

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODKIRK HIGH SPECIALIST SCIENCE SCHOOL

Wakefield, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108082

Headteacher: Mr P. A. Bailey

Lead inspector: Mr D. Cox

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2005

Inspection number: 269008

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

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Terms used in this report

*Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools **after** Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).*

Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 – 18

Gender of students: Mixed

Number on roll: 1819

School address: Rein Road
Tingley
Wakefield
West Yorkshire

Postcode: WF3 1JQ

Telephone number: 0113 2533930

Fax number: 0113 2526456

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of
governors: Mr D. Fisher

Date of previous inspection: 11th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Woodkirk High Specialist Science School is much bigger than most other secondary schools and educates boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18. The school is situated about six miles south of the centre of Leeds. The students come from approximately 25 feeder schools. The school is heavily over subscribed in all years. There are 1819 students on roll with 245 in the sixth form. The sixth form is larger than most other sixth forms. There has been a significant increase in the number of students on roll since 1997 when there were 1509 on roll. The vast majority of students are white although there are small groups of students from many different ethnic backgrounds. The school population reflects a wide socio-economic background but is average overall. Overall attainment on entry to the main school is average as is attainment on entry to the sixth form.

The percentage of students' first language not/believed not to be English is a little higher than in most schools. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is below average and the percentage of students with Statements of Special Educational Need is average. Most students are on the register for moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia, social and emotional and behavioural needs, speech or communication, hearing impairment, physical or autistic needs. There are two students in

the sixth form with special educational need. The school is a specialist science college. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities Initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10297	David Cox	Lead inspector	
13395	J. Illingworth	Lay inspector	
33139	M. Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics.
19596	B. Treacy	Team inspector	English.
4145	C. Harrison	Team inspector	Science.
15208	A. Briggs	Team inspector	Music.
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design.
11933	D. Driscoll	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT).
30973	G. Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology.
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography.
19026	B. Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages.
22411	A. Axon	Team inspector	Mathematics in the sixth form.
12985	S. Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education.
30427	F. Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	Religious education. Citizenship.
2597	C. Jackson	Team inspector	Business studies. Sociology.
11720	P. Winch	Team inspector	Special educational needs.
30825	K. Hayton	Team inspector	Chemistry in the sixth form.
15832	J. Vanstone	Team inspector	History.
33158	G. Jagger	Team inspector	English in the sixth form.

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides a **good** quality of education and **very good** value for money. Teaching and students' achievement are good. The leadership of the school is very good. The sixth form is good and its cost effectiveness is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average, reflecting students' good achievement as a result of good teaching.
- There is an ethos in the school that promotes hard work, very good attitudes and equality for all.
- The leadership of the school is driving up standards.
- Students' achievement in design and technology in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- There is not enough time to teach the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Some important policies are not always applied consistently across the school.

Progress since the last inspection has been **very good**. Standards are much higher and achievement is better as a result of significant improvements in teaching. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed successfully and many are now strengths of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Standards are above average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Students' achievement is good by the end of Years 9 and 11. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

By the end of Year 9, students achieve well in all subjects with exception of science, design and technology, citizenship and religious education where achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, students achieve well in all subjects with the exception of geography and citizenship where achievement is satisfactory and in design and technology and religious education where achievement is unsatisfactory.

Students achieve well because of the very positive ethos that permeates the school. Standards of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) across the main school are above average. The achievement of students with special educational needs mirrors that of other students. Students who are gifted achieve as well as other students. Students who are particularly talented achieve very well. The school sets demanding targets for improvement and usually exceeds these.

Achievement in the sixth form is good; standards are above average.

Students' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. They are strengths that make a significant contribution to students' good achievement, and are very effectively promoted by the school's provision for moral development. Students' attendance and punctuality are also very good, and enhance their academic progress. Overall, the school makes good arrangements to develop students' personal qualities. Provision for their cultural development is very good. Provision for their social development is good, and provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory.

Students in the sixth form have good attitudes to learning and their personal development is **good**. Their attendance and behaviour are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is good. Teaching is good in all years, including the sixth form; this consistency of good teaching leads to good provision overall and to good learning. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good in all subjects with the exception of science, design and technology, religious education and citizenship where they are satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good in all subjects with the exception of geography, religious education and citizenship, where they are satisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory in design and technology.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Changes brought about by the recent workforce reforms have released teachers from administrative tasks and enabled them to focus far more on how students learn and to adapt their teaching styles to better suit students' needs. Students speak highly of their teachers and support staff, and are grateful for the additional time that staff spend with them when problems arise.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a good range of enrichment activities. The school does not provide enough religious education in Years 10 and 11 to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus or a daily collective act of worship for all students. The school has a good match of staff to its needs and sufficient resources and accommodation. The quality of support, advice and guidance for students is good. Provision for their care, welfare and health and safety is satisfactory. Arrangements to seek students' views and involve them in the work and development of the school are satisfactory. The school has good links with parents and the community, and very good links with universities. Its partnerships extend students' opportunities for learning and effectively enhance their academic progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school by the headteacher and other senior staff is **very good**; management is good although some policies are not embedded fully across the whole school thus reducing their impact. There is a continuous drive for improvement. The senior team is very reflective and is always evaluating the work of the school and coming up with new ways to improve. The school has a very good ethos. The financial management of the school is very good. The leadership of middle managers is good.

Governors have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses although governance is only satisfactory because governors do not fulfil all their statutory duties.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Comments are based on those students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. Parents are very happy with the education their children receive; students are very happy.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve students' achievement in design and technology in Years 10 and 11.
- Provide enough time for the Agreed Syllabus for religious education to be taught in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure all policies are applied consistently across the school.

And to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.
- Provide written reports in citizenship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT WOODKIRK HIGH SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a **good** education and its cost-effectiveness is **good**. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The same very good ethos found in the main school also permeates the sixth form.
- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Provision for ICT in the sixth form is very good.
- Whilst achievement is satisfactory in English literature and geography, it is currently not as good as that seen in other subjects.

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	Provision in English literature is satisfactory . Students achieve satisfactorily because of the satisfactory teaching they receive. Students tend to have an over-reliance on the teacher's input.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . Teaching is good overall and consequently students are well motivated and work hard.
Science	Provision in chemistry is good . The working relationship between teachers and students is excellent and leads to students achieving well.
Humanities	Provision in geography is satisfactory . Standards are improving because of good teaching. Students' achievement is satisfactory. Provision in history is good . Good teaching produces challenging lessons that move at pace and lead to students achieving well. Provision in sociology is good . Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is good . Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
Information technology	Provision in ICT is very good . The curriculum is very good; all students study ICT. Standards have improved significantly as a result of very good leadership.
Business	Provision in business is good . The range of teaching activities allows teachers to meet students' individual needs. Students achieve well.

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

Good attention is given to students' welfare and guidance. The school extends admirable support to students through good monitoring systems and readily available well-targeted help and advice from teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are **good**. The current head of sixth form provides very good support for students. There is a clear vision of how the sixth form can expand and develop.

Management is good; courses are well organised and operate smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The sixth form has made good progress.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students in the sixth form are happy at the school and have no real complaints about their own education. They are particularly appreciative of the time and effort provided by their teachers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Main school

Students join the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are average overall, although this varies from subject to subject. By the time students leave in Year 11 their standards are above average. Students achieve well overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Talented students achieve very well in music, sport and art and design.
- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 11 because of the good teaching they receive and their very positive attitudes.
- Examination results have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students.
- In Years 10 and 11, achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education and design and technology.

Commentary

1. By the end of Year 9, standards of attainment are above average. They are well above average in mathematics and above average in all other subjects with the exception of design and technology, music, physical education, citizenship and religious education where standards are average. Students achieve well in all subjects with the exceptions of science, design and technology, citizenship and religious education where achievement is satisfactory.
2. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are above average in all subjects with the exceptions of geography, where standards are average and in design and technology, religious education and citizenship where standards are below average. Students achieve well in all subjects with the exceptions of geography and citizenship, where achievement is satisfactory, and in design and technology and religious education where achievement is unsatisfactory.
3. Achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory because there is not enough curriculum time to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. In design and technology, the achievement of students varies from very good in food technology through to unsatisfactory in resistant materials. Students achieve very well in food technology because of the very good teaching they receive. Students are underachieving in resistant materials because of unsatisfactory teaching.
4. Students achieve well in Years 7 to 11 because of the good teaching they receive. Students' very positive attitudes and the support they receive from their parents also make a major contribution to their achievement. Students achieve well because of the very positive ethos that permeates the school; students come to school wanting to learn and to do their best.

5. Standards of literacy, mathematics and ICT across the main school are above average. Most students are confident speakers, who contribute well to paired and class discussions when required to do so, and are ready to listen attentively to teachers and other students. Most students have a good understanding of what they read and communicate clearly in writing. However, the work of lower attainers is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students' mathematical skills are put to good use in other subjects. Students use their ICT skills to enhance their work and to research topics using the Internet.
6. The achievement of students with special educational needs mirrors that of other students. Through well-focused support and good teaching, students improve their social as well as their English and mathematical skills. In GCSE examinations students do well. For example, students with statements have gained university places in the past. Students who are gifted achieve as well as other students because of the good range of activities provided for them. Students who are particularly talented achieve very well, for example in music, sport and art and design. In music, the choir is expertly led, with ambitious performance goals and a very high profile in the school and the community.
7. The school sets demanding targets for improvement and usually exceeds these.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.8 (36.0)	N/A (33.4)
Mathematics	38.2 (37.3)	N/A (35.4)
Science	34.5 (36.3)	N/A (33.6)

There were 320 students in the year group. The 2004 results have not yet been validated. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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	61 (62)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (94)	89 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	37.4 (36.8)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 321 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

8. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were above average. Students achieved satisfactorily given their test results at the end of Year 6. The trend in results is above the national trend.
9. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were above average. Students achieved well given their standards at the end of Year 9. The trend in results is above the national trend. There was no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls or of those students from different ethnic backgrounds.

Sixth form

Whilst students enter the sixth form with average levels of attainment overall, attainment on entry varies from subject to subject. Overall, by the end of Year 13, standards are above average and students achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Results are above average and have been so for many years.
- All students not following AVCE or A-level courses attain an ICT level 2 qualification.
- Whilst achievement is satisfactory in English literature and geography, it is currently not as good as that seen in other subjects.

Commentary

10. In the subjects inspected in detail, students attain above average standards in mathematics, chemistry, ICT, history, physical education, business studies and sociology. Standards are average in English literature and geography. Students achieve well in all subjects with the exception of English literature and geography where achievement is satisfactory.
11. Students achieve well overall because of the good teaching they receive. Their very positive attitudes also contribute significantly to their achievement. It is not only in their classroom subjects where students achieve well, but also in areas such as sport and the arts.
12. Results overall in the 2004 A-level examinations were above average; this represents a slight fall compared to previous years. In many other subjects not inspected in detail, examination results suggest that students achieved well. Results have been either well above or above average for some years. Students achieve well given their starting points when joining the sixth form in Year 12. Very few students fail to complete courses and retention is high. All students not following AVCE or A-level courses attain an ICT level 2 qualification.

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	90.6 (92.2)	92.4 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	29.7 (27.0)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	284.8 (303.3)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 86 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Main school

Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are strengths that make a significant contribution to students' good achievement, and are very effectively promoted by the school's provision for moral development. Students' attendance and punctuality are also very good, and enhance their academic progress. Overall, the school makes good arrangements to develop students' personal qualities. Provision for their cultural

development is very good. Provision for their social development is good, and provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students come to school expecting to learn and to work hard, and are keen to take part in activities.
- Students are mature, confident and articulate.
- The school is a very orderly community in which relationships and behaviour are very good.
- Students' punctuality is very good and their attendance is well above average

- The school makes very effective arrangements to promote good behaviour and attendance.
- Provision for moral and cultural development is very good.
- Students are sometimes too passive in lessons and are reluctant to express their views.

Commentary

13. Students of all ages and levels of attainment have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and want to do well there, as their very good attendance shows. Their punctuality is very good. They walk briskly between classrooms and therefore arrive on time for lessons despite the large size of the school site. Students are enthusiastic about the school's provision for extra-curricular activities. There is a very good level of participation in clubs and additional classes, even though these take place outside normal school hours.

14. Students show very good levels of interest in their lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers, sustain their concentration well, and keep on task when working independently. Good teaching successfully promotes these positive qualities. Most lessons have good pace and challenge and keep students interested and fully engaged in their work. Attitudes to learning are also enhanced by teachers' good use of praise, formal rewards and individual guidance. The support and encouragement that students' receive raise their self-esteem and determination to succeed. The quality of relationships is another factor that promotes very good attitudes to learning. Students have very good relations with members of staff and with their peers. They respect and trust their teachers, value their opinions and feel valued by them. They co-operate well in group work and are very supportive of each other in lessons. Throughout the school there is a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms, which is conducive to good learning and progress. Occasionally, students are too reserved and are diffident about expressing their views in front of the class.

15. The school is a very orderly community and its students are articulate, responsible young people. They are polite and friendly and behave very well in lessons and around the school. There is a notable absence of all forms of aggressive and disruptive behaviour. There are isolated instances of bullying but members of staff deal very quickly and effectively with them. Students are unanimous in saying that bullying is not a feature of life in school. Last year, the rate of exclusion was high for a school where students are well behaved and have very good relationships with one another and with members of staff. Many exclusions stemmed from rigorous enforcement of the rule against students bringing mobile phones to school. Students who ignored the ban were excluded for a fixed period. The strategy was successful in

dealing with the problem of mobile phones, but pushed the number of exclusions above the national average. The exclusion rate has now fallen to normal levels.

16. The school makes very good provision for the moral development of the students. They in turn meet the high expectations of their teachers and as a result the school environment is well ordered and harmonious. Despite the volume of students moving about the school they demonstrate good self-control and positive attitudes to their work. Moral issues are highlighted in many areas of the curriculum, and students are encouraged to think about the consequences of different actions. Students are encouraged to take action to support others through the 'Eco Club', and their response to the recent tsunami disaster showed their willingness to do so. There are good opportunities for students' social development. The support of some Year 8 students in science for students from a local special school encourages their confidence when working with others, and is a fine opportunity to take responsible action. The 'Healthy Lifestyles Week' provides a strong lead to students, and the resulting club is not only an educational, but also a sociable event. Extra-curricular clubs are well supported and enable students to develop their social skills, and to enjoy the company of students of all ages. While students are clearly sociable and responsible, few have the opportunity to lead others and most have little opportunity to develop their leadership skills through decision-making and posts of responsibility.
17. The school has very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. Students know that members of staff have high expectations regarding conduct, and have a firm but fair approach to discipline. The school has a policy of assertive discipline which members of staff apply consistently and successfully in lessons. Students are fully aware of the consequences of breaches of the rules. They also understand and value the system of rewards. They think that it acts as an effective incentive for hard work and good conduct. The school monitors behaviour very thoroughly. As a result students with problems are identified at an early stage and given appropriate support, such as sessions in anger management with the school's learning mentors.
18. The school makes very good provision for the cultural development of students. They are encouraged to participate in the arts and the range of clubs and events stimulates their interest and involvement. The annual European tour by the school band is just the culmination of many musical events. The display of art by students, in the community, makes a clear statement to them of the value the school places on their work. The school makes good use of its links with China to encourage students to take a global perspective and subjects such as art make the most of the stimulus of the 'Chinese dragon dance'.
19. The school has improved the level of its provision for the spiritual development of the students and this is now satisfactory. In many subjects teachers encourage students to reflect on what they learn. In history students are encouraged to consider the fears of the soldiers of the First World War through their poems. In art and design and music they are encouraged to reflect on the emotions that the music and art work stimulate in them. Assemblies are well planned and provide good opportunities for reflection on issues. The limited time for religious education, however, means that reflection on their own beliefs and values is restricted
20. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection, from above average to well above the national average. Very high attendance rates make a positive contribution to students' academic and personal progress. The school has very good procedures

for ensuring that attendance remains high. It has appointed a pastoral secretary who contacts home very promptly if a student is absent without explanation. The rate of unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. It has risen slightly since the previous inspection because the school now refuses to authorise more than ten days of holiday leave per year.

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	1704	318	4
White – Irish	1	2	
White – any other White background	12	3	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	2	
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	5		
Mixed – any other mixed background	6		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	46	4	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	14		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British Caribbean	4	2	
Black or Black British African	0		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	1	
Chinese	3		
Any other ethnic group	1	3	
Parent/student preferred not to say	11	3	

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded. The number of students on roll is for the current year

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.7
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.

Sixth form

Students have good attitudes to learning and their personal development is good. Their attendance and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy being in the sixth form, have very good attendance, and have high aspirations.
- Students respond very positively to opportunities to take part in activities and to serve the school community.

- Some students lack the confidence to contribute to discussions in class and to take responsibility for their learning.

Commentary

21. Students are happy with the quality of education and opportunities for personal development that they receive in the sixth form. Most of them enjoy their chosen subjects, as shown by their very good attendance at lessons and their good punctuality. Students want to succeed and are therefore keen to make good progress. They are attentive in lessons, have good powers of concentration, and respond well to challenging work. However, even some very able students are very shy and lacking in confidence in oral work. Other students are at times over reliant on their teachers and do not show enough initiative in their learning.
22. Students' mature attitudes and very good relationships with one another mean that there are no problems with behaviour in lessons or around the school. Their excellent relations with members of staff make a major contribution to their good academic achievement. Students like and have confidence in their teachers. The majority of them have already established good relationships with staff during their years in the main school, which is one of the reasons why they choose to stay on after Year 11. When they are in the sixth form they appreciate the way that teachers treat them as young adults, while still providing them with the help and guidance that meet their needs.
23. Students have good opportunities for personal development through their involvement with the main school and the opportunities to support younger students. They provide very good support as part of the peer mentoring scheme and the paired reading scheme, and some are involved with younger students in lessons such as modern foreign languages. The annual party that the sixth form hold for elderly members of the community is a very good opportunity to develop social skills and a sense of responsibility in their locality. The 'European Day' they organise encourages them to consider the wider community. The newly developed sixth form council is designed to involve students in the organisation and development of the school; however, this has not yet taken on a school focus and there is little communication back to the other members of the sixth form about any outcomes. Students are being prepared to become responsible citizens and in several areas of the curriculum teachers are emphasising aspects of a democratic society. The school is represented on the Leeds' Youth Parliament, and members of the sixth form are championing the development of the debating skills and public speaking skills in the main school. There is no co-ordination of these opportunities however, to ensure that all students are aware of how and why they vote, or of the work of parliament and the judicial system in Britain and Europe.
24. A minority of students have excellent opportunities for personal development through the organisation and running of clubs, groups, coaches and even co-ordinating the school annual concert in the absence of the member of staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching is good. Good attention is given to the care and welfare of students. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Main school

Overall, teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11. The quality of assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and leads to students achieving well.
- The work of support staff contributes significantly to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers manage students very well which aids achievement and learning.
- Teachers give good demonstrations of the skills and techniques associated with all types of work, making the aims of the lessons clear and interesting so that students know how to make progress.
- The quality of marking, whilst satisfactory, is not consistent across the school.
- Teachers do not always use assessment data when planning their lessons.
- The quality of teaching in design and technology in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and leads to students underachieving.

Commentary

25. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good in all subjects with the exception of science, design and technology, religious education and citizenship where they are satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good in all subjects with the exception of geography, religious education and citizenship where they are satisfactory; teaching is unsatisfactory in design and technology. Teaching was also sampled in drama where it is very good.
26. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Much of the school's in-service training in recent years has been about improving teaching and learning and the effects of this are now being seen in the classroom. It is the consistency of good teaching that students receive that enables them to achieve well during their time at the school. It is not just what goes on in lessons that makes the teaching so good. Changes brought about by the recent workforce reforms have released teachers from administrative tasks and enabled them to focus far more on how students learn and to adapt their teaching styles to better suit students' needs. Teachers insist that students present work well. A significant strength of the teaching is the amount of work that students are expected to do in lessons, and also outside of normal lesson times. The scrutiny of students' work indicates that a substantial amount of homework is set that extends the learning. Teachers and support staff are always available to help students. Students speak highly of their teachers and support staff and are grateful for the additional time that staff spend with them when problems arise.
27. Teachers have very good relationships with their students and create and maintain a very good climate for learning that is quiet, calm and purposeful. They give good demonstrations of the skills and techniques associated with all types of work, making the aims of the lessons clear and interesting so that students know how to make progress. Teachers have very good strategies to manage the behaviour of students. It is rare for a teacher to have to reprimand a student. They earn the respect of their

students who show very good attitudes to their work. Behaviour in lessons is generally very good.

28. Most teachers play a significant part in developing students' skills in reading, writing and everyday mathematics. However, there is not a consistent approach to improving students' skills within all subjects. Teachers make good use of ICT in their teaching.
29. In design and technology in Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching varies greatly between subjects. In food technology, the thoroughness of the planning, pace of lessons and high expectations of the teachers result in very good achievement. In contrast, in resistant materials the lessons are slow, activities lack challenge and designing lacks rigour. In food technology, the marking of students' work is very thorough and the clear feedback that is given to students helps them to improve. This is not the case in areas such as resistant materials where students have little idea how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.
30. There are two areas of teaching where, although good, they could be easily improved; these are the marking of students' work and the use of data from assessments. Students' work is generally assessed well, so students get a good idea of what they have done well or not well enough. It also ensures that teachers have a good idea of the students' strengths and weaknesses. However, in several subjects, whilst work is marked, comments do not always help students to understand what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not always make effective use of the wealth of data that is available to them when matching the work to the needs of students; this can lead to some students drifting off task because they find the task too difficult or too easy.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 212 lessons (teaching was not graded in all lessons)

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (3)	40(19)	86(41)	68 (33)	8(3)	1(1)	0(0)

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

31. The school's assessment policy has been updated since the last report and is now a much more effective tool in supporting good practice; it is good overall. The school has developed a rigorous system of assessment that is reliable and tracks the progress of individual students well. It is comprehensive and provides a good framework within which departments can devise subject-specific policies and strategies. Effective use is made of National Curriculum levels within subjects to record students' progress through key stage 3. At the end of Year 9, National Curriculum assessments and further standardised test results are used to assess each student's GCSE potential and to inform their choice of curriculum options. The school reports assessments regularly to students and parents. At its best, assessment ensures that students have opportunities to discuss their strengths and weaknesses fully and agree on exactly how to improve, with focused support from the teacher. In such cases, students have accurate information about their progress and the gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding that need to be filled. In other cases, the focus on individual strengths and weaknesses is not as clear as general feedback about how to achieve particular grades.

32. The assessment of students with special educational needs is good. Information obtained from primary schools and from later testing is used well for identifying targets in students' individual educational plans. Helpful information on students' achievement provided by subject teachers is effectively incorporated in the Annual Reviews of students with statements. Students log their own achievements in the computer programs aimed at helping them to improve their reading and spelling and this tells them how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve.
33. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and teaching is better developed at a whole-school level than within departments where it is patchy. Monitoring of the use of assessment by individual subjects is on an *ad hoc* basis and results in an unevenness of provision.

Sixth form

Teaching is good and brings about good learning. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strength and weaknesses

- The good teaching provision leads to students achieving well.
- Students respond to the good teaching by working hard.
- Whilst teaching is satisfactory in English literature and geography, on average it is not as good as that seen in other subjects.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information to match work to the needs of all students.

Commentary

34. In the subjects inspected in detail, the quality of teaching is good in all subjects with the exception of English literature and geography where it is satisfactory.
35. Teachers manage students very well. This leads to trust and a mutual respect between teachers and students. Students are attentive in lessons, have good powers of concentration, and respond well to challenging work. However, there are occasions when teachers miss the opportunity to allow students the freedom to express themselves or to argue a specific point. There are excellent relationships between staff and students and there are no problems with behaviour in lessons or around the school. Students like and have confidence in their teachers.
36. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and so are able to talk about topics that are not part of the planned lesson. The marking of written work is generally good; errors are signalled and suggestions are made to students about how they might improve content. Students respond to the good teaching by working hard; their notes are detailed and their files well organised, providing a valuable basis for further study and revision. Teachers prepare students well for examinations and even in the early stages of Year 12 students are required to judge the quality of various possible examination answers in order to extend their understanding of precisely what the questions require.
37. In the comparatively weaker subjects, when teaching is less effective, teachers have developed a culture of 'spoon feeding' students which is restricting initiative. The pace of the lessons can be slow and tasks can lack challenge.

38. The pattern of assessment in the sixth form is similar to the rest of the school. Thus, school policy and procedures for assessing and recording students' attainment and progress are good, but the implementation of the policy is inconsistent in departments.

The curriculum

Main school

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a very good range of enrichment activities. The school has a good match of staff to its needs and sufficient resources and accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many more trips and visits than are usually seen.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- Students do not get enough opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
- The school does not provide enough time to teach the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

39. The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, but the time allocated to religious education in Years 10 and 11 is far too limited to enable the Agreed Syllabus to be taught in full; this was an issue raised in the last inspection, which has not been fully addressed. Religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and careers education are all taught in one lesson each week; this is not enough time to deliver all the elements and it is religious education that suffers. Priority in the hour is given to ensuring that the requirements of PSHE, such as sex and health education, are covered adequately, while citizenship is satisfactory because of the work that goes on in other subjects. However, while other subjects do enough to ensure that requirements for citizenship are met, insufficient use is made of ICT in many subjects.
40. In Years 10 and 11, the school offers a good range of subjects and goes to great lengths to ensure that the students all have clear routes to further education that lead on from the courses they have chosen.
41. Form time each morning is used inconsistently; some teachers use the time to allow students to reflect upon, or have meaningful discussions about the 'Thought for the day', while others do little other than mark the register, leading to many students not taking part in a daily act of collective worship.
42. Overall, the provision for students with special educational needs is good. Teachers take note of students' individual education plans when preparing lessons and generally provide appropriate work. However, where insufficient account is taken of these plans, the work is not always suitable and students do not learn as well as they should. Teaching assistants provide good support in class and work well with subject teachers, though where teachers do not make best use of assistants, the effectiveness of the support is lessened. Withdrawal sessions are well focused on helping to improve English and mathematical skills. Students say they benefit from the individual attention they receive and the computer programs provided. In the Pupil Support area, students whose conduct has been unacceptable learn to exercise

greater self-control and work in a supportive environment, under the strong leadership of the Inclusion Coordinator and centre manager. In small groups, learning mentors encourage these students to think about how their behaviour affects others. Mentors additionally provide a homework and support club after school for students under their guidance working in the learning resource centre where they use computers for research and receive advice as needed.

43. The curriculum for students identified as gifted and talented is good. A number of activities, such as summer schools and trips to university, enrich the provision. These are a strong contributory factor in their good achievement.
44. The school provides far more trips and visits than is usual. There are also many special events, such as stage productions, musical and sporting activities that ensure that the participation in the sports and arts is well above average.
45. There are sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. New staff are made welcome through an extensive induction programme. The very good programme of continuing professional development, including both teaching and support staff, is focused on improving the quality of education for students.

Sixth form

The curriculum is good overall, with a good range of enrichment activities. The school has a good match of staff to its needs, sufficient resources and adequate accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are a large number of advanced level courses available.
- There is a good enrichment programme.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

Commentary

46. The school takes very good account of the opportunities that are available to students locally at colleges to ensure the courses it offers are the best ones for its students. To this end, the school concentrates on offering a good range of AS and A-level courses. The courses offered, together with those available in local colleges, build very well upon the subjects that students have studied at GCSE level.
47. All students in Year 12 study general studies as well as an enrichment programme that includes useful courses for future life, such as 'cooking on a shoestring'. The provision made to improve students' skills in ICT is very good, with all students either studying an ICT-based course or taking key skills in ICT to Level 3. However, students are not required to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

Care, guidance and support

Main school

The quality of support, advice and guidance for students is good. Provision for their care, welfare and health and safety is satisfactory. Arrangements to seek students' views and involve them in the work and development of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very thorough arrangements for monitoring students' behaviour and personal progress.
- Students' academic progress is well monitored and supported.
- Students with problems are identified at an early stage and given support and guidance that meet their needs.
- Students have very good and trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- The school's accommodation does not promote the health, safety and welfare of its students and staff.
- The school sounds out students' views, but does not have effective means of involving them in decision making.
- Personal and social education lessons and registration periods do not always make an effective contribution to support and guidance for students.

Commentary

48. The school knows that good support and guidance raise academic standards and therefore gives pastoral care a high priority, starting with the induction of the new intake. Arrangements for welcoming new students are good and help them to become familiar with the school's routines and expectations. As a result, Year 7 settle quickly and soon make new friends. Students of all ages receive good individual support and guidance. The pastoral structure of form tutors, heads of year and heads of school gives them a good choice of sources of advice. The quality of personal guidance is enhanced by the very good relations that students have with members of staff. Students feel that teachers are supportive, and they have confidence in the ability of senior staff to sort out serious problems, such as bullying. They also feel that their opinions are valued and carry weight with teachers, even though there is no school council. There are very good arrangements for finding out what students across the school think, but no formal arrangements for consulting them and involving them in decisions. A year ago the school carried out an in-depth survey of their views. However, students are not aware of the results, and do not know if their views have influenced the running of the school.
49. There are very effective whole-school procedures for monitoring students' personal development. Members of staff keep accurate and detailed records of students' behaviour and are able to track their personal progress through the rewards they have earned and the sanctions that they have incurred. Students keep their own records in their student planners, which form tutors check each week. These checks give tutors a valuable insight into how well individuals are doing. The school's thorough procedures ensure that anyone who is struggling to cope is identified and given help. The school makes very good arrangements to support students who give cause for concern. The learning mentors play a crucial role in this area under the leadership of the Inclusion Coordinator. They have very good relationships with the students who are referred to them, and work with success to get them back into mainstream lessons.
50. The staff in the special needs department make a very good contribution to students' well-being. The very good individual education plans guide students in how to improve their work. In the behaviour management and inclusion areas, emphasis is placed on improving social skills. Outside lessons, staff are available to give individual advice and support and this helps students to learn more quickly. As a result, students think better of themselves and are more confident that they can achieve well.

51. Monitoring of academic progress is good and provides the basis for well-informed guidance to students on how to improve their work. Teachers give them much good informal feedback and advice in lessons. However, marking of work is variable and does not consistently provide helpful comments. The school has good formal strategies for removing barriers to learning, such as the 'Aimhigher' programme, which gives valuable support to students who are in danger of underachieving. The school aims to meet the needs of every student. All of them receive individual targets for improvement in their academic work, and get the opportunity to discuss their progress with their teachers at review days. Despite these measures, many students have limited understanding of their own attainment. Some of them are confused about the significance of National Curriculum levels and are unclear as to how they can raise the standard of their work.
52. Most students and parents feel that the quality of personal and social education is satisfactory. However, significant numbers of them have expressed concerns about careers education and the lack of one-to-one interviews with advisers. The school has now taken action to address this issue by appointing a careers mentor. There are still weaknesses in other aspects of guidance via personal and social education. For example, the subject is taught by non-specialist teachers not all of whom have received training in the role. Morning registrations are often missed opportunities to provide support and guidance to students. Some form tutors use the time well, but others let students treat it as an informal social period.
53. Arrangements for health, safety and welfare are satisfactory overall. Students feel safe in school and secure from bullying and aggressive behaviour, but make justified complaints about the accommodation. The buildings and paved areas are in poor condition and do not promote health and safety. For example, the numerous loose slabs in the grounds are a hazard. The previous inspection report commented on the lack of risk assessments. Since then the school has put in place an adequate system for assessing the buildings and grounds.

Sixth form

Students receive good support and guidance. Arrangements for their welfare and health and safety are satisfactory, as are procedures for consulting them and involving them in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school monitors students' progress well and gives them good support and guidance.
- Provision for help and advice is greatly enhanced by excellent relations between students and members of staff.
- The sixth form council does not give students adequate feedback on its work.

Commentary

54. Students are generally happy with the quality of support and guidance in sixth form and with the advice on courses that they received when they were in Year 11. The outcomes are positive. The majority who complete their courses achieve well. Students are very satisfied with the help that teachers give them with their work. They are confident that members of staff will make time to see them and feel that if they

need explanations and advice they only have to ask. Students receive adequate information on their progress from written reports.

55. Provision for personal support and guidance is good. Students have excellent relations with teachers and they are comfortable about discussing problems with them. They have a very high regard for the current head of the sixth form. Students in Year 13 are full of praise for the support that he gave them when they were completing their UCAS applications. Support and guidance from form tutors are variable. Since the introduction of fingerprint registration there are no daily registration periods where tutors can meet all their students but spend time monitoring the progress and target setting with some. The quality of guidance on higher education is good. Students have plenty of opportunities to obtain information on university courses. They are encouraged to study prospectuses and attend university open days. They also benefit from ongoing contacts with undergraduates from the University of Leeds who come to Woodkirk to mentor students.
56. Arrangements for seeking and taking account of students' views are satisfactory. There is a sixth form council consisting of representatives from each tutor group in Years 12 and 13. It has brought about some changes that students wanted, such as improvements to facilities in the sixth form common rooms. However, there is no provision for the school council to report back on its work. Consequently, the majority of students say that they do not know what it has achieved or plans to do. The school council is not yet fully effective as a means of consulting and involving the whole of the sixth form in decisions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are good, and links with other schools and with colleges and universities, are very good. The involvement of parents in the work of the school is of great benefit to students' learning.

Main school

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very good reputation and is oversubscribed.
- Parents are very satisfied with the school and give very good support to their children's learning.
- The school's very good partnership with other schools, colleges and universities enhances students' learning.
- Links with the local community and with other countries make a valuable contribution to students' personal development
- The school's status as a specialist science college is strengthening its partnership with local schools and with the community in general.
- The annual written reports on progress, although satisfactory overall, contain limited information on how students can improve their work.

Commentary

57. The school is very popular with parents in the local area. They are very keen for their children to transfer to Woodkirk for their secondary education because of its good results and very good reputation regarding behaviour and discipline. As a result, the school is heavily oversubscribed. Woodkirk is very successful in meeting parental

expectations. Parents are very happy with the work of the school. They think, with good reason, that students are well taught, behave very well, and make good progress. The school values the support of parents and has made good provision for sounding out their opinions. Just over a year ago it commissioned a research company to carry out a survey of parental views. This gave the school a very detailed analysis and evaluation of what parents think about standards and provision. It showed that they were least satisfied with the availability of careers education and guidance. The school has already taken action to improve its arrangements by appointing a careers co-ordinator and a non-teaching careers mentor.

58. Parents give very good support to students' learning. They make a major contribution to attainment and progress by ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually. A minority of them take family holidays in term time, but this is a national problem and is not particular to Woodkirk. The incidence of parentally condoned unauthorised absence is negligible. Parents take a good level of interest in their children's academic work. The majority of students say that they get help and support with learning at home. Parents also attend progress review days in large numbers in order to discuss their child's learning and achievement with teachers. The school is very keen to engage parental support whenever it has concerns about a student's behaviour or progress. It makes every effort to involve parents from the outset in strategies to solve problems. Parents are very co-operative. They back the school and are willing to work with members of staff, over issues of discipline or standards of work. There are good links between special educational needs staff and families of students with special educational needs. Parents are welcome to visit the Learning Support Centre and Inclusion Area during the school day. They have copies of their children's individual education plans and they attend review days. The support that they give their children enhances the latter's learning and personal development.
59. Information for parents on their child's progress is satisfactory overall. Review days are a strength of the school's provision. They are popular with parents because they give them good opportunities to discuss student work with teachers. Student planners are another source of information on learning and progress. They provide a valuable day-to-day account of what students are doing and what they have achieved. The annual written reports are the weakest feature of the school's arrangements for informing parents about their children's progress. Subject reports are impersonal and do not include any comments from teachers or targets for improvement. They report on the student's attainment, effort and progress through levels, grades, and ticks in boxes on a grid. The reports have sections on all subjects except citizenship.
60. Links with other schools, and with colleges and universities, are very good. The school's status as a science college has helped it to widen and deepen its contacts with its main partner primary schools. There are now very good curricular links in science. For example, a specialist science teacher at Woodkirk spends three days a week on working with primary schools to improve cross-phase transition in science. The collaboration is of mutual benefit to all parties. Both primary and secondary students and teachers gain from the work that is being done. There are also strong links with primary schools in mathematics and very good links with Broomfield Special School in respect of science. Woodkirk High Specialist Science School is involved in numerous partnerships with other schools, such as 'Aimhigher', the Gifted and Talented initiative, and the Leadership Incentive Grant Collaborative. It also has very strong links with Joseph Priestley College and Leeds College of Building with regard to

vocational courses. These wide-ranging links are very successful in enhancing the school's provision for staff training and extending students' opportunities for learning.

61. The school's links with the local community are good, and its international contacts are very good. The latter include links with China, Australia and the Czech Republic. The school's twinning with a school in China has led to the promotion of Chinese culture in the curriculum. Chinese dancers and jugglers have performed for Year 7 students, and this year the art department has focused on Chinese art. The link with China has been very effective in developing students' understanding of a country and society that is very different from their own. The school has very good partnerships with many employers in the local area and these are of great value to vocational education and careers education and guidance. For example, they enable students to find good work experience placements. Students are very positive about work experience. They say that they greatly enjoyed and benefited from their taste of the world of work.

Sixth form

The school has good links with parents and the community, and very good links with universities. Its partnerships extend students' opportunities for learning and effectively enhance their academic progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive. They encourage their children to learn and to work hard.
- The school's very good links with universities and colleges enrich the sixth form curriculum and enhance the quality of support and guidance.

Commentary

62. Parents are very supportive of the school and students' learning. They share their children's aspirations to do well and to get good qualifications and support them in applying for courses in higher education. Information for parents on students' progress is satisfactory. Written reports are more detailed than those in the main school. Subject reports contain teachers' comments and brief outlines of strengths and weaknesses. At present there are no review days for sixth form students and their parents, but the school has plans to introduce them.

63. The sixth form has good links with the local community. They make a positive contribution to students' personal development, as when sixth formers hold their annual Christmas party for elderly people from the local area. Links with colleges and universities are very strong. The school has an excellent partnership with the University of Leeds. Students at Woodkirk who want to take further mathematics at A-level are able to do so by attending classes at Leeds University. Other students benefit from the support of the university's undergraduate mentors. Overall, the sixth form's very good links with other providers of education extend students' opportunities for learning and enhance the quality of provision for advice and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Main school

The quality of leadership is very good and the effectiveness of management is good. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, along with the senior team and the governors, has brought about significant improvements in many aspects of the school since the previous inspection.
- In ICT, very effective leadership is ensuring that students achieve well.
- The financial management of the school is very good.
- The leadership of design and technology is unsatisfactory.
- Management, whilst being good, does not ensure all policies are implemented consistently.

Commentary

64. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He continues to drive the school forward with a relentless zeal that has resulted in significant improvements in examination results and other aspects of the school since the previous inspection. These improvements have been brought about because the headteacher together with the senior staff are a formidable team for bringing about change. A strength of this team is the manner in which it has embraced national initiatives and used these to improve the quality of teaching and therefore the quality of education for students. For example, the school has used funding from its specialist college status and from the Leadership Incentive Grant very effectively to bring about changes to the workforce. Better use is being made of support staff and this is helping to free teachers from administrative tasks and therefore enabling them to focus far more on their teaching and improve the achievement of students.
65. The senior team is very reflective and is always evaluating the work of the school and coming up with new ways to improve the school. Sometimes tough decisions need to be taken and the senior team does not shirk away from its responsibilities to the students. For example, art was a weakness noted in the previous inspection report. Now, through a complete change of leadership and staffing, it is flourishing and results have improved significantly.
66. The school has a very good ethos which is based on the premise that students should not only attain high academic standards but should develop as responsible young adults who are polite, courteous and respectful to others. In this respect, the school is very successful. For example, throughout the inspection week, many students asked inspectors about the inspection and were openly proud of their school and spoke highly of the staff and the way in which the school is managed.
67. The school improvement plan is very good and focuses on improving achievement through improving the quality of teaching. Detailed reviews are carried out both internally and by external consultants. These reviews help the school to focus on areas for development as well as celebrating areas that are achieving well. The financial management of the school is very good. There are good systems for managing the budget. Very good use is made of additional grants. For example, the school supports partner primary schools and a special school through the funding it receives from its specialist college status. These schools benefit from additional technical support or through the expertise of Woodkirk's teaching staff.

68. Management of the school is good. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. New systems and structures have been introduced since the previous inspection. There are very good and clear lines of responsibility. A multi-layered approach to the management of the school enables staff to be involved in different working groups or forums; this greatly widens the staff's perspective of the school and allows new staff to gain management experience. Monitoring systems are good although policies are not always followed consistently. For example, the work of the Key Stage 3 strategy managers is very good and there are very good policies in place. However, these policies are not always applied consistently across the whole school thus reducing their impact.
69. The leadership of middle managers is good but varies from very good in ICT, modern languages and art and design, through to unsatisfactory in design and technology. In ICT, significant improvements have taken place and teachers work as a highly effective team which has subsequently led to significant improvements in teaching, standards and achievement since the last inspection. On the other hand, in design and technology, leadership and management are ineffective and insufficient action has been taken to overcome the poor performance of students.
70. The leadership and management of the special needs and inclusion areas are good. The leadership and management of inclusion are very good. The school provides ample accommodation and staffing to enable students with behavioural difficulties to receive the close attention required. The co-ordinators lead a unified and hardworking team of staff committed to helping students learn better. Administration is very efficiently carried out and Annual Reviews in the special educational needs department are carefully planned. As a result, students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students.
71. Governors have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work alongside the senior team and have played an important role in the development of the school in recent years. They set demanding targets of the headteacher and carry out their role of 'critical friend' very well. The chair and vice-chair never lose sight of their guiding principles that students should be provided with the best education possible within a school that is strong on discipline. However, governors do not fulfil all their statutory duties. The school does not provide enough time for the Agreed Syllabus for religious education to be taught in Years 10 and 11, nor does it ensure a daily collective act of worship for all students takes place. Progress reports in citizenship are not provided.

Sixth form

The quality of leadership and management is good. Governance is very good.

Main strength and weakness

- The current head of sixth form provides very good support for students.
- The leadership of ICT is very good and results in students achieving well.

Commentary

72. The sixth form is well led. The current head of sixth form provides very good support for students. There is a clear vision of how the sixth form can expand and develop. Management is good; courses are well organised and operate smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The monitoring of students' performance is good; each student has a

number of interviews throughout the year and remedial action is taken if thought necessary. The governors have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. Progress since the previous inspection has been good.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	6439435	Balance from previous year	41960
Total expenditure	6382892	Balance carried forward to the next	98503
Expenditure per student	3519		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning (WRL)

Provision for work-related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work-related learning is well led and is making a good contribution to learning.
- Work experience is good and successfully supports and complements school-based work.
- Work-related learning has not been extended to incorporate vocational focus days for students.

Commentary

73. Students are achieving well in the vocational subjects offered by the school and are better motivated to learn about work. Students' attitudes to learning and their attendance have improved as a result. Students have a satisfactory understanding of the work environment and understand the importance of issues such as health and safety, employment and workplace practices.
74. The WRL programme has been carefully planned in line with the national recommendation. In Years 7 to 9, units of WRL study are built into the personal and social education programme, such as careers related development, and are well supported by the Connexions service. In Years 10 and 11, careers education is delivered through the life skills course and students are able to choose from a range of vocational courses. The guidance and preparation of students for entering these courses are excellent and lead to much improved attitudes to learning and more regular attendance in school. Opportunities for other students, however, are more limited because there are limited places available on the respective courses.
75. Work experience is well planned and close links with local employers ensure that students' experiences are relevant and evaluated. In addition, curricular links with local colleges provide students with opportunities for practical training in building and service work and to gain vocational qualifications. It is unusual for students not to complete the vocational course. Many subjects are contributing to WRL through units of work or specific courses. The school's specialist science status has led to students

improving their knowledge of industrial processes and how business ensures the health and safety of its employees. Vocational training is well developed in other subjects such as business, art and design and ICT. Opportunities for more students to benefit by school-based industry-focus days through practical simulations have not been developed.

76. WRL is well led and managed and has led to excellent preparation of students for their chosen course of study. Business links are well managed and employers feel their contribution is effective in helping students prepare for adult life. There is good liaison with teachers and support of management is strong but mapping the overall contribution of the curriculum is at an early stage of development.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Students have very good attitudes. In particular, in Years 10 and 11, they adopt a mature approach and work hard at redrafting their written work to improve its quality.
- There is less use made of ICT in teaching and learning than is normally expected.

Commentary

Examination results

77. Whilst national benchmarks were not available for end of Year 9 national tests in 2004, an analysis of the results would suggest that they would be above average. In 2004, GCSE results in English and English literature were above average.

Standards and achievement

78. Students' skills in speaking and listening are above the national average. By Year 9 most students are willing to take part in discussions and accept their responsibility to make a worthwhile contribution and to listen to the views of others. Most students express themselves clearly in writing. Higher attainers have the range and flexibility of language to be able to adapt what they produce for a range of audiences. Standards in reading are good. Students understand what they have read and the vast majority can read independently.

79. In Years 10 and 11, students improve their skills at a rate that means their standards remain above average. The majority of students are articulate, speak in turn and are ready to challenge the views of others. Standards of reading remain high, and many students show a good insight into demanding literature. Many students produce well-structured essays on a good range of topics, though the work of lower attainers tends to be marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Most students redraft their work with care in order to improve its quality.

Teaching and learning

80. Teaching and learning are good throughout Years 7 to 11. Some very good teaching was also seen. When teaching is most effective, teachers possess very good subject knowledge and use this to arouse students' interest, for example, by being able to formulate questions that provoke thought, debate and deeper understanding. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, the tasks set are varied and time is used efficiently. This results in students being interested in what they are doing and wanting to make progress. Homework is used effectively to support learning. Teachers set tasks that are relevant to the work being undertaken in class and students complete them promptly and conscientiously. A number of teachers use the 'three-part' lesson to advantage. This helps to create a structure in which there is variety, students know what is expected of them and there are opportunities for students to consolidate their understanding. When students' written work is marked accurately and thoroughly and targets are set for improvement, students work hard to raise their standards, take a pride in what they produce and learn to be self-critical. Such guidance is especially valuable when students are required to redraft their work. However, redrafting, and the detailed marking that supports it, is given greater prominence in Years 10 and 11 than it is in Years 7 to 9. Students have very good attitudes to their studies, behave well and generally make an important contribution to their own learning.
81. In the less effective lessons, teachers tend to set tasks by telling students what they should do rather than by explaining in sufficient depth, or, more especially, by demonstrating, what is required. This means that students with limited powers of expression do not have adequate models upon which to base their own writing, with the result that what they do produce can often be dull and inappropriate. When teachers talk for a large proportion of the lesson, and create little or no opportunities for students to be active or to contribute to the lesson, students' concentration wanes and their learning is slow. There is less use made of ICT in teaching and learning than is normally expected.

Leadership and management

82. The head of department is a good role model. He and his colleagues work closely together as a team and share ideas. This has certainly contributed to the good improvement that has taken place since the previous inspection. Though monitoring of teaching does take place, it has not yet been successful in ironing out some inconsistencies of practice and in spreading best practice.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

83. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are above average. Most students are confident speakers, who contribute well to paired and class discussions when required to do so, and are ready to listen attentively to teachers and other students. Most students have a good understanding of what they read and communicate clearly in writing. However, the work of lower attainers is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
84. The school has created a comprehensive management structure to promote basic skills, including literacy, across all subjects. This has certainly helped to create greater awareness of how teaching and learning could be improved and there has been a raising of standards in consequence and resulted in some very good practice. However, there are inconsistencies across departments.

English as an additional language

85. There were no students identified as being at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is small, and these students make progress at the same rate as all others. The school's very good approach to social inclusion ensures that students from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated into the life of the school.

Modern foreign languages

Overall provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection.	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection: this is as a result of improved teaching.
- Students behave very well and have very good attitudes to work.
- Leadership of the subject is very good and has resulted in significant improvements in the subject.
- Students are not provided with enough opportunities to use ICT to enhance their studies.

Commentary

Examination results

86. The 2004 GCSE results were above average in both French and German. Boys did less well than girls in examinations, but results for boys were still above those for boys nationally. Results have improved since the previous inspection.

Standards and achievement

87. Standards have risen since the time of the previous inspection. There are no differences in attainment across all aspects of the subject. Boys and girls achieve equally well. By the end of Year 9, students have a good understanding of grammar but find difficulty in manipulating the languages themselves to express their ideas without help from notes and their teachers. By the end of Year 11, students speak and write in the language with confidence and fluency. Lower-attaining students and those with learning needs are achieving well. Higher-attaining students have produced written coursework of a well above average standard. The school has put a number of curriculum and teaching strategies in place to improve boys' achievement and these are now succeeding in raising standards. Good achievement is consistent across all groups of students.

Teaching and learning.

88. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, not only of the language and grammar structures, but also of how best to prepare students for examinations. This is an important factor in the rise in results that has taken place. Teachers control their classes very well and no time is lost because of poor behaviour. Students behave very well and have very good attitudes to work. Working relationships are very good and there is a relaxed but businesslike atmosphere in lessons. Where teaching is most effective work is challenging, students are actively engaged in the lessons and little English is spoken either by the students or the teacher. Relevant homework is regularly set. Where teaching is less effective, work is not sufficiently challenging and the pace of the lesson is too slow to improve learning and raise standards. In planning, teachers do not always take sufficient account of the range of ability found in most classes. There are good procedures for assessment, and there is good use of

the data provided to show students how they can improve their work. Students' work is usually marked and corrected, but the use of marking as a means of helping students to improve their work is limited. There is a strong emphasis on grammar and writing in most lessons. As a result modern foreign languages make a very good contribution to students' literacy development. The contribution to numeracy and citizenship is satisfactory. The subject's contribution to learning with computers is unsatisfactory. This is because there is limited access to computer rooms; there is only one computer in the department and there are no interactive whiteboards.

Leadership and management

89. The curriculum is good. Students have opportunities to study two languages and an encouraging number choose to study languages for GCSE. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Monitoring and support of teaching are good and are an important factor in the improvements in teaching and learning that are taking place. The subject is very well led by the head of department. A strong team of teachers is developing who are committed to raising standards further. Management of the subject is good and the subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics, which supports students' achievement well.
- The students benefit from good regular assessment and the resulting performance data is used well to monitor their progress.
- There is good leadership of the department resulting in a clear vision for the improvement of the department.
- Higher attaining students in some lessons are insufficiently challenged.

Commentary

Examination results

90. Results in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average and continued the upward trend in these results. The GCSE results in 2004 were above the national average and were broadly similar to those in 2003.

Standards and achievement

91. By the end of Year 9, students' algebraic skills are well above average and the students make good achievement having entered the course with slightly above

average standards. Higher attaining students can use algebraic methods effectively to solve simultaneous equations; however, lower attainers struggle to expand brackets in expressions correctly. In Year 11, higher attaining students have above average algebraic skills. They can explain how to solve quadratic equations by use of the formula but have difficulty in solving by completing the square. The lower attainers have below average shape, spatial and measuring skills. Whilst they can prove the sum of the angles in a triangle, they struggle to calculate the sum of angles in a polygon due to their weaker numerical skills. Overall, by the end of Year 11 this represents good achievement for a cohort of students who entered the school with broadly average standards.

Teaching and learning

92. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics, which combined with their good rapport with the students results in the students learning well. Some very good lessons were evident. Teachers use good 'starter' activities, to get students going in lessons, but the finishes, do not always sufficiently recapitulate what has been learnt. In the top sets the higher attaining students are well challenged; however, the higher attaining students in other classes do not always benefit from such a level of challenge. Students are assessed well through regular testing, the outcomes of which are recorded by students in their Student Progress Records. Student self-assessment of their learning is developing in some classes and helpful and constructive marking does usually take place. Homework is provided regularly and assists well in the raising of achievement.

Leadership and management

93. The head of department is a good role model to both staff and students, providing good management and leadership, with a clear vision for improvement. Assessment of students' learning and examination performance is carried out and monitored to inform both planning and target setting. Departmental self-review does take place and results in a pertinent development plan.

94. GCSE statistics is offered to students in Years 10 and 11 to enrich their learning and those who take up this offer do well in their examinations. Good community links have been established with local primary schools resulting in the sharing of good practice.

Mathematics across the curriculum

95. Standards of mathematics across the curriculum are above average. Training has been delivered to other subjects on the teaching and learning of mathematics. Co-ordinators have also been appointed from each department to attend monthly strategy meetings and develop numeracy within their departments. In ICT, very good use is made of mathematics. Students readily overcome numerical problems by calculating mentally, rather than using the computer, and carry out breakeven calculations using iteration intuitively. However, monitoring of the numeracy provision in subjects is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the standards seen in ICT are consistent across the other departments. For one week each year, students in Years 7 and 8, in individual subjects, focus on the theme of travel to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Links with the wider community are developing and include a maths trail at a local shopping centre and a life expectancy analysis at a local church.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students gain better GCSE results than might be expected in relation to their test results when they enter the school.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about science so that students generally enjoy lessons, work hard and learn effectively.
- There is not yet enough monitoring of lessons and students' work to ensure that all students experience consistently good teaching.
- The department has successfully used the specialist science school status to provide better resources and opportunities for students.

Commentary

Examination results

96. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were above the national average, but lower than they had been in previous years. Results at GCSE in science were above the national average in 2004. Students taking double award science did better in science than they did on average in their other subjects. Thirty students took three separate science subjects. Results were above national averages in all three subjects and students did particularly well in chemistry.

Standards and achievement

97. Students generally have at least a satisfactory knowledge of the topics they have studied recently and higher attainers often have much better understanding than expected for their age. For example, some students in Year 9 successfully applied their knowledge of particle theory to various different situations. Similarly, in the chemistry course in Year 11, students were very adept in deducing empirical formulae. However, in Years 7 to 9, even in higher attaining groups, students do not always say precisely what they mean when answering unfamiliar questions.

98. In 2004, students did not do as well in the national tests at the end of Year 9 as expected, given their test results when they entered the school. Hence, for this year group, there was some under-achievement. The department has improved its planning for lessons and sharpened its assessment procedures so that the achievement of students now in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Students make good progress through Years 10 and 11, as a result of the good teaching they receive. Therefore, by the end of Year 11, their GCSE results are better than expected in relation to their standards when they joined the school.

Teaching and learning

99. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully. They clearly enjoy their subject so that students respond enthusiastically, work hard and behave very well. Teachers generally make good use of a 'three-part' lesson with an interesting 'starter' to get students thinking and a whole-class session at the end to reinforce the main learning points. In good and very good lessons, teachers place particular emphasis on students actively learning. They provide challenging questions and activities to keep students 'on their toes'. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on plants, students used what they already knew to sort cards, predicted and explained the outcome of an experiment, plotted graphs and used their newly acquired knowledge in GCSE questions.
100. However, there is some variation in the quality of teaching and learning in both key stages and, overall, teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, partly because there are still some weaknesses in the lesson planning for Years 7 to 9. When teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is often rather slow and, in the occasional unsatisfactory lesson, the tasks provided are not sufficiently demanding for the group.

Leadership and management

101. The head of department leads by example with the high quality of her own teaching and she has been successful in building strong and supportive relationships across this large department. The department has used the school's specialist science college status as a background to providing extra resources and additional experiences for its own students as well as giving help and support to other departments and schools.
102. The department was disappointed by the 2004 Year 9 test results and is working hard to ensure that students' achievement is improving. However, there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and there is not yet enough regular, systematic monitoring to ensure that all students experience consistently good teaching and learning.
103. Since the previous inspection, GCSE results have improved from average to above average; resources and accommodation are now much better than they were. Hence the department has made good progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising rapidly as a result of very good leadership and management.
- Students achieve well across all aspects of the subject.

- Teachers in other subjects do not give students enough opportunities to use computers in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

Examination results

104. In 2004, examination results were average both in GCSE and GNVQ examinations. In 2004 and in preceding years, students have achieved better results than their standards on entry to the courses would indicate. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

105. Although standards are, at present, above average, they are improving rapidly; standards in Year 7 are already well above average for this stage of their course. Throughout the year groups, teachers place a great deal of stress on accuracy and analysis, so these aspects are particularly strong. This really pays dividends when students come to do their examination coursework, where work is very well presented and is accurately matched to the examination criteria and students score highly on research and analysis of problems. Throughout the school, practical skills are above average; by Year 9, students are readily combining different applications to produce a wide range of outputs, and go on to become confident in using some of the more advanced features of the software. Students who have statements of special educational needs achieve very well, because they receive very good support from a teaching assistant whose knowledge and skills in the use of computers are exceptional. Some students in Years 10 and 11 do not study the subject to examination level; they are taught their ICT through other subjects and achieve satisfactorily.

Teaching and learning

106. Teaching is good, and improving, especially in Years 7 and 8. There is a great deal of consistency in the strengths of teaching in the department. In particular, teachers are all specialists with a very good knowledge of the subject; this has not been the case in the past and is one of the reasons why students in Years 7 are achieving better than others. The way that resources are used is particularly good, because it allows teachers to make objectives clear and individualises lessons for the students, such as using individual video clips to make a point. Expectations of the amount of work that will be covered are good, and are successful because of the rapid pace of lessons. In some cases the pace can even be a little too fast, so teachers do not give students enough time to answer questions and end up answering them themselves.

107. Lessons are always well structured, with a good mix of activities, so students do not become bored. If a student's concentration does start to wander, the teachers' good discipline, together with their insistence on students obeying rules, ensures that students are soon working hard again. Sometimes, students get too much guidance, either from the teacher or from worksheets, and this stifles the students' independence. The other great strength in the teaching is the way that teachers plan lessons to include activities that improve students' reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Years 7 and 8. Teachers insist on students reading aloud, writing some work by hand, obeying the basic rules of good grammar and carrying out calculations in their head and on paper.

Leadership and management

108. This is a subject that is improving rapidly as the teachers work as a highly effective team who are prepared to try different approaches and take on board new ideas. They have embraced the national strategy by appointing a teacher with specific responsibility for Years 7 to 9 for example, which has led to outstanding schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 that provide exceptionally good support for new members of staff in particular. The head of department is a very good role model in his teaching and his openness about strengths and weaknesses in teaching, which is reflected in the openness of his staff and the way they continually strive to improve standards. The very good way in which the department is monitored, and subsequent actions are planned and implemented, has led to significant improvements in teaching, standards and achievement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

109. Students' skills in using ICT are above average by the end of Years 9 and 11. This is a result of the good work carried out by the ICT department. However, although some areas, such as the special educational needs department make good use of computers, many do not provide students in Years 7 to 9 with enough opportunities to practise their skills. Sometimes this is because of difficulties in booking into computer rooms, but at other times staff are not receiving enough encouragement to build this into their teaching.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 7 to 9 leads to students achieving well.
- The assessment arrangements are good and enable students to know how well they are doing.
- The curriculum is enhanced through fieldwork in each year.
- There is continuing weakness in writing skills for lower attaining students which adversely affects coursework.

Commentary

Examination results

110. Results in the 2004 GCSE examination were below average, particularly at grades A* to B. Results were similar to those achieved in recent years. Overall, students did less well in geography than in their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

111. By the end of Year 9, students have achieved well and improved their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of topics. They have average map skills, but do not make enough use of the atlas to improve knowledge of places. They know where and why earthquakes occur and use appropriate terms, but diagram and sketching skills are weak. Students literacy skills are average, but graphical skills are above average. Higher attaining students write well-explained answers but the quality of writing of others is reduced by grammatical inaccuracies. By the end of Year 11, students' map skills are average but they have extended their knowledge of global topics such as world population. They can describe pyramid graphs well, but they do not use their knowledge of places enough to explain answers. Students use number well to collect fieldwork data about Leeds but they do not analyse information enough. There is continuing weakness in writing skills for lower attaining students. Students with special educational needs make good progress because their specific needs are well supported.

Teaching and learning

112. In Years 7 to 9, aims are made clear and students benefit from the guidance and support they receive. Teaching is well structured with a variety of activities but teachers do not always match the work to meet the needs of all students, particularly higher attaining students. Progress is well assessed through regular tests and good use is made of learning resources, particularly text books. In some lessons, teachers talk for long periods and students are not involved enough in learning; this leads to lapses in concentration and learning slows. In Years 10 and 11, teachers have good knowledge of topics and prepare lessons carefully so that learning is relevant and interesting. Lessons are well managed, learning proceeds smoothly and much is achieved. Occasionally, however, lower attaining students make slow progress

because they do not concentrate or respond to encouragement. In class discussions, students are not always challenged to develop answers.

Leadership and management

113. Arrangements to monitor students' progress are identified, but not enough is done to monitor the quality of learning. The schemes of work inform well about learning proposals and guidance is given about policies and practice. Teachers are well supported and morale is good. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of good, often innovative, teaching by enthusiastic teachers.
- Lessons are interesting and challenging and students behave well and work hard.
- Teachers give good feedback so that students understand how to improve on their written work.
- Students are highly motivated to succeed.
- GCSE results in 2004 fell to below the national average.

Commentary

Examination results

114. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were below average although in previous years they were close to the national average. Reasons for this drop have been identified and teachers have adopted appropriate strategies to improve students' attainment.

Standards and achievement

115. In Year 9, students reach above average standards and, as their attainment is average when they enter the school, their achievement is good. In their oral and written work students show that their skills have developed well in using sources of evidence to interpret events. Lower attaining students achieve as well as others because teachers provide materials that are well matched to students' needs and learning styles that enable students to understand difficult concepts.

116. Around twice as many students than in most schools choose to continue studying history beyond the age of 14. In Years 10 and 11, students develop further their analytical and writing skills and continue to achieve well. Students of varying levels of

attainment, for example, show good understanding of the correlation between German inflation and unemployment from 1924 to 1933, and the number of votes cast for the Nazi Party in elections to the Reichstag. The standard of work seen is higher than the 2004 GCSE results would suggest as a result of the strategies put in place since then.

Teaching and learning

117. Over the last two years, new appointments and re-allocation of key responsibilities have significantly strengthened the subject's team of teachers, and all students benefit from being taught by enthusiastic teachers who expect high standards of work and behaviour. Teachers explain clearly the aims of lessons and provide interesting and challenging learning tasks. In the challenging lesson on the Spanish Armada, for example, the atmosphere buzzed as students discussed animatedly what was the most important reason, from a number of possibilities for its defeat.
118. Students' work is assessed accurately and they know, because of informative marking, how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Homework is used well to extend learning beyond the lesson. The teaching of literacy is effective in helping students to improve their writing but speaking skills need more considered and planned development.
119. In Years 10 and 11, the thorough analysis of previous GCSE results, fully involving all of the new team of teachers, has resulted in innovative lessons that make full use of every minute, interest all students and challenge their thinking. Students produce good coursework assignments because teachers emphasise the importance of this, to the gaining of good GCSE grades. Assessments of other written answers are accurate and students benefit from detailed feedback from teachers so that they know what improvements will gain higher grades.

Leadership and management

120. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced head of department who has welcomed the lively and enthusiastic contributions of young teachers. The department development plan matches school priorities and focuses on further improving learning and teaching, and on improving GCSE examination results. The subject's plans do not yet, however, state explicitly enough the strategies that teachers must use to further improve students' literacy skills, especially speaking skills. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is not enough time allocated to deliver the Agreed Syllabus in Years 10 and 11.

- Standards in the GCSE course are rising and numbers of students choosing to follow the course are growing.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the students are enabling them to make the most of their lessons.
- The annual changes in many staff for Years 7 to 9 mean they cannot build on experience or training.
- There is no monitoring of progress, or assessment of attainment of non-examination students in the upper school.

Commentary

Examination results

121. In 2004 the GCSE results were average, although there were few of the highest grades. Students achieved well compared with other subjects. This was particularly impressive as one teacher was not available for the two terms prior to their examination. This success reflects the support they received for their independent study and their good attitudes to work. Results and the numbers of students choosing to follow the course have risen steadily since the last inspection.

Standards and achievement

122. Standards in Year 9 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement given the very limited time for study and the lack of development of non-specialist teachers who may change every year. The achievement of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because they regularly miss half their lesson when they are withdrawn for extra support for other subjects. They find they are at a disadvantage when they return and do not have the opportunity to catch up what they have missed.

123. By the end of Year 11, standards in the non-examination course are below average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement. The pressure to deliver PSHE and careers is squeezing religious education time further and the long gaps between the two six-week religious education modules reduce continuity and development. The lack of homework opportunities means that lessons are used to deliver information rather than enable students to develop their beliefs and values. There is insufficient opportunity for students to consolidate what they learn and to explore, and reflect on, the beliefs that influence others. The change of teacher for each of the three subjects does enable the religious education modules to be taught by a specialist, but it leads to further disruption as students and teachers settle into a new half-termly routine.

124. Standards at GCSE are average and achievement is good. Students recognise the dilemmas behind moral issues and can identify the opinions of the major religions. They speak with confidence and are well prepared for the examination. They have a secure grasp of the key features of Islam and the teachings that give rise to them.

Teaching and learning

125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Given the very limited time, teachers' high expectations of behaviour and concentration enable students to consider concepts, such as a creed and the question of evil and suffering, to a useful level. The clear worksheets support non-specialist teachers and ensure learning is organised and developmental. The use of clearly structured planning enables students to identify the focus of the lesson and so to recognise their achievement. Teachers have good relationships with their students, whose behaviour and attitudes are good and enable them to make the most of the limited time they have.

126. In Years 10 and 11, teachers have good specialist knowledge, but pressure of time is resulting in teachers leading the lessons and results in a lack of independent learning. In an effort to present basic information about moral dilemmas, religious teaching is becoming secondary to secular information and is not integral to the learning. Assessment tasks are being introduced in Years 7 to 9 that will enable teachers and students to identify their progress and attainment, but there is no monitoring or assessment of progress for the non-examination course in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management

127. The leadership of the department is satisfactory, but management is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator recognises areas for development and has developed the work of the GCSE groups well. The amalgamation of religious education with careers, PSHE and aspects of citizenship into one weekly period for each year group, however, has restricted development of the subject. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching or assessment of the progress of the different groups in order to ensure the quality of teaching. There has been little training to support non-specialist teachers, and as several change each year there is no opportunity for them to build on their experiences of teaching religious education. Only the two specialist teachers can attend the religious department meetings so development of non-specialist staff is perfunctory. Since the last inspection a second specialist teacher has been appointed and the GCSE course has been developed well. Assessment tasks have been designed, although they have yet to be fully embedded in the work of the department. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection; however, there has been no increase in time in Years 10 and 11 so the school is still not meeting its statutory requirements.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in food technology because of the very good teaching they receive.
- Students are underachieving in resistant materials because of a combination of unsatisfactory teaching and poor planning.
- The leadership and management of the department are ineffective and insufficient action has been taken to overcome the poor performance of students.

Commentary

Examination results

128. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were below average; they were well above average in food technology but well below in resistant materials, graphics and textiles. Both boys and girls do worse in design and technology than they do in their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

129. By the end of Year 9, students' designing and making skills are average; this represents satisfactory achievement given students' attainment on entry to the school. They use a variety of tools and equipment competently and with confidence in all material areas. However, students achieve less well in resistant materials than they do in food and textiles because too much time is wasted on projects that take far too long to complete. As a result, students lose their momentum, their work lacks rigour and activities such as copying notes from books do not develop students' knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 11, standards of designing and making are below average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement since Year 9. The exception to this is food technology where standards are well above average. Students' work in food is thorough, superbly presented and packed with careful analysis and evaluation. In contrast, standards in resistant materials are very low, and whilst standards of making are close to average, students' designing skills are weak and their knowledge of materials and processes is very limited, largely because of a poorly planned course.

Teaching and learning

130. In Year 9, students experience a good range of practical activities and design and make interesting products. In most lessons, students work at a satisfactory pace and the lessons are planned with clear learning objectives. However, some of the teaching in resistant materials is unsatisfactory because teachers' expectations are too low and the activities are too easy. Students are not made to work hard enough and productivity in these lessons is too low. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching varies greatly between subjects. In food technology, the thoroughness of the planning, pace of lessons and high expectations of the teachers result in very good achievement. In contrast, in resistant materials the lessons are slow, activities lack challenge and designing lacks rigour. In food technology, the marking of students' work is very thorough and the clear feedback that is given to students helps them to improve. This is not the case in areas such as resistant materials where students have little idea how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. The students' attitudes and behaviour are always good, even when the teaching is dull. Students use ICT well for the presentation of their coursework in food and graphics, but computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing are not being used in resistant materials or textiles.

Leadership and management

131. The main weakness in the way the department is led is the lack of direction for the subject as a whole. Food and textiles work largely independently from resistant materials and graphics and as a result there is a lack of coherent planning. Individual areas such as food technology are well managed and have developed very good practices; unfortunately these are not being shared. Recent staffing changes have led to an improved provision for graphics but overall, weak management means that there are inconsistencies in almost every aspect of the department's work. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and the health and safety issues raised at the last inspection with regard to teaching textiles in a food technology room have yet to be addressed. In addition, there is insufficient technician time to support the work of the department.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and contributes directly to the rising standards.
- Students study a wide range of art forms that broadens their learning and skills.
- Leadership and management are very good, bringing vision and energy to the subject.
- Students' very good attitudes to the subject contribute to their success.
- There is not enough provision in ICT to fully extend students' learning.

Commentary

Examination results

132. GCSE results were above average in 2004, although a smaller than average proportion of students gained A* or A grades. These results continue a very significant rising trend from well below average at the time of the previous inspection.

Standards and achievement

133. A beneficial feature of students' work in all years is the wide range of different art forms that are studied. These include drawing and painting, printing, ceramics, light sculpture, carving and casting. Students acquire good skills in all these areas that they then use effectively in subsequent work. In all years, students use their sketchbooks well for research and experimentation. They are good independent learners and do a substantial amount of imaginative work outside of lessons. In GCSE, three-dimensional work is inspired by a visit to a sculpture park and students' final pieces are large scale and ambitious. This represents good achievement given students' average skills on entry to the school.

Teaching and learning

134. Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good features in all lessons. Teachers have very good skills in organising practical work so there is very efficient use of time. All teachers have very good relationships with their students and create and maintain an excellent climate for learning that is quiet, calm and purposeful. They give good demonstrations of the skills and techniques associated with all types of work, making the aims of the lessons clear and interesting so that students know how to make progress. They earn the respect of their students who show very good attitudes to their work. Behaviour in lessons is generally excellent. Teachers give good one-to-one guidance and support to all students so all, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, make equally good progress. There is not enough provision of ICT within the department. This limits the scope of teachers' demonstrations and presentations. It also limits students' opportunities to do research on the spot and to explore and manipulate images to extend their ideas during lessons. Assessment, including self-assessment, is good. Marking is done in good detail and students are given clear guidance on how to improve. There is good, well-planned support for raising students' skills in literacy and numeracy. There is

good provision for work-related learning within the vocational course in Year 10. Students learn skills that can be used in a range of situations.

Leadership and management

135. Since the previous inspection, there has been new, energetic leadership with a clear vision for raising standards further. There is a good range of staff expertise and very good teamwork and mutual support. The leadership has moved quickly to rectify all the issues raised in the previous inspection. There is good technician support that contributes to the smooth running of the department. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by studying these aspects in works of art, especially in the art of other cultures. There is very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in standards in GCSE and in students' attitudes.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because the majority of teaching is imaginative and dynamic.
- Students' learning is greatly enhanced by the outstanding quality of the extra-curricular musical activities they take part in.
- Students do not use computers enough in Years 7 to 9 and their composing skills suffer as a result.
- Students' very positive attitudes and clear enjoyment of the subject enhance their work and help them to learn better than expected in some lessons.
- The high quality teaching of some teachers is not shared enough throughout the department so inconsistencies occur.

Commentary

Examination results

136. GCSE results in 2004 were below average. Girls did not do as well as boys did. Overall, boys and girls did not do as well in music as they did in their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

137. By the end of Year 9, students have well-developed performance skills but a weaker understanding of composing. They work cooperatively and enthusiastically to create group performances and short compositions. Higher attainers display a good understanding of musical elements and are generally competent performers. Although students get good opportunities to use electronic keyboards they do not have enough access to computers with music software and do not use the few multi-tracking keyboards available to enhance their composition work. By the end of Year 11, standards are much better than the previous examination results would indicate. This is because all the students now following the course are instrumentalists or vocalists and have benefited from an improved curriculum in Years 7 to 9. They perform very well on their chosen instrument because of the good instrumental tuition they receive but are much weaker at composing and using computers with music software. The more musically talented are accomplished performers and get lots of opportunities to take part in the high quality ensembles within the school. Students use technical language very well when describing the music they hear and study. Theory and appraising work is less developed but still shows a satisfactory understanding of the examination requirements.

Teaching and learning

138. Teachers are excellent musicians and most provide really interesting well-structured lessons that enable students to learn well. However, teaching during the inspection was not consistent and ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Students really enjoy music lessons because most teachers ensure lessons have a wide range of activities that capture the students' interest. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of brisk

and lively activities that are geared to get the best out of the students. In a small number of lessons, teaching can be dull and unmusical, but students still achieve and learn satisfactorily because they have very positive attitudes to their learning, want to do well and so work very hard. Relationships are excellent throughout the department. Some of the very best teaching takes place in the out-of-school groups such as the excellent school choir and swing band. Students in Years 10 and 11 work really hard in lessons without relying on the teacher to keep them focused. They benefit from the high quality examination preparation teachers give them.

Leadership and management

139. Leadership is characterised by a clear vision and strong commitment to improving all aspects of the department and has resulted in much improvement of resources and schemes of work. Day-to-day management ensures that systems are in place and documentation is appropriate. However, there are too many inconsistencies within the department. The lack of monitoring of teaching results in insufficient sharing of the really good practice that takes place and an inconsistency in the use of marking, teaching strategies and assessment procedures. The quality of the extra-curricular musical activities is a major strength of the department and students really enjoy taking part in the high quality performances.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- A very good extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for all students, especially the gifted and talented, to excel in school and beyond.

Commentary

Examination results

140. The 2004 GCSE results were average. Following the years of above average results, this dip had been anticipated because of this cohort's lower practical skills.

Standards and achievement

141. Standards in Year 9 are average overall; however, most students achieve above average standards in team games. This represents good achievement because students enter the school with widely different experience and starting points in physical education. Girls and boys achieve well in gymnastics and also in team games, well illustrated by boys in football, and girls in netball. Students with special educational needs are well supported, and achieve as well as their classmates, as seen in football.

142. In Year 11, standards are above average, reflecting good achievement. Boys and girls achieve well in badminton, as they develop new skills through tactical play. High standards are also evident in girls' aerobics and boys' football. Students following the GCSE course, attain above average standards in all aspects of the course. Boys' achievement in football is very good. In theoretical aspects, students demonstrate a good understanding of the body's systems. Standards in extra-curricular sport are very high, well illustrated by the school's many successes in games at county, regional and national level.

Teaching and learning

143. Teaching is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and motivating. High standards are expected and received. Students have very good attitudes towards the subject, reflected in their high levels of participation, standards of dress and behaviour in lessons. Students also support extra-curricular activities very well, and put good physical effort into their work. Teaching is often very good, combining pace, high expectations and challenge to create a demanding pace of learning. Very good use of ICT enhances learning in examination classes.

Leadership and management

144. The department is well led and managed, supported by a strong, committed team. Clear vision and direction for the subject support traditional values, and create an ethos of high standards. A very good extra-curricular programme offers a wide range of opportunities for all students, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel in their chosen sports. Strong links with the community and local sports clubs enhance this, and exciting curriculum initiatives are being developed in partnership with higher education Institutions, such as the Healthy Lifestyles Project. Outdoor facilities for the subject are very poor, and they are a constraint on students' standards and achievement. Most importantly, the school is achieving the aim of the national strategy for all students to receive at least two hours a week of high-quality physical education. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained, and the department is moving forward.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Not applicable	Above average
Achievement	Not applicable	Good
Teaching and learning	Not applicable	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good overall because teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers are specialists with good subject knowledge.

- Teachers effectively monitor performance and set individual targets.
- There is a need to extend resources and opportunities for higher attaining students.

Commentary

Examination results

145. In 2004, the GCSE results were below the national average, with boys not performing as well as the girls. However, these results are not typical for a subject that usually produces results that are above the national average and the school has requested re-marking by the examination board.

Standards and achievement

146. Students in Year 10 already have a secure understanding of key business terms and concepts and they have a great desire to do well. This was evident in a lesson when they received their fourth progress test back. They all were interested to see how well they were performing in relation to their target grade. Students are made aware of their predicted grade and are suitably concerned if they are not making steady progress. Staff are well aware of gender inconsistencies in this subject and a concerted effort is being made to redress the balance. Students in Year 11 demonstrate a secure understanding of terms such as 'start up', 'running', 'fixed' and 'variable' costs. They do not confuse such terms as 'profit' and 'cash' and can draw up and analyse cash flow forecasts. Staff ensure that students also get the chance to view the business world from alternative perspectives and apply their knowledge and understanding to real situations. When GCSE revision classes take place they are well attended and focus appropriately on raising individual levels of achievement.

Teaching and learning

147. Business studies teachers have very good relationships with their students. They know their students very well and use this knowledge to challenge students appropriately. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and skilfully use this to extend students' learning. Teachers use many different styles of teaching and there is good planning of work to suit the wide range of ability of the students. This was particularly evident when the teacher introduced Year 10 to the differences between 'need' and 'want' and students looked at marketing ploys to create need. Students' work is marked regularly and consistently so that all know how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Learning is effectively extended through homework.

Leadership and management

148. There is a highly experienced head of department who leads and manages his department well. His concern over the 2004 GCSE results resulted in improvements in the monitoring and target-setting processes for both Years 10 and 11. Summative tests at the end of each unit have been introduced and the department regularly uses external examination-based questions to extend students. There has been good progress since the time of the previous inspection as the department has worked hard to further involve students in their learning process and self and peer assessment is now integral to teachers' planning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

149. The personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes plus religious education and careers are integrated into one lesson each week.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	NA

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Citizenship is clearly identified in lessons across the school, enabling students to develop their understanding of the concept.
- Students support each other and work well together.
- There are good opportunities to develop leadership skills in physical education.
- Students have very little understanding of the process of government and the judicial system.
- Achievement in citizenship is not yet evaluated, and students' progress is not monitored.
- Students do not have a forum for discussion and for active participation in the development of the school.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

150. Students work well together and support each other through group tasks. They are keen to participate in lessons and are confident in voicing their opinions knowing that their responses will be well received. Their sense of responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves, is well developed, as is seen through their response to the recent tsunami disaster in Asia. Some students have good opportunities to display active citizenship through leadership of clubs, activities such as coaching sports teams and conducting music groups; however, this is not widespread across the school's population. Some students demonstrate awareness of the need for a responsible life style through the Healthy Lifestyles Club. Although the school consults students, there is no system that enables the student body as a whole to exercise democracy and participate in the organisation and running of the school. There are limited opportunities for responsibility in the main school so this area of development is satisfactory at best. Students' knowledge and understanding of the process of British and European Government, finance, and the judicial system are below average. They have little opportunity at present to consider these topics.

Teaching and learning

151. All teachers recognise their responsibility for developing a sense of citizenship in their students. In physical education and music in particular, students are encouraged to recognise the skills of citizenship they are using. Specific citizenship topics are delivered across the curriculum. For example, in Year 9, students become aware of the value of tourism to Britain through geography lessons, and their brochures recommending Yorkshire demonstrate this has been successful. Other areas of knowledge are more superficially covered while studying other subjects and the focus

on citizenship is a by-product of the lesson. As a consequence there is no evaluation or assessment of the depth of the knowledge obtained, and no monitoring of the quality of the delivery of that aspect of citizenship. Overall, teaching is satisfactory; however, there is a lack of specialist knowledge and understanding of aspects such as the judicial system and the European Union. The use of outside agencies such as the Police Youth Offending team, provides current information; however, there is insufficient time for students to question such specialists. As a result misunderstandings occur. For example, some students believe they can be arrested for standing with a group of friends. The lack of monitoring, training or a detailed scheme of work is resulting in inconsistency in delivery and content, and so students' experience varies.

Leadership and management

152. The leadership of citizenship is satisfactory; however, management is unsatisfactory. All departments have identified opportunities for the syllabus to be delivered through their subject, although individual department responsibility for specific areas of the syllabus is unclear. The school as a whole is very aware of the importance of the subject. Good examples are in place, but there is insufficient co-ordination of cross-curricular delivery. As a consequence, there is no evaluation or assessment of the success of the delivery, or of the knowledge and understanding achieved by the student. The school is introducing an individual student portfolio that will enable students to record their experiences and future evaluations.

153. Citizenship was not reported in the last inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	11	100	98.3	63.6	50.2	94.5	87.1
Biology	12	100	96.6	41.7	40.0	83.3	79.3
Business	43	95.3	91.6	37.2	24.1	71.6	67.9
Chemistry	19	100	97.7	57.9	50.0	90.5	85.7
English / English language	27	100	99.2	48.1	36.4	82.2	81.1
English literature	9	100	99.4	44.4	44.9	80.0	85.5
Design and technology	14	100	97.8	7.1	35.0	61.4	77.9
Drama	5	100	99.6	0	42.8	40.0	85.1
French	5	100	99.0	40.0	53.1	92.0	88.9
General studies	48	100	94.9	14.6	30.4	67.1	72.9
Geography	12	83.3	98.8	25.0	46.4	56.7	85.2
German	2	100	98.6	50.0	49.6	80.0	86.3
History	10	100.0	99.0	30.0	45.6	80.0	85.1
Information technology	10	100	96.3	10.0	25.7	70.0	71.1
Mathematics	7	85.7	96.8	42.9	56.6	80.0	96.8
Music	6	100	98.2	50.0	37.1	83.3	79.5
Other sciences	24	100	97.4	58.3	44.2	92.5	82.5
Other social studies	1	100	97.4	100	42.5	100	81.6
Physics	8	62.5	96.7	25.0	45.3	50.0	82.6
Sociology	10	100	98.5	30.0	45.3	78.0	84.6
Sports/PE studies	8	100	97.8	50.0	30.9	82.5	75.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was English literature.

English literature

The quality of the provision in English literature is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very positive student/teacher relationships are a major strength of the department.
- Staff are very hard working and enthusiastic about their subject.
- Lessons are well planned and there are ample support materials for students.
- Students tend to have an over-reliance on the teacher's input.
- There is less use of ICT in English than would normally be expected.

Commentary

Examination results

154. Results at A-level were well below average in 2003 and average in 2004.

Standards and achievement

155. Students are able to take part in discussions and share their ideas. In the best discussions, students are confident and enthusiastic, and listen attentively to the contributions of others. Students do not always use subject terminology to share their views, and too often use colloquial words to present their points. In their written work, students are developing the ability to make judgements on set texts. Students undertake their own research although they do not always read widely enough around the texts, and are over-reliant on the support materials provided for them.

Teaching and learning

156. One of the main strengths of the teaching is the very positive student and teacher relationships. Teachers are extremely hard working and committed, and are able to pass on their love of literature to the students. Their enthusiasm for the subject is very obvious, and this motivates the students to learn. Students are keen to volunteer answers, and get involved in discussions, and feel comfortable doing this. At times, discussions are unduly led by the teacher, and this does not sufficiently encourage students to explore their ideas and become more independent learners.

157. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, and lessons are well planned. Students are given a wealth of support materials. These are most useful when students annotate them and have clearly read them. They are less effective when

there is not an expectation on students to do this. Teachers have developed a culture of 'spoon feeding' students which is restricting initiative.

158. Teachers provide a variety of activities that enable the students to learn. Students learned best when they were in groups and pairs. This allowed them to share their ideas, and develop their own views. Past papers are used in both Year 12 and Year 13 to prepare students for the examinations. This provides clear guidance about what is expected of them in the course, and the final examination. Teachers make it very clear to students what is expected of them. They do this by introducing students to the criteria used by the examination boards when assessing A-level performance. However, this is not used fully enough in the assessment of students' written work.

159. The marking of coursework across the department is quite varied. Some teachers use the A-level grading schedule, whilst others use their own system. As a result, students are not always clear about the grade they are working at, and what they should be working towards.

Leadership and management

English has increased in popularity over the last few years. Staff development has not effectively managed to meet the department's needs in the light of its new staffing and expanding curriculum.

Literacy across the curriculum

160. The standards of literacy are above average. The school makes good provision to ensure that the students' literacy skills are well developed across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

The focus of the inspection was mathematics.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good level of knowledge of the teachers leads to clear explanations of concepts.
- Teaching is good overall and consequently students are well motivated and work hard.
- There was an improvement in results in 2004 and standards are improving.
- Schemes of work are not developed sufficiently to give teachers guidelines on teaching methods and resources so that the quality of teaching can be improved further.

The inspection covered the AS and A-level courses in mathematics and the AS-level course in 'The Use of Mathematics'.

Commentary

Examination results

161. In 2004, results at A-level were broadly in line with the national average.

Standards and achievement

162. Overall achievement is good, given the students' attainment on entry to the course. There was an improvement in results in 2004 and the standard of work seen is above average now. The improvement in standards is due to the strategies that the department have developed to improve attainment. For example, there is a greater participation of students in lessons; the school has changed the entry policy to the course; each student has a course handbook so that they know what they are to study; and methods of studying outline and workshops are provided at many times throughout the week and after school. Students have their own self-assessment profiles and they are developing a greater responsibility for their own learning and a greater independency. In both A-level and AS-level, the quality of students' written and oral work is generally better than that seen at this stage in the course. Students are developing good basic skills in calculus and they use these effectively to calculate the equations of tangents to curves and turning points of graphs. They progress to differentiating composite functions and can use the different rules of calculus appropriately. Above average work was seen from students on the 'Use of Mathematics' course. They demonstrate a good understanding of the normal approximation to a Poisson distribution and can use it accurately. They progress to applying significant tests for the mean of a Poisson distribution.

Teaching and learning

163. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They give students good support with clear explanations when they ask for clarification. One of the strengths of the better teaching is the quality of challenging questions and the good planning of lessons. This challenges and inspires students to tackle questions with confidence. Lessons are planned with a variety of activities and proceed at a stimulating pace so that students are engaged throughout the lessons and a high level of concentration is maintained. Students are highly motivated and put in a very good level of effort. They acquire new knowledge expeditiously. They participate fully in discussions, responding well to questions and volunteering questions and answers. They work well co-operatively in pairs and small groups. Homework is used well to consolidate and extend new learning that takes place in the lessons, and there are opportunities to develop study skills further by encouraging the use of the Internet. There is good use of ICT in the AS-level 'Use of Mathematics' course; however, use in other areas is inadequate. The marking of students' work contains good diagnostic comments that show the students where they have made mistakes and what they need to do to improve. It is particularly good in the 'Use of Mathematics'

Leadership and management

164. The good leadership and management are the result of teachers of the subject having a clear understanding of what is needed for students to succeed in mathematics at this level. The department has identified the need for improvement in attainment and strategies are being put in place. Teachers work well together and are keen to raise achievement in mathematics. The commitment of teachers is good. There are good procedures for assessing the students' performance as they progress through the sixth form. Results are analysed thoroughly. Students are able to track their progress through the sixth form by the use of the self-assessment profiles and homework

monitoring sheets. These also help them identify any problem areas and students are developing a greater understanding of how they can improve. There is a good curriculum with a wide range of topics both within the A-level mathematics curriculum and with the option to study 'The Use of Mathematics'. These provide students with good opportunities to study new areas of the subject ensuring that interest and motivation are maintained and extended. Although there is a comprehensive programme of study that follows the published syllabuses, the schemes of work lack guidance on appropriate teaching methods and use of resources that would enhance the teaching further. There has been good progress since the last inspection; teaching and standards have improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

165. Competence in mathematics is above average. There is extensive use of graphs and data in geography. Students analyse data well using Spearman Rank Correlation. Students use formulae with competence when creating spreadsheets in ICT key skills.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was chemistry but teaching in physics and biology was sampled. Attainment in the 2004 examinations in biology was above average and was higher than in previous years. In physics, the numbers of students studying the course were relatively low and the results in 2004 were below average and showed a decline from the previous year.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The marking and monitoring of students' work are very good.
- The working relationship between teachers and students is excellent.
- The sharing of good practice should be extended further.
- Students are too passive in class and could be challenged more.
- Teaching is good, leading to good learning.

Commentary

Examination results

166. In 2002 and 2003 the standards attained at A-level were well above national averages and in 2004 the results attained were above national averages. Over the last three years students have attained greater success in chemistry than the other science subjects.

Standards and achievement

167. The standards seen during the inspection are also above average. Students have a thorough understanding of the work and the quality of their written work is high. Students in both years have practical and investigative skills that are above average for this stage in the course and they work meticulously on investigations. Students' files are immaculate and contain detailed notes, successful numerical calculations and carefully completed homework.

Teaching and learning

168. Teachers plan their lessons very well and very good preparation supports good classroom teaching. Students' work is marked impeccably. The presentation of the students' work is very good and is closely monitored by the teachers. Work is returned very quickly to students, corrected and graded, with clear indications for improvement where appropriate. The support given by the teachers is greatly valued by the students. Teachers give generously of their own time by providing additional sessions outside the timetabled programme. There is an excellent relationship between students and teachers, based on trust and respect, and this ensures a very good learning environment in the classroom. Lessons are well prepared and lesson objectives are explained to students. Good use is made of homework, which is both regular and relevant. However, in the lessons observed there were opportunities missed to broaden and extend topics and there were occasions where the higher attaining students were insufficiently challenged. ICT is used well for research, for student presentations, for experimental work and for teaching. Students are guided to appropriate websites to help focus their research: this is an example of the way in which the skills of independent learning are encouraged and steadily developed over the length of the course.

Leadership and management

169. Leadership and management are very good. There is a shared determination to maintain the very high standards of previous years despite several recent staff changes: the committed and exemplary leadership is a key part of this. Teaching is monitored and there is support for teachers new to the school and to the syllabus. There are not enough opportunities to share good practice across the subject. Schemes of work are thorough and also in a constant state of review and development. They are held on the school's intranet and conveniently available to all the teachers. The subject is outward looking, and planning to develop the links it has started with universities and local industry. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. Standards have improved as a result of improvements in teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus of the inspection was information and communication technology.

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Insufficient evidence	Above average
Achievement	Insufficient evidence	Good
Teaching and learning	Insufficient evidence	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Progress since previous inspection	Very good
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Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very good; all students study ICT.
- Standards have improved significantly as a result of very good leadership.

Commentary

Examination results

170. Examination results were average in 2004, after having been well above average in the previous two years. The apparent decline in standards indicated by the results is simply a result of lower attaining students starting the course; students did better than expected in all three years given their standards on starting the course. Students in Year 12 were sitting examinations in the subject during the inspection so it was not possible to observe their lessons or look at their folders.

Standards and achievement

171. Students in Year 13 started the course with broadly average standards; standards now are above average. Coursework is very well organised and presented and students achieve particularly well in this element. Their ability to analyse situations is also strong, with clear links made between the requirements of a user and the detailed analysis of how a proposed system will meet their needs. There are no areas of weakness in students' knowledge and understanding; teachers are now working hard on improving students' examination techniques in order to maximise students' marks in written examinations.

Teaching and learning

172. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and of the requirements of the syllabus, so are able to target their advice to students on exactly the right points to have maximum benefit. The resources available are very good and used very well in lessons. In one revision lesson, for example, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to give a presentation of tips on how to approach the examination. This was carried out with an example on another whiteboard to show how the tip might be used and then followed up with a written example from a past examination paper. The good planning was evident in the way that the teacher planned to go on, next lesson, to provide worked examples which the students would have to improve using the tips with which they had been provided. It is this type of style, using a variety of approaches, which makes potentially dull topics come to life.

Leadership and management

173. Significant improvements have been made in recent years as a result of very good leadership provided by the head of department; standards, achievement and teaching have all improved. The head of department is a very good role model for other teachers in his teaching, attention to detail and determination to continually improve. There is a high degree of consistency in the teaching, brought about by very good management of resources, so that all teachers know what is expected of them in each lesson. The analysis of data is very good; for example the head of department has been able to accurately predict a 'cut off point' for the standards of students on entry to the course, after which their chances of success become much lower.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

174. Provision in the sixth form is very good. All students study either an ICT-based course or key skills in ICT to Level 3. The key skills course is very well taught and students achieve very well. Students' practical skills are particularly impressive, so that they leave the sixth form as very confident users of a wide range of applications. Standards are above average in the sixth form. Far more students possess these above average standards than is usually the case, because all students are taught ICT in Year 12. This allows them to be very confident in their use of ICT in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was geography, history and sociology.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving because of good teaching.
- Students benefit from links with higher education and through fieldwork experience.
- There is not enough attention given to promoting students' self-reliance in learning.
- Students do not make enough use of case studies to support knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

Examination results

175. The 2004 A-level results were well below average and similar to those awarded in 2003. Few students achieved grades A or B. These students started the course with well below average standards.

Standards and achievement

176. At the end of Year 13, students have a broad understanding of topics of a world-wide dimension, such as contrasts between ecosystems of the Arctic and tropical rain forests. They illustrate answers with well-annotated diagrams, but do not make sufficient use of knowledge of places to support theoretical study. Students understand the processes that shape coastlines and use technical terms to explain developments but, do not make enough use of diagrams or case studies to support answers. Many students, particularly higher attainers, produce above average standards in coursework. They collect data about river valleys in Cumbria and make good use of algebraic calculations to test hypotheses. The work is organised well and enhanced through the use of ICT. The quality of map skills however, is variable with

lower attaining students lacking self-confidence in map interpretation and too reliant on support in order to achieve tasks.

Teaching and learning

177. Over the last two years, new appointments have significantly strengthened the subject's team of teachers. These changes are now beginning to impact and students' achievement is now satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject; explanations are clear and standards are rising because emphasis is placed on improving students' essay writing and question answering skills. Learning is well supported, particularly through opportunities for fieldwork and links with higher education. As a result, students improve their knowledge of topics and places. The aims of lessons are clear and resources, including ICT, are well used to generate interest and promote learning, but not enough is expected of students in discussions or in promoting self-reliance.

Leadership and management

178. The subject improvement plan has appropriately identified the need to raise standards but arrangements to monitor and evaluate success are vague. The longer-term aims for development of the subject have not been identified and incorporated into planning. Evaluation of learning weakness is being addressed. The schemes of work provide clear guidance about what is expected and staff are well supported through in-service training. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching produces challenging lessons that move at a brisk pace and lead to students achieving well.
- Students work well independently and relish the frequent opportunities to bounce their ideas off each other in group discussions.
- The analysis of students' previous attainment and the setting of realistic targets for their future achievements are rigorous.

Commentary

Examination results

179. Results in the 2004 A-level examinations were average and the achievement of the students was good. This was an improvement on results in 2003.

Standards and achievement

180. Students in Year 12 quickly adjust to the more challenging demands of AS-level work. The great majority produce writing that analyses critically source evidence, evaluates different views and reaches well-supported conclusions. This good standard is evident, for example, in work on the Great Reform Act of 1832, in which students evaluate well the pressures for reform and the impact of the changes to the franchise resulting from the Act. In the context of their prior attainment, students' achievement is good.
181. Almost all students continue to the A-level course and, in Year 13, most of them demonstrate above average investigative skills. They become confident independent learners who produce personal study coursework that reflects clear thinking and a good standard of ongoing self-evaluation of the quality of work they are producing.

Teaching and learning

182. The restructuring of the team of teachers that has re-invigorated history in the main school has also had an important impact on teaching and learning at post-16. Against a background of significantly larger numbers of students choosing the subject there is a renewed emphasis upon improving students' thinking and organisational skills, whilst ensuring that they acquire good subject knowledge and understanding. This helps to explain the improvement in A-level results in 2004. All students benefit from knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching. Teachers plan their lessons well, including in them a range of individual and inter-active activities that challenge and stimulate their students. As a result, students learn well and achieve well in both Years 12 and 13. For example, in a Year 12 class students worked well in small groups to pool their ideas, before debating animatedly the pros and cons of Parliamentary Reform in 1832.
183. Similarly, a private-study lesson to prepare students for a challenging unit of individual coursework in Year 13 was of high quality. Far from being left merely to private reading and note making, students were faced with a range of questions that were very closely matched to the development of analytical planning and thinking that they need to apply if their final assignments are to gain high grades. As a result, students learned well, taking ownership of the knowledge and understanding. Teachers are well versed in the requirements of examinations and their assessment of written assignments is accurate and the marking is detailed and thorough. The monitoring of student achievement and progress, through frequent assessment and student target setting, is rigorous. Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive and they enjoy the lessons.

Leadership and management

184. The subject is managed well and clear vision and direction are provided. A well-structured handbook that contains thorough schemes of work and guidance for staff is in place. An annual evaluation of students' performance in examinations is carried out and this feeds directly into teaching and learning plans. The maintenance of good standards through the period of changes to post-16 examinations means that good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average

Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and know course requirements well.
- Teaching is lively and teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is infectious.
- After-school workshops are effective in promoting higher level attainment.
- Independent learning and students' ownership of their own learning is not emphasised enough.
- Departmental documentation systems require further refinement.

Commentary

Examination results

185. The first cohort of students took the examination in 2004 and results were in line with the national average. Males' results were pulled down by lower coursework grades.

Standards and achievement

186. Students achieve well compared with their prior attainment. Students in Year 12 demonstrate a secure understanding of key sociological terms and concepts and an understanding of how social structures and processes relate to one another. They refer to up-to-date research, and are able to apply concepts and theories to real-life situations. Students demonstrated this well in a lesson about whether research methods and data are reliable when different researchers use the same methods to obtain similar results. Students in Year 13 have a secure understanding of the methodology of the subject, including the strengths and limitations of particular research techniques. They draw concepts and theories from different sociological traditions. This was evident in the lessons observed about crime and deviance.

Teaching and learning

187. Students in Years 12 and 13 benefit from good teaching by specialist teachers who have very good secure subject knowledge. Teachers always make lesson objectives clear. When class discussions take place, they are skilfully led and all contributions are encouraged and valued. This was particularly evident when Year 12 students were discussing domestic violence and looking at the changing patterns of the family. Assessment procedures, particularly self and peer assessment, are currently being developed and students now have a greater understanding of how much progress they are making and what they need to do to improve their work. Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive and they enjoy their work. The subject is growing rapidly in popularity.

Leadership and management

188. The head of department leads the newly formed department effectively. She has a strong sense of direction for the subject and a determined drive for improvement. She ensures that all staff share a common purpose and are committed to improving standards. Management of the department is satisfactory although there is a need to improve the quality of schemes of work by indicating differentiated reading resources and also a need to develop a detailed departmental development plan. Sociology was not a focus subject at the time of the previous inspection and therefore it is not possible to comment upon progress since this time.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Two Year 13 music lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was inconsistent. In one excellent lesson, students achieved much better than expected because the teaching was inspirational and underpinned by superb musicianship and a clear passion for the subject. The learning took place at breakneck speed as a result of the variety of strategies used by the teacher and the excellent relationship with the students as they studied the harmonic structure of the film score to the movie, "Titanic". In the other Year 13 lesson, the same students sat passively and achieved satisfactorily because the teaching was secure, accurate and knowledgeable but lacking in drive or enthusiasm. Overall, standards were above average.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus of the inspection was physical education.

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- There is no opportunity for all students to maintain an active lifestyle as part of their enrichment curriculum.
- Assessment data is used well to set individual targets and record progress.

Commentary

Examination results

189. The 2004 GCE A-level results were above average, maintaining the good quality results gained in 2003.

Standards and achievement

190. Students in Year 12 show an impressive knowledge and understanding of the importance of motivation in competitive sport. In Year 13, students work quickly, at a

demanding pace, and are confident in using the specialist language of the subject. Students have a secure understanding of the effects of altitude on sporting performance.

Teaching and learning

191. Teaching reflects an excellent knowledge of the subject and the examination syllabus. Meticulous planning and organisation are a feature of all lessons, and a range of strategies is used, effectively, to make students think deeply, to solve problems and discuss their work. Probing questioning initiates stimulating discussion, such as in a spontaneous debate on the motivation and morals of professional footballers. Students are highly motivated and contribute well. Very good use of ICT extends the depth and breadth of students' learning, effectively. Very clear, informative marking ensures that students know how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

192. Good leadership ensures that monitoring of students' progress is central to management. The analysis and use of assessment data in setting individual targets and recording progress are very good. Students are appreciative of the good support and guidance they receive. There are good opportunities for students to continue their sporting interests through the extra-curricular programme. However, there is no opportunity for all students to participate, regularly, in physical activity, or gain the Community Sports Leader Award, as part of their enrichment curriculum. Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

Business studies

The focus of the inspection was business studies.

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department is committed to improving standards within the department.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use questions well to probe students' understanding.
- Staff have a thorough understanding of the demands of the examination boards.
- Boys' coursework is not of such a high standard as that of the girls.

Commentary

Examination results

193. Results in 2003 and 2004 were above the national average on the Intermediate GNVQ, AVCE and A-level business studies courses. The GNVQ course is no longer offered by the school but it did prove to be a very successful course and last year all the students used it as a progression route onto Level 3 business studies courses.

Standards and achievement

194. All Year 12 students demonstrate a confident understanding of key business terms and concepts. They interpret and evaluate information from various sources. They are encouraged to apply concepts and theories to case studies and problems in real organisations; this was demonstrated well in a lesson on market analysis and approaches to marketing. Students respond positively to new challenges and achieve well as a result. Members of Year 13 apply what they have learned to case studies, actual organisations and the real economy. In a lesson on business planning, students were able to effectively apply their knowledge and understanding of 'break even' to their own business plans. Scrutiny of students' work demonstrates that students in both years analyse the information they collect, draw appropriate conclusions and make predictions.

Teaching and learning

195. Teachers always make students aware of lesson objectives; students know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers use their subject knowledge very effectively to extend students' learning and this was evident when students were looking at the organisational structure of different types of businesses. The range of teaching activities allows teachers to meet students' individual needs. Students in Year 13 were able to assess each others' examination answers after the teacher thoroughly reinforced the link words that students can use to achieve at the highest grades. Teaching is well planned and organised and assessment is used effectively. Students are clear about the assessment criteria that teachers use to evaluate their work and are well aware of how much progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

196. The head of department is well established and his leadership is principled. He has overcome staffing problems in recent years and has established a cohesive team, which works well together. The department is organised in an efficient manner and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Procedures and processes are kept under review and initiative is encouraged. The department has a strong focus on raising standards. A well-resourced business base, with a purposeful working ethos, has been established and this is used well by all the sixth form business students. The department's focus on improving essay writing and evaluative skills has paid dividends and the department has made good progress since the time of the previous inspection.

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	3	3
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	2
Overall standards achieved		3
Students' achievement	3	3
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		2
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	3	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
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	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for students	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
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	3	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).