary

29. No lesson was judged to be less than satisfactory, more than nine out of ten lessons were good or better and almost half of them were very good or excellent. This is an unusually strong record of teaching and helps to explain why students are achieving so well in their subjects.
30. Sixth form teaching has particular strengths which promote strong learning. Teachers have a very good command of their subjects. The resulting enthusiasm and confidence are shared by students who in turn show real interest – even passion – for their subjects. This expertise also leads to very skilful questioning which probes students' knowledge and develops their understanding. In history, for example, astute questioning helps students arrive at a personal view rather than jumping to conclusions. Lessons have real pace and teachers have high expectations of students' willingness and capacity to work. Marking of students' work, too, is a major feature of the very good teaching. Students comment on how carefully their work is assessed in such a way that they are helped to improve. Teachers go out of their way to support students in their learning and are often available outside working hours to help them if they need it. This in turn has helped to bring about a very pleasant rapport between teachers and students who warmly appreciate the support and guidance they receive.
31. The use of ICT in sixth form subjects is uneven and in too many subjects is inadequate for the needs of the course. An exception to this is mathematics where ICT is used effectively to develop new ideas and to present them in a vivid and engaging manner. In other subjects, however, notably in biology, chemistry, psychology and business studies, students have limited access to ICT resources to support their learning and facilitate research.

The curriculum

The school provides a good academic curriculum that fits the needs of the students. There is a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. However, the curriculum overall is merely satisfactory as statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship are not met. Resources are satisfactory but accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good curriculum for students in Years 7 to 9 with particularly strong provision for foreign languages.

- The school fails to meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education for all students in Year 11.
- There is a good range of optional subjects for students in Years 10 and 11 but the ICT course is not sufficiently challenging.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very strong programme of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

32. The curriculum for students in Years 7 to 9 is good. Students follow courses in all National Curriculum subjects and there is particularly strong provision in modern foreign languages. All students study French and in Years 8 and 9 there is a choice between German, Spanish and Latin, the last-named of which is a popular subject and a good addition to the curriculum. However, in order to allow sufficient time for languages not enough time is allocated to English and ICT, while drama as a discrete subject is limited to Year 7. Time allocation for physical education has improved since the time of the previous inspection and there is now sufficient time to cover the agreed syllabus in religious education.
33. In most respects the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good, offering a full range of academic subjects as options in addition to the compulsory courses. At the beginning of the present school year it was decided, after wide consultation among governors, staff, students and parents, that design and technology and French would no longer be compulsory. To increase the amount of choice there is a wide range of options within design and technology and students can choose to do either combined or separate sciences. ICT, however, is at present taught as a key skill with the result that students are not fully prepared for the ICT A-level course in the sixth form. The curriculum fits the needs of nearly all the students as the percentage choosing to continue their education in the sixth form or elsewhere is very high. Mentoring is provided for the very few who find it difficult to cope with the work.
34. However, the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has to be judged unsatisfactory as it fails to meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education to all students in Year 11 in addition to the small minority that follow the GCSE full course. This situation has not improved since the time of the previous inspection but plans are now in hand to rectify it from September 2005. All Year 10 students follow the GCSE short course in religious studies if they do not opt for the full course and they will continue in Year 11.
35. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education, and provision for citizenship is satisfactory. All students have one lesson per week to cover these topics formally in addition to other more incidental provision in other subjects and in assemblies and there are plans for further development.
36. Curricular provision for students who have special educational needs is very good. They follow the same curriculum as all other students and are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that they receive every support and all teachers are aware of their needs. The school does not have full wheelchair access, governors having decided to postpone installation until they can meet the very substantial cost that the design of the buildings demands.
37. The school's provision for gifted and talented students is good. For instance, during inspection week, a mathematics puzzle day was held for Year 8 students, and part of this involved specific challenges for gifted mathematicians.

Extra-curricular activities

38. The curriculum is enriched by a very strong programme of extra-curricular activities. There is a wide range of sporting fixtures and opportunities which is popular with many

students. There are many chances for students to augment their musical education beyond the classroom. One student in five takes instrumental tuition and there are many other opportunities to make music, most prominently the music tours to Europe which take place most years. There is a strong tradition of annual dramatic productions while *First Bow* is a feature in which older students produce and direct short plays for Year 7 students to act. Among the many other extra-curricular activities, the whole of Year 8 moves for a week to continue its education in Normandy.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

39. The match of specialist teachers to their subjects is very good, with a good balance of gender, age and experience, although in religious education there is only one specialist teacher and several non-specialists. In design and technology problems associated with the lack of specialists identified at the previous inspection have been resolved but there are still no technicians, an unsatisfactory situation. Newly qualified teachers appreciate very good support. Librarian support is very good.
40. Accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, but remains unsatisfactory. Although the physical education department makes good use of off-site accommodation at a nearby sports centre, the on-site provision continues to be unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection the school has added an ICT room of good quality, but the development of ICT in other subjects means that the demand on the two ICT rooms is reaching its limit, and further ICT accommodation is now required.
41. The resource centre is well organised and managed. However, the six computers are in heavy demand as the resource centre is used throughout the day, for lessons, lunchtime activities and private study. The lack of a sixth form study area is a serious deficiency.
42. The provision of learning resources in subjects is satisfactory. It is particularly good in music with a very good range and quality of musical instruments. However, there is a shortage of control equipment in design and technology. The number of computers has been increased since the last inspection, but many departments have insufficient computers to make effective use of the technology. The ratio of computers to students of about 1:5 is about the same as that seen in most schools nationally.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The sixth form curriculum offers a very broad range of academic courses
- Business education and physical education at A-level meet the vocational needs of students.
- There are limited opportunities within the curriculum for students to widen their knowledge of moral or political issues.
- Sport is only available to those students who study the subject for examinations.

Commentary

43. With the exception of a small number of Year 12 students who are struggling with AS-level mathematics, the sixth form courses meet the needs and aspirations of students. The mathematics department is introducing a new course next year that is better suited to these students. The school in this respect, and in many others, is sensitive to students' needs and responds to their requests. Another example of this is the recent introduction of AS-level sports studies, a successful new course brought in to respond to growing demand.
44. Although this is an academic curriculum it is not exclusively so. In recent years the curriculum has grown and adapted significantly so that there are now over 30 AS and A-level courses available. In addition to the subjects students have taken at GCSE level, courses in business, media studies, geology, philosophy, critical thinking, government and politics, sociology, psychology, sports studies and several more are on offer. These new subjects are very successful in attracting students from outside the school to join the sixth form, and in offering everyone a new start in a fresh discipline. They are popular – in a few cases leading to very large teaching groups – and, because of very good teaching, are leading to very good achievement by students.
45. The weekly lesson of personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) is well planned. This session is also well used for individual monitoring of students. Outside of PSCHE and their chosen subjects, however, there are very few opportunities on the timetable for students to deepen their understanding of social, political and moral issues, or to take part in sport if they wish to. Male students in particular would welcome such opportunities. The curriculum meets requirements for religious education.

Extra-curricular enrichment

46. Provision for extra-curricular enrichment is unusually good and contributes greatly to students' personal development. Many of the activities open to the main school are equally available to sixth form students. Indeed, a good number of older students not only take part in, but also help to organise activities such as *First Bow* where sixth formers direct short plays often written and acted by younger students. In their duties as prefects or paired readers, too, sixth formers have frequent productive contact with younger students. This leads to friendly, unstrained relationships within the school. Many students subscribe to the Millennium Volunteer scheme which records and accredits students' achievements outside the classroom. Many also take part in a Young Enterprise business project or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, both of which require time, commitment and responsibility.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

47. Accommodation for the sixth form is unsatisfactory. In art, students are limited by the lack of a designated area in which to continue their work. In media studies the subject base is too small for the large numbers of students on the course. All students are affected by the inadequate size and the drabness of the sixth form social area and the lack of spaces where they can study quietly. It is a tribute to students' resourcefulness that they usually manage to find somewhere to work, but this is frequently without access to computers.

48. Staffing of the sixth form is very good. Teachers are well-qualified specialists. Resources are satisfactory overall. Good resources in many areas are offset by the lack of ICT facilities in certain subjects and for students' private study. The resource centre is well used by students as a study space, though this is limited when it is in use as a classroom.

Care, guidance and support

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are very well guided towards their examination choices and future careers
- There is inconsistency in the way subject departments help students understand how they need to improve; some areas do it much better than others.
- The school cares about how students feel about school and consults extensively with them.
- Basic health and safety requirements are in place but whole-school systems and procedures need improving.
- The school council helps improve the quality of life for students, but students are capable of taking much more responsibility for its management and organisation.

Commentary

49. The quality of advice, support and guidance students receive is very good. This is particularly so in respect of the guidance they receive about examination options and possible career pathways. Careers guidance has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is very well tailored to meet the needs of students.
50. The quality of guidance about students' work, how they are doing, and how they can improve, is better in some subjects than in others. The school's monitoring system, overseen by form tutors, is based on grades for attitude, behaviour, progress etc. It is universally understood and successfully highlights those who are doing well and those who need closer watching. Some subjects for students in Years 7 to 9, for example geography, are very good at explaining how pieces of work equate to National Curriculum levels and what students need to do to work at the next level, so as to improve. In other subjects, particularly art, music and languages, this is much less apparent.
51. Consultation with students is an important part of life here, highly valued by the headteacher. An extensive consultation regarding the nature of the curriculum choices resulted in the 'freeing up' of some GCSE option choices. A survey to find out how students felt about several aspects of school life has resulted in a much closer focus on how bullying is being dealt with and how staff can provide individual, yet confidential help to those who need it. Students are happy that staff take any bullying reports seriously.

52. Requests from the school council are listened to by senior staff, and do result in changes, such as revamping the quad area and providing water coolers. Students, because they are so mature and sensible, show themselves to be highly capable of organising and running the council. Chances for giving more responsibility (and thus raising the council's profile) so students can gain a greater understanding of how democracy actually works, are being missed.
53. The daily care and welfare needs of students are dealt with well and members of staff are very friendly and supportive. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and the level of training is good. Basic health and safety procedures are in place, but this area of the school's work needs a much more stringent focus, with staff training, to bring systems in line with the expectations for current practice. The school is already aware of this. Some areas were brought to attention of the headteacher during the inspection.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receive excellent tutorial support and guidance in the sixth form.
- Students feel that they are treated fairly and like adults, and that in return adult conduct is expected of them.

Commentary

54. The very high quality of support, warmly acknowledged by students and parents alike, plays a key part in students' very good achievement in their academic work and their personal development.
55. The team of sixth form tutors together with heads of year combine to ensure that students always have one or more responsible adults who know them as individuals. Students meet their tutors regularly to review progress through the very well established monitoring procedures. These ensure that each individual's academic and personal development is closely monitored so that under-achievement is quickly identified and acted upon. Students have 'target monitoring grades' based on their GCSE results and these are regularly tracked and compared with actual progress in each subject. This termly monitoring is shared with parents who greatly appreciate the information it gives them. In addition to this, students receive very good support for their university applications and well-informed careers advice when they need it.
56. Students are frequently consulted, their views taken seriously and, where appropriate, acted upon. The sixth form council is a respected body that is seen to have influence. Sixth formers lead much of the very good charitable work that involves students across the school. Students are all entitled to vote in favour of individuals among them who wish to become prefects and their votes carry the same weight as those of staff. A questionnaire in Year 12 genuinely solicits students' opinions. It was largely on the strength of students' requests that the school took steps to offer a course in AS-level sports studies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school holds itself highly accountable to parents; it listens and is responsive to their views.
- The information for parents about school news, special events and what is being taught, is comprehensive and of very good quality.
- Work with close primary schools and the immediate community is being carried out sensitively, taking full account of the needs of local people.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.

Commentary

57. Parents hold the school in high regard. They are very supportive of its work and their fund-raising efforts make a significant contribution to improving the quality of experiences for students.
58. Consultation with parents is an established part of the annual cycle here, and the questions they are asked are often searching. For example, at Open Evening each year new parents are asked to rate the quality of the headteacher's speech! Responses are almost always positive. This is a school that genuinely wants to know how it is doing in parents' eyes, warts and all! As the headteacher says, "I am happy to be influenced by parents". Parents now receive a monitoring sheet because they said they wanted more details about how their child was progressing.
59. The results of the Ofsted questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. However, a number of written comments referred to uncertainties about what the school was doing for the students who were gifted or talented. Inspectors feel that parents need clearer information about this.
60. A few Year 7 parents felt the first parents' evening was too late in the year. The system was changed some time ago because the school felt the 'settling in' evening in the autumn term was not working well. The school is sensitive to these opinions and will be looking again at current arrangements.
61. Information to parents is of high quality. This extends to newsletters, monitoring sheets (referred to above) and useful year group handbooks covering issues pertinent to particular years. There is a useful website which gives access to curriculum details and past newsletters and covers most areas parents often want information on.
62. There is good liaison with the parents or carers of students with special educational needs. They are always invited to review meetings and included in the drawing up of individual education plans. The school has a deservedly good reputation in the community for being prepared to offer places to students with special needs and for the support it gives them.
63. Becoming a specialist science college quite recently has given the school the means to work with the local community. Senior management has listened carefully to what professionals and local people have said they needed the most. Working with the local Family Centre and families in challenging circumstances, the school have funded two

visits out, with a scientific bias, in the hope that this is a catalyst for families to engage in learning. Visits to Chester Zoo and follow-up work completed at the Family Centre were a success and more visits are planned.

64. In a similar vein, local primary schools are pleased at the extra mathematics and science teaching they are receiving from visiting North Halifax Grammar School teachers, who are teaching specifically requested sections of the primary mathematics and science syllabuses. Some schools point to a specific increase in students' attainment as being attributable to the North Halifax Grammar School input.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The sixth form is very effective in keeping in touch with parents and providing them with the information they need.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges

Commentary

65. A strong example of effective communication is the monitoring reports sent to parents on a termly basis. These are supplemented by meetings to discuss students' progress and periodic briefings to interested parents about aspects of the sixth form. Parents are very content with the quality of information they receive.
66. Many students are involved in working with the community through help with reading to primary school children, musical events in residential homes, and charity fund-raising. The two-yearly Challenge of Management Conference for sixth formers gives them further opportunities to meet professional people from commercial organisations in the region. Various subjects such as government and politics and music give students very good opportunities to broaden their experience by visiting the Houses of Parliament and attending concerts.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. In many respects the governors are very effective, but the governance of the school is judged to be satisfactory because the school does not meet all statutory requirements. The school is efficiently run and manages its finances well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is purposeful, provides clear direction and has been very effective in bringing about appreciable school improvements since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher is very well supported by a dedicated and hardworking leadership team.
- Departmental leadership is at least good in all subjects except citizenship where it is satisfactory.
- The governing body is failing to ensure that religious education is taught to Year 11 students.

Commentary

67. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The school is very well led by the headteacher who exerts a strong influence over its development and improvement. His leadership is purposeful, provides clear direction and has been very effective in bringing about appreciable school improvements since the previous inspection. These include the raising of students' attainment, the gaining of specialist science college status, improved accommodation and a much-enlarged sixth form. His participative style of leadership is a good motivator for staff and has enabled the school to focus on areas needing development with vigour and perspicacity. He is a very visible presence around the school and is very approachable to students, parents and staff. He is harnessing the considerable potential of staff and students and much is being achieved. The school's priorities, in particular those to improve the curriculum, are appropriate. They include firm plans to increase the allocation of time to English and to continue the religious education course through to Year 11.
68. The headteacher is very well supported by a dedicated and hardworking leadership team. Between them they bring a wide range of skills and experiences that complement each other. They share a commitment to raising standards and are very supportive of each other and of the headteacher.
69. The overall quality of management is at least good in most departments. Departmental plans are linked very clearly with the overall school development plan. A regular programme of monitoring lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning is in place. This enables senior staff to be aware of where the strengths of the school lie and where support is needed. The clear focus of all the departments is raising students' attainment and their aspirations. In this respect, as in many others, they are being very successful. The governors give very good support to the headteacher. They are very well led by the chair. They have a clear vision for the future development of the school, and have a very good understanding of its present strengths and weaknesses. The governors bring a wide range of experiences and expertise to their roles that they are prepared to use to the benefit of the school. There is a very well organised committee structure that ensures that governors are aware of developments in all aspects of the school's life. Decisions about curriculum developments, for example the gaining of specialist science college status, reflect their desire to get the very best for the students in terms of facilities and funding. They are strongly committed and their work is well informed, providing strategies and policy framework for the operation of the school. Governors are not fulfilling their legal obligation to ensure that all students in Year 11 receive religious education lessons. They have explored fully the reasons why the school finds it impossible to provide a daily collective act of worship.

70. The management of the provision for students with special educational needs has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. All legal requirements regarding students with statements of special educational need are met. There is a good system of communication between the special needs co-ordinator and other teachers. Training in support for students with special needs is provided for teachers as needed. Individual education plans lack precision although teachers are aware of individual students' needs and provide appropriately.
71. Staff development and performance management are very effective and contribute forcefully to the very good teaching across the school. Induction for new and newly qualified staff is very effective, and the school responds well to the needs of departments and individuals.
72. Financial management is good. The school has a deficit budget arising from the transition from grant-maintained to foundation status. However, the deficit has been well managed with the support of the local education authority and this year the budget is expected to have a small surplus. Financial decisions about large and small sums are made with efficiency in mind and the school makes best use of its resources. The principles of best value are embedded in management. The school consults widely, compares its performance meticulously with similar schools and looks for the best value in its spending. It gives good value for money.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- Communication between tutors, subject teachers and the sixth form leader is very effective.

Commentary

73. A clear and coherent vision for the sixth form, shared by staff, senior managers and governors, has at its centre the maintaining and improving of standards and students' achievement. The feature that distinguishes this leadership, however, is that continual improvement is not bought at the expense of students' personal development or their happiness. Of equal importance to students' academic performance is the part they play in the school and the community, and their development as responsible individuals and citizens. The sixth form is academically strong but not an academic hot-house. Students are genuinely cherished and great care is taken of their progress.
74. Although this vision originates from the top, the very effective team of year heads and form tutors are the ones who implement it on the ground. The sixth form runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Responsibilities are effectively delegated. Very good communication between tutors and subject teachers results in the best possible support for students. Seven of the 11 subjects focused on during the inspection are very well led and managed; in the rest leadership and management are good. There is an appropriate balance between the income and expenditure of the main school and the sixth form, which is operating within the governors' intended costs. In view of the very good achievement of students and the strong educational provision they receive, the sixth form is cost effective.

75. The challenge facing leadership of the sixth form is how to accommodate the growing number of students – attracted by academic success and the breadth of curricular opportunities – in areas which allow them to study quietly and with good access to ICT, and to spend their brief recreational time in a spacious and comfortable environment.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3487722	Balance from previous year	-86693
Total expenditure	3429780	Balance carried forward to the next	-28751
Expenditure per student	3402		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

The provision for work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

76. The school has well-planned provision to enable students to learn about and experience the world of work. This starts in Year 7 where an effective introduction is made in the PSICHE programme. In Year 8 all students use suitable computer software to explore aspects of different careers and learn about the necessary qualifications. In Year 9 they use this information and advice when choosing the courses they want to follow in Years 10 and 11.
77. Through the Connexions and other careers professionals the school gives students very good guidance, and the work experience programme is very well organised. Students have a week of work experience in Year 11, timed so that they can spend an additional week in the workplace over half term if this turns out to be appropriate. Interview practice is well established through links with the local Rotary Club. These are held in the executive suite of a local bank in order to give students an experience that is as realistic as possible.
78. The academic nature of the school means that most students continue into the sixth form and virtually all go on to higher education. For this reason none follow alternative work-related curricula. Nevertheless the school makes sympathetic and appropriate provision for those few students who choose to go from Year 11 to apprenticeships or directly into employment.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Results of national tests and GCSE examinations were below expectation in 2004.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Some features of the timetable restrict learning.
- The department has very good leadership.

Commentary

79. In 2004, test results at the end of Year 9 were below what the school expected and the school has requested a review of the marking. Results in 2003 were well above average and continued an established trend of improvement. Boys attained less well than girls but by a narrower margin than is found nationally.
80. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are well above average and students' achievement is very good. Students speak confidently and listen carefully with quick understanding to teachers and each other. The quality of class and group discussion is very high with students able to express opinions fully and in clear and often sophisticated language. They read with enjoyment and good understanding. They are especially quick to recognise significant detail and understand how writers use language to create effects and influence readers. Students know how to write appropriately for different purposes. Standards of accuracy are high though a minority of students continue to miss full stops and misuse the apostrophe. Those who begin with faulty writing skills benefit from additional help so that their writing more closely matches other skills. Students with learning difficulties are well supported and, like others, show very good achievement.
81. In 2004, GCSE results were well above the national average and matched the average for similar schools in English literature. Results in English were also well above average but most students did less well in the subject than in others in which they were examined. The proportion of boys gaining A* and A grades was well below the equivalent for girls.
82. Standards of work in Year 11 are well above average. Girls considerably outnumber boys in top sets as they do in Year 9 which reflects the higher attainment of girls and may contribute to it. Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 as they build upon the skills established earlier. They work very well in groups and in class discussion,

expressing their views clearly and confidently. The overall quality of writing is well above average but a small minority of students fail to organise and develop material sufficiently for their purposes.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is sometimes excellent and is never less than good. Teachers ensure that students are fully challenged. They explain tasks clearly and quickly and conduct lessons at a brisk pace. Students have high levels of concentration and work purposefully. Teachers use questions to check understanding and to extend it. Students quickly learn to provide evidence and examples to support their views. They are positively affected by their teachers' enthusiasms. High expectations and purposeful endeavour are found together with good humour and enjoyment. Students learn how their work will be assessed by teachers and examiners and what they need to show in their answers. Coursework is consistently well managed by teachers and students, in contrast to last year when inadequacies in some classes are thought to have reduced overall results. The many strengths contribute to the achievement of high standards. They do not remove the limitations of the mix of short and long lessons both of which cause inefficiencies in the use of time. The total time given to the subject is less than in most schools.
84. The work of the department benefits from very good leadership based upon high yet realistic expectations of teaching and learning. Members of the department are all specialists who effectively share successful practice. Since the time of the previous report, there has been satisfactory improvement from an already high base. Standards overall have continued to rise. Drama features in the curriculum but for Year 7 only. Planned class access to ICT equipment has not yet been firmly established.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

85. Very good standards of English and literacy enable students to show how much they know and understand in all subjects. They have very good general vocabularies and also understand, use and correctly spell technical terms related to their studies. A major theme in English is how language can be used for different purposes. Many subjects such as history and religious studies successfully provide opportunities for discussion and debate to advance learning and develop the capacity for individual thinking. Students with problems of communication are sensitively helped to enjoy the greatest possible participation as was well illustrated in a mathematics lesson. Students' experiences of other modern languages and Latin help them to understand words not encountered previously.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE in French and German are very high and exceed the average for similar schools.
- Very good teaching and students' excellent attitudes to the subject ensure that they achieve very well.
- Teachers mark students' work very helpfully so that they are clear about how to improve.

- The modern foreign languages department is very well led and efficiently managed.
- All students, and most especially boys in Years 10 and 11, would benefit from more opportunities to practise speaking and pronunciation in the foreign language.
- Apart from a very good new ICT suite, the department's accommodation is unsuited to the needs of contemporary language teaching.

Commentary

86. In 2004 GCSE results in French were very high and above the average for similar schools. Almost all students in Year 11 gained a grade A*-C and well over half of them were awarded an A* or A. Girls did better than boys, but by less than the national difference. The smaller number of students who took German as a second foreign language scored equally high results, all of them gaining A*-C. Students achieved very well.
87. Standards in Year 9 are well above average in both French and German. Students are all achieving very well and there is little difference at this stage in the performance of boys and girls. The highest attaining students have an excellent memory for the language they have previously learnt. They understand the rules of grammar very well and adapt them successfully to form new language. The quality of written work is a particular strength, and in this girls do better than boys. Boys, however, enjoy speaking the language and, when given the opportunity, they excel in oral work. Less able linguists and the few with learning needs achieve as well as their peers because of the sensitivity and high expectations of their teachers. Students in Year 8 who have started the half-year 'taster' courses in Spanish and German are responding very well to very good teaching.
88. By Year 11 standards in French and German are very high. Students of all levels of attainment, boys and girls, achieve very well because they are pushed hard by teaching that expects a lot of them. They also bring excellent attitudes to their learning. They have unusually good listening skills and write confidently in French or German to describe events that happened in the past or their plans for the future. They benefit greatly from careful preparation for examinations. The most able linguists write and understand the foreign language at a level that is beyond GCSE. However, students are not as secure in their speaking as they are in other respects. Some speak haltingly and with English-sounding pronunciation. They would benefit from more oral work in lessons.
89. Teaching is very good and leads to equally good learning in most lessons. Teachers are demanding, expecting students to cope with difficult grammar and to memorise new language quickly. They prepare students very thoroughly for the requirements of examinations and mark their work helpfully. Homework is appropriate and students complete it well. Teachers are enthusiasts for their languages and communicate this to students who respond very positively. They rise eagerly to these challenges and work with admirable co-operation and independence. In a few lessons students learn less when teachers talk too much in English and give students too little opportunity, through visual stimulus, to practise speaking actively. The department's new ICT suite is put to good use and students both enjoy and learn very well from the opportunities ICT gives them to consolidate language they have learned in class.
90. The modern foreign languages department is very well led and efficiently managed. Languages staff are a strong team of committed professionals who work very well

together and willingly take on tasks that need to be done. In spite of the unsuitable accommodation – outdated classrooms far from each other in two parts of the school – the department runs efficiently. An annual residential trip to Normandy for Year 8 students enriches their linguistic and cultural experience. Beyond this there is scope for more extension work, such as reading for pleasure in the foreign language, to stretch and motivate the keenest linguists at all levels. From an already strong base in 1998 the department has made good improvements since the previous inspection. Standards have risen; teaching and learning have improved and most of the reservations in the report have been successfully dealt with. Provided the department strives to improve the quality and fluency of students' spoken French, the department is well placed to continue improving.

Latin

Provision in Latin is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good, engaging teaching stimulates students' interests, so they learn and achieve very well.
- Study of Latin makes a very good contribution to students' personal development and to their literacy and ICT skills.

Commentary

91. The study of Latin is successful; it requires a high degree of strictness of discipline that clearly fulfils these students' needs and interests. Very nearly all of them respond and do very well. The popularity of the subject is growing apace, mainly because of highly stimulating teaching that makes learning fun and also, now, gives the students many opportunities to expand their study skills and learning through what they find to be fascinating computer-based research in school and at home. Achievement is very good. Higher grade pass GCSE results are slightly below school averages, because the range of candidates is wide; no one is denied the chance to have a go.
92. Students' knowledge and understanding come on very well. Very good teaching brings students quickly to an understanding of how to tackle the complexities of written Latin so that in Years 8 and 9 they develop skills of recognition and deduction very well. They are able to identify a variety of verb forms and other parts of speech, so they make good stabs at translating texts. They find the work satisfying in itself, but, at the same time, it gives them good insights into custom and life in the ancient world. Whilst this is going on, the teaching makes very sure they are able to pick out the derivations of words in everyday and more sophisticated English usage. As a result, students benefit very well personally.
93. For the many who select to continue in Years 10 and 11, inspection and work scrutiny show still very good achievement and above average standards. Students are able to translate with a good degree of accuracy into and from Latin. They do their homework very well so it reinforces learning and helps students to explore how language works and develops, for example when challenging their peers' and the teacher's awareness of words starting with 'omni'. Students carry out research well, using dictionaries, texts and interactive computer sources that bring study to life.

94. In conversation, many students claim Latin to be their favourite subject because of its interest and the outstanding quality of teaching. Teaching and learning are very good. Based upon a first rate knowledge and love of the subject, lively teaching makes the work interesting and shows Latin's importance as a major root of English. Students are fascinated, so they think deeply about how language works. Teaching methods are very good: demanding, varied, short and sharp exercises invariably follow well-presented and explained purposes for each lesson. Teaching puts a lot of responsibility on the students to work things out for themselves, but gives them some very useful clues that help. In Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form, teaching quality adds up to excellence. Teaching and learning can, for example, venture into the world of popular televised cartoon to excite learning. Students feel comfortable, so in Year 10 and beyond they follow avidly, liberally throwing in their own ideas and always feeling good about the work because, even if they are wrong, the teaching praises their often great effort and points out very gently where errors occur. Very good assessment raises standards. Students are well aware of how they are doing. Very careful correction of written work points out errors and makes very clear how to avoid repetition. Teaching in Years 8 and 9 is good. The subject's popularity necessitates some non-specialist teaching that does a satisfactory job, but is, perforce, less assured and adventurous.
95. The subject is very well led; there is excellent clarity of purpose. High aspirations that have a Pied Piper quality show in students' very good attitudes, responses and results.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and students' achievement is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes and work very hard.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with a strong emphasis on developing logical reasoning and the ability to communicate mathematically.
- Very good leadership and management are shown in the very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Commentary

96. Standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are well above average. Results in Year 9 national tests are consistently very high. In 2004, in relation to students in similar schools, the results were above average. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are very high and show very good achievement.
97. The GCSE results in 2004 are very high and are also very high in comparison with similar schools. This demonstrates the cumulative impact of very good teaching and learning throughout the school. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are very high and students achieve very well.
98. The proportion of students gaining the highest level or grade in national tests and GCSE examinations has increased considerably since the previous inspection.
99. Overall, from well above average standards at the beginning of Year 7 to very high standards in Year 11, achievement is very good. A key factor in this is very good teaching, with an emphasis on the rapid development of strong algebraic skills and also on the ability to reason and to communicate ideas effectively, orally and in writing. Students' very positive attitudes to learning are also an important factor in this very good achievement.
100. There is no significant difference in either attainment or achievement by gender. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers; teachers provide very good support in line with students' specific needs.
101. Students develop a secure foundation across all aspects of mathematics in Years 7. In lessons, and through activities such as the Enigma Code workshops, they are developing their ability to think logically, to express themselves mathematically and to enjoy mathematics as well. For example in a Year 7 class, ICT was used effectively to get students to think about the likelihood of certain events happening, and to describe this, using mathematical language precisely.
102. In Year 9, students have strong algebraic skills, confidently solving a variety of equations and applying this to the solution of problems. Higher attaining students can quickly identify strategies to solve complex ones, lower attainers needing more prompting to do so. The well-planned curriculum gives many opportunities for higher attainers to move on quickly to more challenging tasks, while making sure that lower attainers, progressing more slowly, are also suitably challenged.

103. There is a similar picture in Year 11. Students build very effectively on the work in earlier years to reach very high standards in all aspects of mathematics, and are very well prepared for their examinations.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful. Students know they are expected to work very hard and come prepared to do so. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and use well-chosen examples to develop students' understanding. ICT is used very effectively, for example in a Year 11 lesson to provide a focus for discussing circle theorems, leading to very good learning. In the best teaching, questions are used particularly well to generate lively discussion, as are appropriate paired or group activities to help students develop their ideas.
105. Leadership and management of a strong specialist team of teachers are very good. The impact is shown in the very good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below those of similar schools. Achievement in comparison to similar schools is now very high in Year 11 and the mathematics curriculum is much livelier, attracting and keeping students' interest in mathematics. The additional funding linked to specialist college status is used very effectively, for example in providing ICT resources and enrichment activities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

106. Students' competence in mathematics is very good and makes a strong contribution to their progress in other subjects. For example, in science students can carry out calculations and present and interpret data graphically. These strong skills in handling and presenting data are also used effectively to help progress in geography. Students in ICT can handle formulae competently and use them in spreadsheets. There is a very strong focus on mathematical skills in design and technology; students measure accurately and have very good knowledge of shape for design.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests and examinations are consistently above average and improving each year.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- The quality of teaching is at least good and sometimes very good.
- Students' attitudes to their work are very good.
- Routine marking of students' work is not consistent in giving advice about how to improve.
- Boys in Years 10 and 11 do not always complete writing tasks with the required thoroughness.

Commentary

107. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have, for the last four years, been very high in comparison to all schools nationally. In 2004 almost every student

attained one level above the national average and two thirds attained two levels above. When compared with similar schools these results are average because not so many students as nationally attained the level 7. Standards of work seen in lessons and books are well above average.

108. In 2004, results in double science were significantly above national figures with nine out of ten students attaining a higher grade (A*-C). Girls performed better than boys, particularly at the highest grades A* and A. The group of students who sat three separate science GCSEs in 2004 all attained a higher grade, almost all at A*-B. Students' results in science were better than in their other subjects and results in 2004 were similar to the previous year.
109. Students achieve very well from starting in Year 7 as they maintain their high levels or improve them. This very good achievement continues on through to GCSE. Those students identified as gifted scientists achieve particularly well when placed in the specific group of able scientists in Year 9. Those few students identified with special needs, despite receiving no specific support, also achieve very well. There was, however, evidence of some underachievement of, in particular, a few older boys in lessons when they fail to complete writing tasks such as question sheets or notes.
110. Teaching is good overall because in three quarters of the lessons seen it was good or very good. These lessons are characterised by a variety of activities to keep students actively involved in their learning, plenty of intellectual challenge and a brisk pace. Teachers have high expectations both of the amount of work to be covered and students' completion rate within a particular lesson. Activities such as writing creatively or drawing a cartoon strip about science keep students, particularly the younger ones, interested. ICT, such as computer presentations prepared by students themselves or interactive simulation programs, is often used well to keep students fully involved.
111. All the teachers are science specialists and mostly teach within their own chosen discipline, bringing with it expert knowledge and sometimes a unique style of delivery. Where teaching is only satisfactory, traditional teaching styles, questioning techniques and resources used do not present sufficient intellectual challenge. Very thorough tracking and analysis of individual students' attainment in tests are recorded on a departmental database. This is monitored by subject managers and used to identify any students underachieving. Whilst all teachers correct students' work and award marks using the departmental marking policy as a guide, marking is inconsistent in giving students help how to improve.
112. In every lesson students' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Students work co-operatively with one another, particularly in practical activities despite being in large groups and sometimes small laboratories. The very efficient team of technicians serves the department very well despite the shortcomings in accommodation. Since the previous inspection when accommodation was described as poor, some of the laboratories have been refurbished and recently a new one has been built so accommodation is now satisfactory. However, there is still insufficient laboratory space for the number of staff and the size of many classes. Other points identified at the previous inspection have mostly been addressed, so improvement is good.
113. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The recently appointed head of department has a very clear, well-planned view of future development and has played an integral part in the successful bid to become a

specialist science college. Science teachers and technicians, many of whom have joined the school since the previous inspection, are mutually supportive while often working as separate subject teams. New appointments with responsibilities across the subjects ensure that specific cross-subject areas such as ICT are planned and monitored.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient curriculum time for students in Year 9 to complete their ICT course in sufficient depth.
- The curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11 does not prepare them sufficiently for higher level courses.
- Students have very good attitudes and are very interested in the subject.
- Teaching and learning are good, and there is good achievement by students in Years 7 and 8.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 do not use recognised levels of attainment to assess their own work.
- Leadership of the subject is good with commitment to improve by the subject leader and senior management but management in terms of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

114. Sixty per cent of students in Year 11 gained key skills award at level 3 in 2004. No students took GCSE examinations. In Year 9, as assessed by the teachers, all students gained level 5, and 76 per cent gained level 6 or better, well above that seen nationally.
115. In Year 9 standards are above average. Students have skills and knowledge above those expected for their age.. They have good understanding of the use of spreadsheets. They are beginning to appreciate how spreadsheets can be used to make predictions. They use some advanced features of spreadsheets such as more complex formulae and how to use goal seek. In Year 7 students create slide show presentations, showing the ability to use font, colour and images to good effect. Students in Year 8 have very good knowledge of spreadsheets and of the importance of absolute cell referencing when using formulae.
116. Students in Years 10 and 11 complete projects as part of their key skills course. They make good use of a range of different types of software, such as desktop publishing, word processing, spreadsheets and databases. Higher attaining students produce professional-looking brochures for holidays and city guides. Standards are above average for the course.
117. Students are achieving well in Years 7 and 8, as they increase their knowledge and understanding of new software. This is particularly good in Year 8 when students make rapid progress in creating a web page using professional software in only their second lesson. Although standards in Year 9 are above average, the weekly single lesson is insufficient for students to complete their ICT course to the depth of which

these students are capable. They are therefore underachieving in Year 9. There is satisfactory achievement by students in Years 10 and 11 as they complete key skills coursework, with higher attaining students meeting the level 3 requirements. However, the course itself does not provide these able students with sufficient challenge, nor provide the best foundation for those who wish to study advanced level ICT.

118. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject, and are able to give students clear explanations about the use of software, leading to students making good progress. The work set is challenging and matches students' capabilities. Where time allows, three-part lessons are well planned, although sometimes the plenary session is rushed, and learning is not reinforced sufficiently. In Years 7, 8 and 9 National Curriculum levels are well used to mark students' work. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to use these levels for self-evaluation of their work. Teachers have high expectations of students, who have very positive attitudes and work hard in lessons. This contributes to the good progress they make in lessons.
119. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below average and provision in ICT was a key issue. The number and quality of computers have increased to just below the national average. The current subject leader has only been in post since September 2004 and his good leadership has established a strong sense of purpose and an insistence on high standards of teaching and learning. The underachievement in Year 9 is due solely to the students having insufficient time to develop further the skills they have acquired by Year 8. This is a weakness in curriculum management by senior managers. The subject leader and school agree that the key skills course is inappropriate for the academic nature of its students, because although it equips them well for their needs in other subjects, it is not a good foundation for advanced level study. Leadership of the subject is therefore judged to be good, but management overall is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

120. Students' competence in using ICT is good. All departments have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. There is particularly good use of ICT in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. In mathematics students use spreadsheets to record and manipulate data. There has been an increase in the use of data logging in science, and computers are well used in modern foreign languages. Students in art use photo imaging software well. Students taking GCSE music compose work using computer technology, whilst in dance the use of a digital camera provides students with good feedback about the quality of their performances. Access to computers is a problem for some subjects, as the two computer suites are heavily used by the ICT department. However, both geography and history take advantage, when they can, of time in the ICT rooms. English have found access to computers particularly difficult, and students are not able to use their word-processing skills in this subject as much as they would like. There has been a significant increase in the provision of computer technology with the installation of interactive whiteboards, laptop computers and data projectors. Along with staff training there is increasing use of the technology in teaching and students continue to make good use of the skills they learn in ICT in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as a result of good teaching and are well above average at the end of Year 11.
- Planning in long lessons sometimes does not allow for sufficient activities and the pace of learning slows.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is excellent and they have very good attitudes to work.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

121. GCSE results in 2004 were high. Boys do better than girls in examinations. Results have improved since the previous inspection.

122. Standards are above average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. Students' attainment on entry is above average in English, mathematics and science but their knowledge of geography is average. Therefore, they achieve well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 9. This is consistent across the ethnic groups in the school and across different levels of attainment. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The department has made substantial improvements in teaching methods since the previous inspection. This is the strongest factor in the rise in standards for both boys and girls that is taking place. Teachers ensure that students develop not only a good factual knowledge, but also the investigation and interpretation skills that are essential

to success. By the end of Year 11, students have a detailed knowledge of patterns that exist throughout the world in both physical and human geography.

123. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge both of the factual content for work at this level and of the best ways to prepare students for examinations. Teaching methods have improved considerably. Lessons are well planned and prepared so there is no time wasted and students are actively involved in lessons. Students' behaviour in lessons is excellent and they have very good attitudes to work. Working relationships in lessons are very good. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the fairly long double lessons tend to 'run out of steam' a little. As a result the pace drops and some students become slightly inattentive.
124. Good assessment procedures allow teachers to track students' attainment and progress. Assessment is used well to show students how they can improve their work. Students carry out a range of writing tasks and take part in discussions so geography makes a very good contribution to literacy development. Students also use a range of tables, graphs and measurements in many lessons, thus making a good contribution to numeracy development.
125. Geography makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Monitoring of teaching in the classroom is good and contributes to raising standards. The leadership and management of the subject are good. A strong team of teachers is now in place and the subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstandingly high standards derive from very good teaching.
- Sharply-focused assessment contributes to unusually high attainment by boys.
- Very good leadership creates stability and consistency.
- Students' excellent attitudes make them partners in learning.
- While interpretation skills are strong, there is not enough use made of maps or numerical data linked to ICT.

Commentary

126. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are well above average. A new pattern of assessment designed to raise standards has succeeded in boosting boys' achievement. Students review progress and set targets so they know how to improve. They absorb new knowledge rapidly, using it as the basis for analysing and interpreting historical events. They judge the impact of change from different viewpoints, teasing out the motives behind sources and weighing their reliability. There is not enough use made of numerical data, maps and ICT-base sources to make interpretation more challenging. Students understand consequences like war or social change through investigating long and short-term causes. They are very articulate, fluent writers and research homeworks feed learning. Enthusiastic collaboration strengthens the learning partnership. Students with particular educational needs

achieve equally well, because teachers focus on their strengths and support literacy needs. Some higher attaining students reach GCSE-level skills. Consequently achievement is very good.

127. In 2004, GCSE results, on an upward trend, were outstanding, more so considering that history attracts three quarters of the year group, over twice the proportion nationally. Both boys and girls performed impressively, well above average at the very highest levels, doing better in history than in most other subjects. Standards of work seen are also well above average. History skills are well consolidated and supported by effective study skills – note making, annotating, tightly structured essay writing and techniques for producing succinct examination answers. At this stage students compare events across time, explaining recurring themes and balancing the interaction between politics, economics, personal aggrandisement etc, as they seek to understand the Cold War, Fascism in Germany and Italy and the struggle for human rights exemplified by the cause of Women’s Suffrage. History becomes very real in creative writing. For example, a reflective and moving start to a lesson captivated the class as a student read aloud her ‘letter from Hungary during the uprising of 1956’, in all its compelling detail. Consequently achievement is very good.
128. Teaching and learning are overall very good, sometimes excellent. Regular meetings ensure consistency in assessments, active learning, developing students’ independence and questioning that challenges students to reflect and *apply* knowledge to overarching critical issues. Confidence with the new interactive whiteboard accelerates learning and enriches the interaction between projected resources, especially visual images, and students’ contributions. Teachers share aims with students at the start of lessons and plot learning as it occurs, thus building confidence. Support is currently in place where such standards are at risk.
129. Embedded monitoring, target setting, improved teaching including ICT since the previous inspection, resulting in raised standards, all point to very good leadership and management. The considerable talents of the team successfully create a confident stable environment for high quality learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students in Year 11 are not receiving their entitlement to religious education.
- All students who are following a religious education course achieve very well and attain standards that are well above average.
- Teaching is very good, with respect for students being a particularly strong feature.
- Although the department is very well led it is too reliant on only one specialist teacher.
- Occasionally marking is not helpful enough to raise the standards of students.

Commentary

130. Standards of work seen by Year 9 are well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and represent very good achievement by students. They have very good understanding of the major faiths of the world, theories of the creation and moral

problems. They reflect very thoughtfully on the effects of what they learn on their own lives and the lives of others. They show very good ability to examine evidence and draw conclusions.

131. In Year 10 all students who do not elect to follow the GCSE full course follow the short course. However, in Year 11 there is no religious education offered other than the GCSE full course, which is followed by a small proportion of students. Standards overall, therefore, are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and the achievement of most students is unsatisfactory. However, students who are taught religious education achieve very well.
132. There have been no recent entries in the GCSE full course in religious studies but for the past three years a small number of students have been taught outside the school day for the short course and have attained results that are well above the national average. The standard of work of students following the GCSE course is well above average. They show very good understanding of topics ranging from Old Testament history to moral and social issues. They understand how religion affects the lives of believers. The Year 10 students on the short course reach standards that are well above average.
133. Students in all years learn very well because of very good teaching. In most lessons teachers engage students very well, listening very carefully and showing every respect for what they have to say. Questions are well constructed to ensure that students have to think hard. Students benefit from the variety of teaching techniques used, which include good use of drama and videos. Year 11 students learn from assessing the work of their peers. Homework builds on what students have learned in class and encourages them to think for themselves. There is only one specialist teacher and occasionally non-specialists rely too much on the text book because of lack of familiarity with the subject matter. Most written work is well marked with students being given helpful guidance and clear grades or levels. However, in some younger students' exercise books comments are too bland or even omitted altogether.
134. The department is very well led. The head of department is very clearly raising the status of the subject so that the full GCSE course is becoming increasingly popular. He is an excellent role model for students and also for non-specialist teachers, who speak highly of the support they receive. Management at departmental level is good. Schemes of work with accompanying suggestions for resources, although not yet complete, are particularly helpful to non-specialists and there is a sound development plan. A close check is kept on students' progress. However, management overall is unsatisfactory as the failure by senior management to provide a course for most students in Year 11 is a breach of statutory regulations, even though plans are in hand to correct this in the next school year.
135. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Leadership, teaching and resources have all improved. However, there is still only one subject base and, most importantly, the school is still failing to meet statutory requirements by not providing religious education for all students.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well by Year 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- By Year 11 students achieve less well in resistant materials than in other materials areas.

Commentary

136. Standards of work seen by Year 9 are above average. Students have a good understanding of the materials they use and have developed very good practical skills. Higher attaining students show flair and imagination in their design ideas and their written and drawing communication of ideas is of a very high standard. Drawing skills are well developed in all materials areas because there is a strong emphasis on teaching them. Although students have a good understanding of what a healthy diet is, their understanding of nutrition is weaker because they do not have enough time allocated to learning about this. In relation to previous experience and attainment, students achieve very well. They make particularly good progress with understanding and using the design process to plan, make and evaluate products to a good standard.
137. GCSE results were well above the national average in 2004. Girls gained more A*-C grades because their coursework was of a higher standard. Very good results have been maintained since the previous inspection.
138. Standards in work seen are well above average by Year 11. In lessons, there is very little difference between the progress of boys and girls. As a result of the positive response made by teachers to the need to support boys to improve their coursework, boys are managing project work well and approaching work in more depth and detail. Achievement overall is good. Students have very good understanding of the principles of design and their practical skills are of a high standard. This is significantly because of the accuracy of their measurement of materials and their patience in finishing work to a high standard. Students have well-developed drawing skills and use these very efficiently to illustrate the development of ideas and as working drawings for practical work. Standards are lower in Year 11 resistant materials because students did not make enough progress in Year 10. Now, because of improved teaching and higher expectations, they are making up ground and achieving well. The current lack of technician support limits the time available for the teacher to provide the additional support needed because he is obliged to do technician tasks. In all other materials areas and Year 10 resistant materials, students achieve very well because they have benefited from very well structured courses and suitably challenging work.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of students. They inspire students to work creatively by giving them opportunities to work independently to develop their own ideas and teaching them design ideas and about the work of famous designers. Teachers have established very good relationships with students and there is a very good spirit of co-

operation and evidence of high levels of interest shown. Students work hard and sustain concentration in lessons and so learn very effectively. The very good knowledge teachers have of examination requirements results in very well focused lessons. Although teachers assess students' work thoroughly, not enough use is made of National Curriculum levels to help students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach the next higher level.

140. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department understands the issues related to continuing improvement and has identified priorities. There are very good relationships in the department and teachers work together to share good practice. They are united in the aim to continue to raise standards. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Very good standards have been maintained and accommodation is improving. There is improved access to ICT facilities but still not enough resources for control. The lack of technician support identified in the previous inspection has not been dealt with.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 11 are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good, and students achieve well as a result.
- Leadership and management are good, and have secured good improvement since the previous inspection.
- The accommodation is cramped, and storage is inadequate.
- Not enough work in Years 7 to 9 is on a large scale.

Commentary

141. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 are above average. Students' skills in colour and pattern work are strong, and they use these to develop complex tile designs, based on a study of natural forms. Portraits in pencil are confident and sensitive, and often produce good likenesses of the sitter. Their masks, made from cardboard and plaster, are highly decorative and colourful. However, while they produce some large group pieces, they do not work on a large scale often enough to develop fully their broader handling skills. Standards in art are average when students enter the school. Their achievement by Year 9 is good, and they make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject.
142. In 2004, GCSE results were above average, an improvement on results achieved in 2003. Not enough boys took the examination to compare reliably their results with those gained nationally. Girls' results were above those gained by girls nationally, although they did worse in their art and design than in many of their other subjects in the school. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 11 are well above average, and the improvement seen in GCSE results has continued in the work in the school. Students' research skills are very strong, and they have an extensive understanding of the work of the artists that they study. Their composition work is careful and

considered, and colours and shapes are very well arranged to achieve harmonious effects. Observation work is very accurate, and drawings of fruit capture subtle colours and textures very well. In addition, sculptures in plaster are very expressive, and effectively explore themes such as 'Mother and child'. The achievement of those students who take the subject in Years 10 and 11 continues to be good.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well prepared, often featuring brisk introductions and good, clear, demonstrations. As a result, students know exactly what they need to do to succeed, and activities get off to a good start. In addition, teachers' subject knowledge is strong, and they give good individual advice. These factors produce good levels of interest, a good pace and good learning.
144. Course leadership and management are good. Recent staffing difficulties have been successfully tackled, and this has helped improve the quality of teaching and learning. Good improvement since the previous inspection has been achieved, and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, and students' achievement have improved. The accommodation, however, is cramped, and storage is inadequate. This makes it difficult for students in the larger classes to spread out and review their research work.

Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are well above average and students achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning overall are very good.
- Students' attitudes are very good in Years 7 to 9 and excellent in Years 10 and 11.
- Extra-curricular work is of a very high standard and high quality instrumental lessons enhance students' achievement at all levels.

Commentary

145. Music holds an important place in the life of the school. Lunchtimes and after school are full of sounds of band, orchestra and choir rehearsals, all of which are of very high quality. Students from all years take part in these. They are committed and enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to perform at a wide range of concerts in and out of school and also abroad. A trip to Venice is planned for next year. High quality instrumental lessons enhance the learning of about 200 students and support these activities and the work of the classroom.
146. Standards in Year 9 are well above average and a number of students are exceptionally talented. They achieve very well. Students use keyboards and a range of other instruments very well. Performances heard in the classroom and on tape were confident and well rehearsed. *Jackass Blues* was lively and rhythmic and first attempts at improvising fills were impressive. Very few students perform unmusically. Compositions are imaginative and assured. Teachers' assessments in 2004 overestimated students' standards.
147. Standards in Year 11 are also well above average and students continue to achieve very well. They compose with a sure hand and compose pieces in a good variety of

styles. All students are strong performers, sometimes on more than one instrument. They listen analytically to music, critically commenting on aspects of composition and realisation. GCSE examination results in 2004 were well above average. Fourteen of the 15 students taking the examination achieved a grade between A* and C. Eleven students scored A, resulting in a points score well above the national average. There were too few students to compare percentages reliably with those seen nationally.

148. Students' attitudes to music are very good and excellent in Years 10 and 11. Music is a popular classroom subject. Work is interesting and students respond very well to very good teaching. In this highly practical environment learning is very good. Lessons are beautifully planned, full of interesting activities and challenging ways to learn. Demonstrations from the teacher help students to learn quickly. Students receive very good one-to-one advice from teachers when they rehearse their music. Whilst this happens others continue to work very productively as individuals or in pairs. They achieve a great deal in the lesson time. Students' work is well assessed and they have a good understanding of where their strengths and weaknesses lie. Regular and reflective discussion does not take place in all lessons. In Year 10 GCSE lessons, students are only just beginning to use the examination criteria, but a lesson using these was highly successful and imaginatively presented. Students made very good progress with their understanding of composition and realisation.
149. The department is very well led and managed. The staff, including instrumental teachers, many of whom direct bands and orchestras, work together as a very good team. Thorough analysis of GCSE examination results has led to improvement in standards in aspects of the course. This does not happen yet in Years 7 to 9. Improvement since the last inspection is good but the department still lacks suited practice rooms for small group work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The overall quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are very high.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Very good relationships and good lesson management ensure that students have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- The indoor accommodation is inadequate.

Commentary

150. This is a very well managed department that promotes high levels of attainment, and makes a positive contribution towards raising students' levels of physical fitness and confidence.
151. In recent years students have gained A*-C grades in the GCSE examination that have been above the national average. In July 2004 examination the number of students gaining the higher grade passes was well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that the students in Year 11 are performing as least as well, with a significant number achieving at the highest level.
152. The levels of attainment at the end of Year 9 are overall better than those achieved nationally. This represents good achievement by the students, some of whom have limited experience and skills when they arrive from their primary schools. Students perform well in a wide range of activities. In games they demonstrate good ball control and are aware of simple attack and defence strategies and are acquiring the skills to enable them to compete successfully. In gymnastics students are able to demonstrate a range of movements and variety on the floor and on apparatus, most being able to create gymnastics sequences that are performed with fluency and control.
153. Students continue to make good progress during Years 10 and 11 and by the time they are 16 years old their attainment is better than that seen nationally. Overall achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
154. Students are able to undertake a range of tasks including acting as officials, referees and coaches. Students understand the necessity of warm-up sessions, with many of them able to lead a warm-up session with confidence.
155. Teaching is very good overall. It is never less than good, and in the majority of lessons observed it was very good or excellent. Lessons are well prepared and content is well matched to students' interest and of attainment. Teachers are continually making demands for high quality performance and good behaviour, and invariably, learning is very good and teachers' demands are met. Students respond very positively and are highly motivated, and their enjoyment of their lessons is very evident.
156. Strong leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the department. There is a very extensive programme of extra-curricular activities on offer, which are very well supported. The inadequate indoor accommodation is, in part, compensated by the use of local leisure centres' facilities. Hard-working teachers work well together, support each other and show a very strong commitment to their students. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Examination results have improved and the overall standard of teaching has improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good where there is strong emphasis on citizenship in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSCHE) lessons.
- Not all subjects that could make a strong contribution to citizenship do so.
- Good leadership of the subject is now beginning to raise awareness and standards.
- The Year 9 citizenship day and other activities across the school provide good opportunities for citizenship development.
- Students discuss issues but do not have much opportunity to write about citizenship.

Commentary

157. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. Students achieve satisfactorily. This is consistent across all levels of ability and across the various minority ethnic groups in the school.
158. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Year 9 students have a citizenship day each year. Teaching in this event is good and learning about citizenship is strong. This is an imaginative project in which students prepare detailed presentations on behalf of a number of cities worldwide in order to convince the audience that this is the best place to host the World Cup. The research students carry out include accommodation, transport, environmental issues and an exploration into the meaning of citizenship both globally and nationally.
159. Teaching is also good where aspects of the citizenship curriculum are dealt with in personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons. This is seen in work done by Year 8 students on consumers and the law, for example. Students have a good grasp of the relationship between laws and citizenship and present their ideas coherently in well-informed discussion. They have less opportunity to write about such topics.
160. Teaching and learning across other subjects in the curriculum is less consistent. Although teachers are aware of the possibilities for teaching citizenship across subjects of the curriculum, they do not always plan thoroughly enough to incorporate elements of the citizenship curriculum into their own subject lessons.
161. Active citizenship is good and students are given many opportunities to take responsibility and become responsible citizens. For example, Year 8 assemblies this term are presented by tutor groups in turn, each with a citizenship theme.
162. The subject co-ordinator has shown good leadership in raising the profile of the subject. Assessment and reporting procedures are in place, and the school has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and what still needs to be done.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

Level 3 GCE A-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	11	100	98.3	54.5	50.2	91	87.1
Biology	30	100	93.3	30.0	40.0	75	79.3
Business studies	18	100	98.9	66.7	39.4	94	81.8
Chemistry	26	80.8	97.7	26.9	50.0	60	85.7
Classical studies	4	100	99.6	50.0	58.1	85	92.8
Design and technology	13	100	97.8	61.5	35	92	77.9
Economics	11	100	98.8	45.5	54.3	89	89.8
English language	20	100	99.2	55.0	36.4	93	81.1
English literature	11	100	99.4	63.6	44.9	102	85.5
French	10	100	99.0	10.0	53.1	70.0	88.9
General Studies	32	90.7	94.9	25	30.5	70	72.9
German	3	100	98.6	66.7	49.6	93	86.3
History	23	100	99.0	78.3	45.6	103	85.1
Mathematics	16	100	96.8	56.3	56.6	91	89.5
Music	7	85.7	98.2	14.3	37.1	74	79.5
Other sciences	21	100	97.4	38.9	45.3	94.3	84.6
Other social studies	48	97.92	97.4	41.7	42.5	79	82.6
Physics	18	100	96.7	36.8	45.3	81	84.6
Sociology	14	100	98.5	64.3	45.3	94.	84.6

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	13	69.2	78.3	15.4	21.6	26	28.5
Biology	27	81.5	63.5	37	10.4	33	19.8
Business studies	226	100	75.3	50	15.4	46	25.7
Chemistry	32	84.4	70.3	31.3	13.2	32	23.0
Classical studies	5	100	89.1	80	36.0	54	36.5
Economics	11	100	87.2	45.5	18.6	43	25.8
English language	38	97.4	85.3	52.6	16.1	42	29.0
English literature	16	100	86.2	68.8	17.4	49	29.7
French	15	93.3	79.8	20	19.4	35	28.2
Design and technology	15	100	72.6	46.7	13.9	44	24.3
General Studies	13	92.3	73.6	38.5	16.9	38.5	25.5
Geography	9	88.9	75.5	22.2	20.4	35.6	27.0
German	9	100	81.6	33.3	18.8	41	28.8
History	27	100	82.2	55.6	20.8	45	29.2
Information technology	12	83.3	66.6	25	8.8	29	20.6
Mathematics	27	96.3	59.9	66.7	14.1	48	20.5
Media Studies	15	100	87.2	46.7	24.9	43	32.8
Other sciences	12	75.0	67.4	25.0	14.8	29.2	22.8
Other social studies	41	100	67.8	58.5	15.1	47	23.2
Physics	27	96.3	66.4	48.2	14.8	42	22.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was **English literature** and **media studies**.

English language, French, German and Latin were sampled. In **English language** an unusually large group of Year 12 students showed that they are gaining good understanding of the main principles of studying dialect. Good learning resulted from the positive attitudes of students and very well informed teaching. In **French** students are reaching above average standards through good teaching and students' very mature attitudes. In **German** students in Year 12 are achieving well and, through their strong motivation, have made good progress since starting the course. In **Latin**, a very popular subject in Year 12, students are achieving very well because very good teaching explores the language adventurously, teasing out meaning and fine points of grammar. Students' command of both Latin and English is very good.

English literature

Provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Students have positive attitudes and work hard.
- Standards are above average in Year 12.

Commentary

163. In 2004, results at A-level and AS-level were well above average with a high proportion gaining the highest grades (A/B). Almost all who begin courses complete them successfully. Results have been either above or well above average in recent years.
164. Students in Year 12 achieve well by comparison with assessments of earlier learning. Standards are above average with a good proportion on course for the highest grades. Students respond confidently to the challenge of working at this level and the expectation that they will reach their own judgements supported by evidence. They are quick to identify significant stylistic features of texts they study and perceptive in their comments. The quality of discussion is very high especially when students are exploring possible interpretations. Written work is above average but less consistent in quality. The best is characterised by very good judgement of what tasks require. Students write clearly and accurately and draw upon wide general and subject-specific vocabularies. Less successful work results from occasional misjudgement of relevance, and expression that is too terse or rambling.
165. Standards in Year 13 are average. The quality of discussion is generally less vibrant than in Year 12 but students think clearly and work purposefully so that their attainment matches and in some cases exceeds expectation based upon evidence of previous learning. This represents good achievement. Students have good understanding of how their work will be assessed which they use sensibly to guide decisions about length and depth of answers. They show clear understanding and enjoyment when challenged to write humorous ballads. Written responses to literature

are well organised and reflect average levels of understanding. A minority make personal judgements of the quality needed for the highest examination grades.

166. Teaching and learning are good overall, and sometimes very good. Teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and effective use of stimulating and helpful resources. Questioning is usually rigorous requiring students to provide full answers together with evidence to support judgements. Teachers plan lessons skilfully and conduct them at a brisk pace which is especially necessary in short single lessons. Learning is secure because of good relationships between students and teachers and the positive attitudes students have to their work.
167. Good leadership makes effective use of the experience and skills of teachers. The head of department has clear vision of how students may benefit from their studies. The department has made good improvements since the previous inspection by sustaining the high standards noted in the previous report and responding successfully to changes in methods of examination.

Media studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well and A-level results are very high.
- The course has quickly become very popular because of very good leadership.
- Detailed helpful comments on students' assignments are a key feature in raising standards.
- Students are very enthusiastic about the course because of the very good teaching.
- Accommodation is insufficient for the number of students on the course.

Commentary

168. In the two years in which students have entered for A-level they have achieved beyond expectations and results have been very high compared to national averages. In 2004 students did better than expected at AS-level. In the work seen standards are well above average with a good proportion of students reaching very high standards. For example, in a study of gender presentation in sitcoms, students in Year 12 show very good analytical skills and present their arguments logically and with a good deal of sophistication. As students have no experience of media studies before joining the sixth form these standards represent very good achievement.
169. Students learn very well because teaching is very good. Teachers' excellent knowledge of the subject allows them to increase students' understanding by skilful questioning and astute interventions in discussions. Close reference to examination criteria similarly helps to raise standards. In particular, students' written assignments are read very perceptively and very detailed comments show students how to improve. Students are highly appreciative of the guidance they receive in this way. Lessons are very well planned with very good use made of resources, including computers, and there is an expectation that students will reach the highest standards. Lessons are conducted with an assumption that students will act and work in a mature way. This is seen, for example, in the emphasis that is placed on students studying

independently. As a consequence students are very enthusiastic about the subject and nearly all continue from AS to A-level.

170. The subject is very well led and managed. In only a few years the subject has become firmly established with the number of students increasing significantly each year. There is a constant drive to ensure that they attain the highest possible standards. For example, the decision to change to a different examination board has been taken in order to raise attainment. A close check is kept on the progress of individual students. Accommodation, however, is unsatisfactory as the subject base is too small for the number of students that the subject now attracts. The subject was not reported on in the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

171. Students' command of English is very good and this is evident in their oral and written work in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning lead to well above average standards and very good achievement by students.
- Students' very positive attitudes are shown in the very good retention rates, and in the increasing number of students who study mathematics.
- Students correctly feel that they receive very good support and guidance from their teachers.
- The AS/A-level curriculum is not appropriate for a few lower attaining students.

Commentary

172. The standard of attainment on entry to Year 12 is above average. In 2004 A-level results were above average; in 2003 they were well above average. Over the past few years virtually all students have passed their external examinations at both AS and A-levels. Results in further mathematics are also well above average: in 2004 all students gained an A grade. In some years male students get better results in examinations, in other years female students do so.

173. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 12 and 13 are well above the national average, showing very good achievement. Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and learning. They are highly motivated and respond very well to clear, knowledgeable teaching; they work very hard and their attitudes to learning are very good. The very strong mathematical foundation provided in the main school is an important factor in this very good achievement and also in the increased popularity of mathematics. However, a small number of lower attaining students in Year 12 are finding the work very difficult and the AS course is not suitable for them. A new course is planned for next year which should provide a more suitable alternative for such students.

174. Students in Year 13 differentiate or integrate a wide range of functions; higher attainers quickly select the most appropriate method, lower attainers need some prompting. Students sketch functions and work out the impact of changes in these on the shape of the graphs. The way in which students tackle new topics and use existing skills to solve more complex problems shows very good achievement for all. There was no difference in standards or achievement by gender in work seen in class.

175. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject. They plan lessons well and explain concepts very clearly, often using ICT effectively to help with the development of new ideas. For example, in a Year 12 further mathematics lesson the investigation of graphical representations of functions was much more striking and understandable through the visual impact of the

ICT program used. Regular homework and frequent topic tests are effective in consolidating students' learning and showing where they need to improve. Students correctly feel well supported in their learning; there is always additional help available, for example at lunchtimes, if they are experiencing difficulties.

176. The leadership and management of a strong team of specialist teachers are very good. Teachers work well together sharing ideas; their subject knowledge and very good relationships with students provide a strong mathematical environment for learning.
177. There were no major post-16 issues raised in the previous inspection report. Standards and teaching have remained well above average. The number of students taking mathematics has increased considerably, and the breadth of the curriculum has also increased. Improvement is very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

178. Students' mathematical skills are above average and are a positive contributory factor to their progress in other subjects. Students in psychology can analyse data effectively and in business education they are confident in handling data and carrying out calculations, such as profit/loss analysis. In science students can interpret and represent data graphically and have good skills in calculation.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was **biology** and **chemistry**. Electronics and physics were sampled. In the practical lesson of **electronics** observed teaching was good and led to high levels of independent learning. In **physics**, the teachers' s very good subject knowledge, and ability to encourage students to think and question led to good learning.

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and uses different activities to help students learn.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning. Very good relationships exist between them and their teachers.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

179. A-level results in biology in 2003 were well above the national average with girls attaining many more of the higher grades than the boys. All students gained a pass grade, though the number taking the examination was relatively small. In 2004 the entry number increased but results fell slightly to broadly average. Girls did slightly better than boys. A few of these students failed to reach their target grade. The groups of students who produced these results had unfortunately experienced long-term staff absences and staff changes during the two years of the course. Until 2004 results had improved each year since the previous inspection, prior to which they had been falling.

Improvement since the previous inspection is therefore good. The standards of work seen in the groups range from very high to average and overall are above average.

180. Most students achieve well from their starting points at GCSE. Most enter Year 12 having attained higher grades in GCSE double science or in biology as a separate subject. Numbers choosing the subject are increasing each year and in the current Year 12 there are four groups of students, nine out of ten of whom have attained grades A*-B at GCSE. At the moment the teaching is shared between two of the full-time staff of the department supported by two part-time teachers. Plans are in place to increase the quota of full-time teachers in the next academic year. This is particularly important as about two thirds of students who start the course in Year 12 complete both years and there is little or no drop-out once students start each year.
181. Teaching by the subject specialists is good and so students learn well. Methods, such as practical activities, are used to develop students' confidence and independence in lessons. Lengthy assessed practical investigations or dissections are used to support theory and so help learning. Students also learn well when the teacher develops and explains a concept and then challenges them to write their own explanations. The occasional use of copied or dictated notes does not give students enough opportunity to think for themselves and then learning is not so effective. The department is short of available ICT facilities to support teaching and to give students access to information for individual research. Resource centre facilities are satisfactory, but no better than this. Marking of individual pieces of work and examination questions is thorough and gives help in how to improve.
182. Students' attitudes to their work are very good. They apply themselves fully to every task set and relationships between students and their teachers are very good. Those students starting A-level from other schools have settled and integrated well. All are very appreciative of the help and support they receive from their teachers both in and out of lessons.
183. The subject is well led and managed. The head of subject has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses and how to move the subject forward. Each year examination results are analysed carefully. Plans are in place to resolve current staff shortages and to introduce human biology as an additional subject next year.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
- Students are very well motivated.
- There are very good working relationships during lessons.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons.
- Resources are becoming depleted due to increasing numbers of students.

Commentary

184. The A-level results in 2004 were below average and the girls achieved higher than the boys. These results were not as good as those for 2003 or 2002, when they were well above average and all students achieved a pass with many of them at the higher grades and again, the girls achieved higher than the boys. Retention rates are good.
185. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average and do not reflect the 2004 examination results. These standards are achieved because of good teaching and the very positive attitudes of the students. In relation to their standards at the start of the sixth form, the achievements of students are good and they make good progress. Although girls achieved better results in the examinations, there is no discernible difference in lessons between the performance of girls and boys. No students were seen with special educational needs and those students for whom English is a second language make similar progress to others. Year 12 students are building well on work covered at GCSE and have a good understanding of chemical bonding and nomenclature. Students in Year 13 are able to plan and design experiments to prepare organic compounds. Written work is well presented and students display literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to the course. Practical skills are well developed in both years.
186. Teaching in chemistry is good and the strong motivation of the students enables them to learn well. Lessons are well planned and organised and have a brisk pace which maintains students' interest. Teachers have sound subject knowledge which enables them to give clear explanations of difficult concepts to help learning. The very good working relationships during lessons mean that students feel able to ask for help if they need it. They work co-operatively together and are encouraged to help each other and share ideas, which works particularly well with the smaller group sizes in Year 13. Teachers' expectations are high and students are questioned frequently during lessons to reinforce knowledge and understanding. They respond well and rise to challenging questions. Independent learning skills are fostered through projects and presentations. Marking and assessment are thorough with clear guidance on improvement. The use of ICT is limited due to problems with networking and there is a shortage of some specialist chemistry equipment.
187. Leadership and management of the department are good and the relatively new head of department has introduced some ideas to raise standards such as the 'Maths for scientists' course. There are good external links with local industries and universities and more are planned. The department is already beginning to benefit from the new science college status by way of the refurbishment of accommodation and the acquisition of wireless laptop computers. The high standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained and improvement has been good overall.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

This was not a focus subject, but one Year 12 ICT lesson was sampled. Almost half of the group had come from other schools and had taken a GCSE ICT course. This gave them the edge over students from the North Halifax Grammar School who had followed the key skills ICT course. Good teaching, coupled with students' very good attitudes, was leading to good achievement, although standards were merely average.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

188. Sixth form students make good use of ICT skills in many subjects. In all subjects students make extensive use of the Internet for research purposes, and where they are required to complete projects they make effective use of word-processing skills in the presentation of their work. There is particularly good use of the technology in art where students create animated work. In mathematics very good use is made of programs to create complex graphs. Students create good slide shows in economics to display information. Students are competent users of the technology, but access to computers for research and independent learning is unsatisfactory, as the six computers in the learning resource centre are in heavy demand by all students in the school.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was **history** and **psychology**. Critical thinking, economics, film studies, geography, geology, government and politics, philosophy and sociology were sampled. In **critical thinking** Year 12 students doing AS-level were achieving very well and were confident in how to identify and classify fallacies in arguments. Very strong teaching gave students ample opportunities to put their knowledge into practice. In **economics** students in both years responded well to very energetic and well-informed teaching. Students were achieving very well and standards were well above average. In **film studies** very good teaching in a Year 12 lesson successfully developed students' powers of observation and their critical skills. Students were achieving very well. In **geography** two lessons were observed. Standards in both were average. In one lesson Year 13 students were achieving only satisfactorily despite good teaching because their motivation was not as strong as expected at this stage in the course. By contrast, in **geology** Year 12 students were highly motivated and responded very well to the teacher's very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for geology. Considering the short time these students have been studying geology, their achievement so far is excellent. In **government and politics** a small group of Year 13 students were learning and achieving well because they were committed to the subject and keen to take an active part in the lesson. In **philosophy** – a relatively new subject – Year 13 students were reaching a very high standard and had an unusually good understanding of the works of 20th century philosophers. Very good teaching and students' highly motivated attitudes ensured that they achieved very well. In **sociology** one Year 12 lesson was observed. The standards and motivation of the students varied considerably and they would have benefited from a faster pace of learning. Teaching was satisfactory, as was students' achievement.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Changes arising from very good assessment and monitoring have led to well above average A-level results.
- Very good achievement contributes to high retention rates and considerably increased numbers choosing history.
- Very good teaching develops independence in students through very effective study techniques.
- Because of large class sizes, opportunities for extended discussion are insufficient.

Commentary

189. In 2004 A-level results were well above average and marked a significant increase over previous years. This justified changes made to the course. All students gained grade C or above and boys' results improved dramatically. AS-level results were also well above average. Students comment on the impact of very good assessment: one-to-one monitoring of progress against targets, extra workshops, an 'open door' for individual consultation and regular practice at marking their own and others' work against A-level criteria.
190. Standards of work seen are also well above average. This reflects students' excellent study skills, for example highlighting and annotating text, that enable them to organise enormous amounts of new historical knowledge, terminology, dates and theories in order to extrapolate significant issues. They compare events across time to trace the progress and regress of democracy, freedom and control, exemplified by 1930s' Germany or Mussolini's Italy. Students are achieving very well, including those with particular educational needs who use sensitively adapted resources.
191. Students' writing is sharply structured and arguments are clear because they use various literary conventions to signal alternative viewpoints or links with a hypothesis. They rarely fall into the trap of overwriting, being selective and self-critical, following a technique for judging complex sources against each other which leads to succinct writing. They are suitably critical of Internet sources. They develop independence, completing research, individually and in groups, in and out of class to contribute to everyone's understanding. They do presentations explaining the significance of a particular aspect (of the 1832 Reform Act for example), illustrating and justifying their conclusions. Many habitually supplement recommended bibliographies with their own reading. They each review a selected resource centre text. A range of historical magazines keeps them up to date with changes in historical thinking.
192. Teaching and learning are very good, sometimes excellent. Expectations are high and pace is challenging. Every student participates frequently and teachers' questioning encourages students to pursue a personal view as a means of exploring a hypothesis, rather than rushing to conclusions. Teachers' enthusiasm and deep knowledge of history are unquestionably strong, as are skilfully designed activities and guidance to help students' understanding and use of difficult material. Sustained discussion across groups would generate challenging use of knowledge and terminology obliging students to refine their thinking in response to others, but the large class sizes make this difficult to manage.
193. Standards, achievement, monitoring, assessment and the quality of teaching and learning illustrate good improvement since the previous inspection because of very good leadership and management. Excellent collaboration and high quality experience of the two principal teachers are very strong features.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 12 and 13.

- Teaching is very good and students achieve very well.
- The subject is very well led and managed and new developments in teaching psychology are raising standards.
- Students have excellent attitudes towards the subject. They take responsibility for their own learning, develop effective study skills and know what they need to do to improve.
- Resources designed by teachers are excellent and enable students to make very good progress.
- Students' access to ICT during lesson time is restricted so they do not use ICT sufficiently to support their learning.

Commentary

194. In 2004 AS-level results were well above average. Results have improved over the last three years. Standards are above average when they start the subject and achieve well in their first year. The 2004 GCE A-level results were average. Over the last three years results have been above average and students have obtained the grades expected of them. Girls have done better than boys.
195. Standards of work seen in Year 12 are well above average. This compares favourably with recent examination results. Students are able to describe the factors that affect short and long-term memory; they know the main forms of coding that may be used when memorising and support their knowledge with experimental evidence. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are also well above average. Students are able to discuss neurobiological explanations of dreaming and compare these with psychological interpretations. Examination results for Year 13 do not reflect standards seen during the inspection. New developments in the teaching of the subject have improved standards at AS-level but have yet to do the same for A-level. Students in Year 12 and 13 achieve very well, including those with special educational needs and special gifts and talents.
196. Teaching is very good and so is learning. An example of excellent teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers use excellent resources and a variety of activities to guide students through the learning processes and students are given every opportunity to develop their independent learning skills. Assessment is very good and students know what to do to improve. Students' attitudes towards the subject are excellent and they use their time in lessons very effectively. Communication and mathematical skills are well developed but restricted access to ICT facilities limits the use of ICT to support learning.
197. Leadership and management are very good. Very thorough departmental self-evaluation, that includes the views of students, takes place annually and resulting action is targeted directly towards the needs of individual students. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very good. The head of department is an excellent role model and good practice is shared by an effective, committed team. There is consistency in teaching and marking and the arrangements for continuity in teaching, where groups are shared by staff, are very good.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Product design

Students follow the product design course. They can opt for graphic products, textiles and resistant materials as a focus of study within the course.

Provision in product design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students have very mature attitudes to learning and manage their coursework projects exceptionally well.
- The range of specialist materials students can choose is too narrow.

Commentary

198. Results for AS and A-level were well above average in 2004 and were equally high in 2003. Girls gained better results than boys. These standards have been maintained over the last three years and are a result of very good teaching and the very positive attitudes of students to learning. The proportion of students completing the course in each year is very high.
199. Standards are well above average in work seen in Years 12 and 13. In Year 12 students are highly motivated and adapt very well to the additional rigour of advanced level work. Their very mature attitudes and high aspirations result in students preparing very well for lessons and managing their projects exceptionally well. This dedicated approach results in their research and written work being completed in the depth and detail required to gain the highest grades. Because they receive and act on very good guidance from teachers, students show a very high standard of referencing skills in their written projects.
200. Most students follow the course through to Year 13 and build very effectively on their learning about design. They have a very good understanding of design principles and use three-dimensional 'mock-ups' of their design ideas to help them evaluate and improve products. Students have very good drawing skills and have developed sketching techniques to help them 'think on paper' and illustrate the development of their design ideas very effectively. Projects are completed to a high standard and students clearly understand design concepts. Most students are studying aspects of technology they have not experienced for several years and they are achieving very well in relation to both earlier attainment and their potential.
201. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and often excellent. Teachers plan their work meticulously to meet the needs of individual students.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent practice in team teaching

Team teaching methods in a significant proportion of lessons are excellent and provide students with access to expertise related to their chosen area of study within the course. Three staff with different areas of expertise, but a shared philosophy, agree the overall structure of the course. A residential visit to London provides opportunities to observe a wide variety of design and makes a positive contribution to establishing staff and student relationships. Teachers assess students' work and check progress closely. As well as reviewing progress with students at the end of lessons, teachers continue to evaluate progress separately after lessons to plan for future lessons. The standard of project management is very high and students are given excellent guidance at the start of their projects on referencing skills, devised in partnership with the librarian. The quality of product studies is further improved by a wide range of skills contributed by their teachers.

202. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The head of department is an inspiring leader and there is excellent co-operation between teachers for planning and teaching. Other teachers voluntarily contribute to team teaching activities to improve provision further and to prepare themselves for extending the course to include other materials areas. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. High standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The department has recognised the need to widen the choice of materials for specialist studies and has planned realistically for improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design and music.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good, and students achieve well as a result.
- Assessment and guidance on how to improve are very good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to developing students' independent thinking skills.
- There is no designated space where students can work independently outside their usual lesson times.
- Experimentation with materials is rather hesitant in some sketchbooks.

Commentary

203. In the AS-level examinations in 2004, results were above average. Similar results were achieved in 2003. In recent years all students who began the course finished it, and retention is very good. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 12 are above average. Students' achievement is good, considering their standards at the start of the course, which are average in this subject. Their work in ICT is strong, and they create bold and unusual photomontages based on the work of Archimbaldo. They draw vigorously, producing large lively portraits, using rapidly sketched lines and distorted shapes. They research the work of a range of artists very thoroughly, and produce

compositions which show a rapidly growing understanding of their techniques. However, their observation work sometimes lacks confidence and fluency.

204. In the A-level examinations in 2004 results were above average. In recent years, results have been consistently above average. Retention on this course continues to be very good. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average, and students' achievement is good. Their analysis of artists' work is very strong, and they can interpret complex work, and understand and discuss the intentions of the artists. Their figure work is assured, and their drawing from the life model is accurate. Computer animation work is exciting, and fast-moving images, set to contemporary music, convey the exhilaration and tensions of inner-city life. However, students' experimental work in sketchbooks is sometimes rather hesitant, and a little too careful.
205. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, challenging ideas, such as the intellectual ownership of artworks, are discussed by teachers and students. To support these discussions, the work of widely differing artists, such as Degas and Christo, are presented for the students to analyse. This encourages students to think independently, and arrive at their own conclusions. Students become absorbed in these ideas, and very good learning is the result. Lessons often feature good individual advice, although sometimes teachers concentrate solely on the work of one student for a little too long, and the pace of work of the other students in the group falters. This restricts learning to a level that is good, rather than very good.
206. Course leadership and management are good. Projects are well organised, and assessment and guidance for students on how to improve are very good. Since the previous inspection, results in examinations, standards of work in the school, and the quality of teaching and learning have all improved. Improvement is therefore good. However, there is no designated space where students can work outside of their normal lesson times. This makes it more difficult for students to work independently, particularly on larger scale pieces of work.

Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good enabling students to achieve very well.
- Students' attitudes are excellent.
- Extra-curricular work is extensive and of very high quality.

Commentary

207. Results in the A-level examinations in 2004 were above average and in the AS examination well above average. The AS results improved on the standards set in the previous years. Numbers taking the examination are too few to reliably compare trends in results for male and female students.
208. Standards seen in Year 12 and 13 are well above average. In Year 13 standards are higher than seen in 2004 results. Students are achieving very well in all aspects of the

course including performance recital which last year proved to be a problem. Reports, and compositions associated with these, are beginning to take shape. The standard is impressively high from most students. One high achieving student in this aspect has completed a very commendable composition inspired by John Coltrane. Listening skills are developing well. In Year 12 students have a good grasp of the stylistic techniques of Schubert's songs, although the four students have differing strengths and weaknesses in this area.

209. Teaching and learning are very good. The programme of lessons is excellently planned, as a result of careful analysis of previous results and current students' progress. Performance techniques now receive increased attention, drawing also on the expert skills of instrumental teachers, with the result that students are achieving more highly in their recitals. Students work very well independently in tutorial-style lessons when the teacher focuses on individuals, supporting their learning and critically analysing their work in progress. This is done in detail and depth and from every aspect thanks to the teachers' very good subject knowledge, which is fully equal to the rigours of the examination. Teachers ensure that students rehearse their aural skills interactively, focusing on the important aspects of the music, and doing small exercises to lead to longer pieces of work. In a Year 12 lesson the teacher did much of the work, but students were being introduced to new material. Even so, students would benefit from greater responsibility for their learning at this stage and certainly from more careful checks on their understanding of the material under discussion.
210. Students talk passionately about music. Their study has led them to discover new areas of great interest such as 20th century music, the jazz of John Coltrane and Elgar's *Serenade for Strings*, all of which have become the inspiration for their compositions. They are highly committed to music in the school and to the very wide range of extra-curricular groups and choirs. They talk highly of the course and of the support they receive from the class and instrumental teachers. Their attitudes are excellent.
211. The leadership and management of the course are very good. The team of teachers are highly respected. Instrumental teachers work closely with the course leader to achieve well-rounded performers. Examination results are analysed in detail and the findings acted on with demonstrable success. The department has made good improvements since the previous inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

One lesson of AS-level **physical education** was sampled. This new course has attracted a large group of able, enthusiastic students. They are working well and responding very positively to the very good teaching. Their standards are above the national average.

BUSINESS

The focus was on business studies.

Business studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students are achieving very well.
- Students learn very well and are motivated by very good teaching.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Assessment of students' work is good, both by the teacher and by the students themselves.
- Students have too little access to ICT, both in lessons and to help their studies.
- Students would benefit from more contact with local business.

Commentary

212. Results at A-level have been well above average in last few years. In the 2004 examinations, when results dipped a little from the very high grades achieved in 2003, they were still well above average with all students passing and two-thirds gaining grades A or B. Girls have usually done better than boys in the examinations. In nearly all cases results have exceeded students' predicted grades.
213. Standards of work of current students are well above average. Achievement overall is very good. Written work is detailed and accurate. It is clearly presented and very well assessed by the teacher and by the students themselves. This is a particular strength of the department's practice. There is a strong emphasis on practice answers. The handling of graphs, calculations and other data is confident.
214. Case studies are not usually linked to the local business environment. In this respect there is scope for more use of local business to illustrate the context of business decisions. There is little evidence in files or in class of the use of ICT for written work or for information search.
215. Teaching is very good. The teacher is very well informed and combines a good rapport with a rigorous pursuit of high standards as he questions the class to revise previous topics and introduce new ones. Individual opportunities for class work are well organised and the outcome carefully checked. The teacher shows good awareness of individual performance and responds accordingly to keep all students involved and thinking. Explanations are very clear and students are encouraged to develop their own notes to supplement the teacher's input.
216. Learning is very good for most students. A small number in Year 12 are still coming to terms with the requirements of advanced study but all students showed their capacity to tackle questions, orally and in writing, conscientiously and to generate relevant and perceptive ideas in discussion. The Year 12 class demonstrated a good understanding of market segmentation and the marketing mix, which they applied to case studies on catering outlets and specific products. Year 13 students were engaged in examinations at the time of the inspection.
217. Leadership and management are very good. The course is very well organised but has limited resources in the base room and the resource centre. There is good use of case study material and current press articles to support learning. There is no ICT provision in the base room and limited access elsewhere. A similar reservation was made in the previous report. Young Enterprise is strong with five companies currently operating involving about 80 students. Students benefit from attending a business management conference but other business contacts are limited. Improvement since

the previous inspection is good. Standards have risen and the very good quality of teaching and learning has been maintained.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Personal, social, health and citizenship education

218. All students in the sixth form have one session a week of PSHCE taught by form tutors mostly in tutor groups. The PSHCE programme is mostly orientated towards higher education and the skills and procedures needed to give students the best chance of success. To this end the programme includes talks by outside speakers on such topics as student finance and living away from home. Students are given mock interviews and practise writing a personal statement. Year 12 students have a session on first aid. Individual monitoring also takes place during this period. Two lessons were observed and their quality was good. In themselves, however, these weekly sessions are not sufficient to allow development of themes of global and national importance, such as the environment, politics and voting, or current affairs.

General studies

219. A small, and dwindling, number of students takes general studies to AS and A-level. No lessons were observed. Results in past years have been above the national average.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
Overall standards achieved		2
Students' achievement	2	2
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		1
Attendance	2	1
Attitudes	1	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	5	5
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		4
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	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	2	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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