

INSPECTION REPORT

Roundhay School Technology College

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108076

Headteacher: Neil Clephan

Lead inspector: Elizabeth Charlesworth

Dates of inspection: 11th - 15th October 2004

Inspection number: 269469

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	1502
School address:	Gledhow Lane Leeds West Yorkshire
Postcode:	LS8 1ND
Telephone number:	0113 393 1200
Fax number:	0113 393 1201
Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Gillian Hayward
Date of previous inspection:	20/9/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Roundhay School is a large comprehensive school and specialist technology college with a large sixth form. The school has recently been completely rebuilt and occupies a large site on the north side of the city of Leeds. About 30 per cent of pupils and students come from ethnic minority backgrounds and 20 per cent have English as an additional language, this broad mix reflecting the diversity of Leeds. There are two Traveller children and seven refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils and students claiming free school meals is average though their social backgrounds are mixed, as they come from the more affluent areas to the north of the school as well as areas of acute social deprivation towards the centre of the city. The attainment on entry of pupils to the school and students to the sixth form is above average, with a wide range of attainment, making the school truly comprehensive. However, the local education authority admissions policy means that more pupils in the younger year groups are now coming from the more deprived areas outside the immediate local community. The school includes a unit for pupils with dyslexia, for which it has received an award for excellence. Thirty-nine pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is above the national average, though the 12.6 per cent who have special educational needs is broadly average. Special educational needs are predominantly related to learning difficulties, visual, hearing, behavioural and specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). Very few pupils leave or join the school other than at the normal times, though many of these were concentrated in the year group which took GCSE examinations in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19532	Elizabeth Charlesworth	Lead inspector	
32698	Steven Barker	Lay inspector	
23082	Graham Loach	Team inspector	Mathematics
17868	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	English Post-16 art and design
27050	Val Blackburn	Team inspector	Science
33518	Terry Freedman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
18035	Roy Earnshaw	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs unit
18065	Susan Dutson	Team inspector	Design and technology
32147	Ann Wallis	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship Work-related learning
24127	Jim Kidd	Team inspector	History
32173	Barbara Brown	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Art and design Music
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education
15678	Jennifer Radford	Team inspector	Religious education Post-16 English Post-16 drama
32878	Steven Goldsmith	Team inspector	Post-16 physics
3555	Carol Emery	Team inspector	Business education Economics

The inspection contractor was:

ALTECQ INSPECTIONS LTD

102 Bath Road

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire

GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	21
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES – Work-related Learning	23
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORMS	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	52

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school, with many excellent features, providing a good standard of education for its pupils and students. It rightly deserves its very good reputation in the city of Leeds. Results in public examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were above average and the in the sixth form well above average. These standards are reached because pupils and students achieve well to maintain their above average levels of attainment on entry in Year 7 and Year 12. Good teaching and learning are at the heart of staff and pupils' commitment to success. The school is well led and managed, guided by a very good headteacher and supported and challenged by the very good governing body. The school gives **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Examination results are above the national average and well above in the sixth form.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff give excellent care and support to pupils and students.
- Pupils' and students' very good attitudes and behaviour promote good achievement.
- The excellent links with other schools and the community give pupils and students a broader outlook on life and work.
- Pupils and students are enthusiastic about taking part in the very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The arts make a significant contribution to pupils' and students' academic and personal development.
- There is variation in the way subject leaders and senior managers evaluate the quality of teaching and learning resulting in the best practice not being shared across the school.
- The school collects a wealth of information on pupils' and students' attainment which is not used systematically by all teachers in monitoring their progress.
- There is excellent provision for pupils in the base for dyslexia.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 provides very well for the needs of all pupils.

The school has made **very good** improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are rising, there is more good and very good teaching now, the key issues have been dealt with, especially in science where standards and teaching are much improved. Most statutory breaches have been put right, though the school does still find it difficult for every pupil to attend a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in GCSE examinations are steadily rising. In 2003 they were above average. They fell back in 2004 to just above the 2002 level, though the proportion of pupils gaining five A*-C grades was very close to the school's published target, reflecting the lower ability of the year group. In 2003, compared with schools with similar above-average prior attainment, results were also above average. Standards in work seen in Year 11 are **above average** and pupils' **good achievement** is enabling them to maintain their above average standards on entry.

The 2003 national test results in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average, and rising at a faster rate than they are nationally. The school's targets were exceeded, and again in 2004 when results in mathematics and science rose further.¹ Pupils are particularly successful at gaining the higher National Curriculum levels, and in 2003 gained twice as many Level 7's as nationally. Standards in Year 9 are **above average** and **achievement is good**. The work pupils do in the arts, especially drama, does much to raise their self-confidence and also to improve their capacity to speak, listen and engage in discussion.

¹ Test results for English in 2004 are not yet available.

In the sixth form results and standards of work are **well above average**. Achievement is **very good** and students' commitment to reaching their goal of a university place is central to this. Throughout the school the drama and history departments are outstanding at promoting high standards of work.

Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			Similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	B	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	A	A	

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are **good**. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding because teachers have very good command of their subject, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to take responsibility to work independently. The curriculum is **very good** in Years 7 to 11 and pupils enjoy the variety of courses. It is **good** in the sixth form and complements well the extensive range of work-related courses in further education colleges. The extensive activities, particularly in the arts and sport make extra-curricular provision **very good**. The newly built school provides **very good** accommodation and resources and is proving to be an inspiring place in which to learn. The school provides a safe and supportive environment with an **excellent** focus on the well-being of pupils and students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governing body of the school is **very good** and supports and challenges the **very good** leadership of the headteacher. Together they have led the school to specialist technology college status, and through a metamorphosis from the original, but dilapidated, building at the time of the previous inspection to its present state, managing the building programme with the minimum of disruption. The leadership of middle and senior managers is **good**, providing **effective** management. The statutory breach to provide a daily act of collective worship has not been put right.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers are very positive about all that the school provides and particularly the way the school cares for their children. Pupils particularly enjoy the broad curriculum and extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make self-evaluation more accurate by basing it on sharper application of established principles.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** sixth form, very well led by a head of sixth form who has vision and commitment. Students' very good attitudes and motivation are major factors in their very good achievement. The sixth form is **very cost effective**. The sixth form has made **very good** progress since the previous inspection in continuously improving its standards.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Examination results in 2003 were well above average and rose further in 2004.
- Students are very well motivated to work hard and achieve very well to secure places in their chosen institute of higher education.
- Students fulfil their responsibilities for helping with the running of the school very well.
- Students are not always encouraged to take enough responsibility for their learning.

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	Very good. Standards are above average and students achieve very well because of very good teaching and their own enthusiasm for the subject. Examination results are consistently very high
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Given the high level of their prior attainment, students' achievement is satisfactory. Teachers are experienced and have strong subject knowledge but their formal approach leads to missed opportunities for independent learning. The marking is inconsistent.
Physics	Good. Standards are well above average and the subject is becoming increasingly popular. Teaching is good and students have many opportunities for independent learning. ICT is used extensively and effectively by both teachers and students.
Information and communication technology	Good. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject and teaching is very good. There is an increasing number of ICT associated courses in the sixth form.
History	Very good. Teachers' very secure subject-knowledge and high levels of intellectual challenge lead to well above average standards and a significant number of students choosing history courses at university.
Art	Very good. Staff have a very good range of expertise and teaching is very good. Standards are well above average and ICT is used effectively as a learning tool.
Drama	Very good. Standards in classwork and examination results are well above average. Students achieve very well because they are highly motivated and work together very effectively. Teaching is very good and students benefit from an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities

Physical education	Very good. Standards are well above average because of very good teaching, using a variety of resources and involving students in their own research. Teachers share the units effectively and link well to their subject specialisms.
Economics	Good. Very secure subject knowledge of teachers, shared effectively with students and a partnership approach to learning lead to good achievement and above average standards.

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

Procedures to ensure students' care, welfare health and safety are **excellent**. The school's provision for support, advice and guidance for students' is **very good** as are the steps taken to involve students' in the work and development of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership by the head of sixth form is very good. She has vision and commitment to high standards, as well as the personal development of students. The provision for religious education in the sixth form now meets statutory requirements.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students value the excellent support and guidance and the consultation with the school over the range of courses. They feel they are encouraged to become independent learners, though inspection evidence does not universally agree with this view.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in Years 9 and 11 are **above average** and in the sixth form **well above average**. Achievement is **good** in Years 7 to 11 and **very good** in the sixth form. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising faster than results are nationally.
- Pupils achieve well to maintain their above average standards on entry to the school.
- Achievement in the arts builds self-confidence and helps pupils' achievement.
- Good development of literacy helps lower attaining pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good level of provision they receive in lessons, the special educational needs base and the dyslexia unit.

Commentary

Key Stage 3

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.1 (35.2)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	39.5 (36.6)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	36.9 (34.4)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 249 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Pupils' attainment on entry was above average and pupils made good progress to reach well-above- average standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003. Results in English have been consistently well above average for a number of years, but have varied between above and well above average in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, results rose again in 2004 and are rising faster than they are nationally. However, compared to school with similar prior attainment results were below average. The school keeps very careful records of how well the different groups of pupils progress through the school, and in the 2003 tests pupils of average ability made more progress than those below and above average. Some of the groups of pupils from black and ethnic minority backgrounds are quite small but overall school records show these pupils make equal progress with their peers in reaching levels of attainment above what is predicted from their prior attainment. The school is very good at picking up pupils who are not working to their potential and giving extra support, which is why many of them do so well. Higher attainers and those identified as gifted and talented are not always challenged enough in lessons to push them even further.
2. Overall standards in work seen during the inspection are above average. In mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and history they are well above average. Attainment in ICT lessons and work is only average, but pupils' facility to use ICT helps them to achieve well in their other subjects. The lack of independent work and the limitations of the course they follow do not allow pupils to demonstrate work at a higher level in ICT. Standards in physical education are average. Work in books, supported by the school's evaluation, indicates that previous high standards will be maintained once pupils have settled into the new school year.

3. Achievement overall is good. Though a lack of basic skills in art and design, music and physical education initially holds back achievement, once these are put right, achievement is good in securing pupils' confidence and in developing individuality. Achievement in history is very good because of the expert questioning by teachers leading to pupils working and thinking as historians.
4. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers across subjects because support in lessons is good, ensuring that learners understand and are able to participate fully.
5. In most subjects, pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as the other pupils because a sensitive balance is achieved between withdrawal for individual teaching and in-class support. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers in supporting and monitoring pupil progress. Pupils with dyslexia are given excellent specialist support both in the base and in lessons, enabling them to make good progress. The quality of the work in the dyslexia unit has been internationally recognised by its *Crested Award* for excellence.

Key Stage 4

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	59 (45)	52.0 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (92)	91.0 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (98)	96.0 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	37.5 (33.1)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 244 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. While national GCSE results have been steadily rising, school results have risen even more, putting on a spurt in 2003 but falling in 2004 to 53 per cent five A*-C grades, though in line with the target which the school set. The attainment on entry of pupils who took GCSE in 2003 was closer to average, compared with above average, which is more typical of other years. However, the drop in results in 2004 can be explained by the fact that only about 80 per cent of pupils continued from Year 7 to Year 11, incoming pupils in part adding to the school's rising special educational needs population. With its focus in the school improvement plan on raising the achievement of all, but particularly black and ethnic minority pupils, the school has set an ambitious 74 per cent as its target for five A* to C grades, which is in line with what can be expected from these pupils' prior attainment.
7. A concern of the school, and indeed a key issue from the previous inspection, has been the performance in science. The hard work has paid off in that science results were well above average in 2003, though they fell back in 2004 to be below the level of other subjects in the school especially at the higher grades. Results in art and design, another of the school's concerns, were below average in 2003 and remained at the same level in 2004, but the proportion of A* grades increased and standards of work are currently above average, because of the school's efforts to improve teaching and learning.
8. Detailed analysis by the school of the relative progress of different groups shows that, because the school caters very well for their language and literacy needs, students from the

lower ability groups achieved better results than expected. Black and minority ethnic groups gained higher results than was the average across Leeds. Of the many pupils who have English as an additional language, only two are at an early stage of learning. Both of these pupils have the opportunity to gain an extra GCSE in their first language. They receive good intensive support when withdrawn from lessons and achieve well.

9. Pupils from the more socially deprived areas of the school's catchment did not do as well as their peers, and the school is working hard to give these pupils the support they need to overcome their barriers to learning. A curriculum which restricts the number of GCSE subjects and focuses more on work-related courses, supported by more emphasis on personal development and study skills is having a positive effect on their achievement and that of the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
10. Work seen during the inspection indicates that the above average standards are being maintained. Students achieve well, building on their knowledge and understanding from earlier years. However, inspection evidence indicates that pupils have the capacity for even greater achievement. As basic skills, particularly in science and physical education become more firmly embedded pupils are poised to rise to greater challenge. The value of the arts in building their confidence was recognised during the inspection as a significant factor in the school's strategy to raise achievement. Achievement in history, music and modern foreign languages is very good, pointing the way for other subjects. In physical education pupils achieve well with only one lesson a week, but this shortage of time is holding back further development. The satisfactory achievement in business studies and ICT is a result of a limited range of activities, which do not allow pupils to demonstrate how well they could do with greater challenge.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students build very well on their previous successes, particularly in gaining higher grades.
- Lack of independence in mathematics and business education is holding back achievement.

Commentary

11. A-level results have been well above average for the last three years, and rose again in 2004, with an increase in both the pass rate and proportion of A and B grades. Overall all students did much better than their national counterparts Female students did better than males with female students in the top 5 per cent in the country.
12. Work seen during the inspection is consistent with these well above average standards overall. The entry requirements to the sixth form are higher than for sixth forms nationally, and for certain individual subjects are very stringent, for example, in mathematics no student has less than a grade B at GCSE. Achievement is very good as students build very well on what they already know and can do. However, in mathematics, students are not capitalising on their former high standards and, because students are not involved enough or responsible enough for their own learning standards, at this early stage in the course, are only average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rewards system is very effective in promoting high standards of behaviour. Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities they have to take responsibility and to assist in the running of the school.
- Cultural diversity is celebrated and racial harmony is a strong feature of school life.

- Pupils benefit from the wide range of sporting, drama and musical opportunities and attend extra-curricular activities in large numbers.
- A small minority of pupils display challenging behaviour and this has a negative effect on their achievement.

Commentary

13. Pupils speak highly of their teachers and have very good relationships with their classmates. Moreover, they take their work seriously, enjoy learning from and with each other and are invariably willing to help when pupils in their classes are experiencing difficulty. They respond very positively to the rewards system and to the emphasis the school places on celebrating their successes, the achievement days, for example. They talk enthusiastically about the extensive range of activities available to them and they participate eagerly and in large numbers in the wide variety of sporting and cultural events. The Roundhay Challenge, which is designed to promote teamwork, encourages a sense of identity within a form group and foster individual expertise, is popular amongst pupils in Years 7 and 8. In addition, drama is an important extra-curricular activity and the productions are highlights of the school year.
14. Because pupils are proud of their school and because teachers work hard to encourage self-discipline, behaviour in classes and around the school is very good. The school has recognised that small numbers of pupils misbehave and has established very effective sanctions to encourage them to concentrate on their studies and improve their achievement as a result. The atmosphere around school is calm and purposeful and pupils believe that the occasional incidence of bullying is treated very seriously and managed very carefully by teachers. Pupils thrive on the many opportunities they have to express their own opinions and often take the lead in charity appeals, growing in confidence and maturity. They value the school forums and pupils meet regularly to discuss whole-school issues.
15. Pupils enjoy and celebrate the successes of different cultures represented in the school and they value cultural, social and ethnic diversity. Teachers are very good role models for their pupils and racial harmony and co-operation between different genders and year groups are very strong features of life in Roundhay. Pupils' spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection and well planned assemblies foster reflection and consideration for the experiences and feelings of others. Pupils with English as an additional language respond well to what the school offers and appreciate the efforts staff make in order to develop their skills
16. Pupils with special educational needs display good attitudes towards their learning. They respond well, are enthusiastic and are keen to achieve as well as they can. Pupils in the dyslexia base enjoy the calm, structured and supportive atmosphere, which helps to build their independence and confidence as learners.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.0	School data:	0.3
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

17. The school actively promotes good attendance through a variety of strategies. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance and the help of a variety of outside agencies is enlisted where necessary to prevent bad habits becoming the norm. The school works very hard to create positive attitudes to education in all pupils and this is reflected in the very good attendance figures.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	956	8	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	24	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	63	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	10	0
Mixed – White and Asian	20	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	53	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	162	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	38	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	77	6	0
Black or Black British – African	10	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	10	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	48	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	10	0	0

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

18. Exclusions are low because the school tries hard to offer pupils in danger of such a sanction additional support, in order that they may modify their behaviour. This guidance is effective and pupils respond positively to the provision.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are very proud of their school and demonstrate a very mature approach to each other, to their teachers and to their work.
- Students speak highly about how their achievements are recognised.

Commentary

19. Students demonstrate very good attitudes to all which the school offers them. They are very proud of Roundhay and are keen to accept responsibility in a wide range of areas. They mentor pupils in other years and also visit classes to support those for whom English is not their first language. Moreover, they often take the lead in sporting and drama activities and act as role models for younger pupils throughout the school. Sixth-form students chair the school forum and make recommendations to senior staff and governors, in order to raise awareness of students' and pupils' interests. The very positive attitudes of sixth form students, to their life in school are reflected in the very good attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** standard of education. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **very good** in Years 7 to 11 and **good** in the sixth form. Pupils' and students' care, welfare health and safety are **excellent**, and support, advice and guidance for pupils' is **good** and **very good** in the sixth form. Partnership with parents is **very good** and links with the community and other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching leads to **good** learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject expertise motivates pupils to learn.
- Feedback to pupils on their work helps them to make progress, though this good practice is not found across the whole school.
- Higher attainers do not always seek to find things out for themselves and push themselves to their full potential.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 187 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (4%)	52 (28%)	86 (46%)	39 (21%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

20. Teaching is good and stimulates good learning throughout the main school. The school's evaluation of teaching and learning, supported by inspection evidence, lists the strengths as planning, experience and the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3. Teachers generally know their subject very well and pupils find this a source of inspiration, as their own knowledge and understanding increases. In practical subjects, particularly physical education and drama, teachers are good role models and their demonstration of skill and technique gives pupils a clear idea of the quality of work they expect. The very effective use of foreign languages challenges pupils, especially boys, in modern foreign languages lessons, to the extent that they use the foreign language for ordinary classroom routines. Teachers work hard to develop in pupils a desire to learn and as a result behaviour in lessons rarely interferes with learning, indeed in a significant proportion of lessons it is pupils' positive attitudes which strengthen their learning. However, the need to challenge and extend higher attainers especially to develop independence and responsibility for learning is not always recognised. Consequently many lessons, although good, are too dominated by direct teaching, do not push pupils far enough and allow them to learn through experience and research. Only in history is teaching very good overall. The head of department

emphasises the sharing of good practice and this results in greater consistency across the department, a feature which the school will do well to copy.

21. The progress in the science department has come about because of the improvement in teaching and learning. The best teachers meet the needs of all pupils very well, making very good use of ICT to enhance learning. However, it is a large department and the best practice is not yet shared by everyone. Where teaching is less effective planning does not take account of all pupils' needs and ICT is not a helpful learning tool. The school has been supporting the work of the ICT, religious education, art and design and music departments, and this has been effective in improving the work of those departments. However, teaching in ICT and business studies is satisfactory, in that lessons are not challenging enough to promote good learning, with a limited range of activities. The school also recognises the small proportion of unsatisfactory aspects of teaching which, seen during the inspection, resulted in unsatisfactory learning, as a result of a lack of challenge and not enough attention to the different ability of pupils in the class.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good across the school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very effective in ensuring that all staff are comprehensively briefed on individual needs so they can provide the right level of work. Teaching assistants carefully track progress and provide valuable and purposeful support in lessons. Teaching in the special educational needs base is highly structured with clear objectives. Teaching in the dyslexia base follows tightly structured, multi-sensory learning programmes carefully linked to individual learning styles. Specialist teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils in the base and in supporting teachers and pupils in main school classes.
23. There are no specifically qualified staff in school for English as an additional language, but development and training have taken place for teachers, especially in English, and help teachers to use strategies in the classroom to ensure that all pupils understand their work. The teaching assistants support pupils well in class and also carry out home visits to enhance the assessment of levels of competence in English and the need for extended home support.

Assessment

24. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good. It is a particular strength in modern foreign languages and music where it is very good. In other subjects assessment is good while in science, ICT, religious education and business studies it is satisfactory.
25. In most subjects, teachers mark pupils' work well and give grades related to National Curriculum levels. This is particularly true in music, physical education and modern foreign languages but in ICT teachers are assessing skills instead of National Curriculum levels. In history and English pupils' work is marked thoroughly with constructive comments. Marking is not detailed enough in science, religious education and mathematics and business education in Years 10 and 11. Science and physical education teachers do not set clear targets for improvement; as a result, pupils do not know how to improve from one piece of work or activity to the next.
26. The school keeps detailed records of pupils' prior attainment and uses this information to set targets for attainment in national tests and examinations. Departments use this information in different ways with several subjects tracking pupils' progress across the years to identify underachievement. This tracking is a strength in history and design and technology where levels are shared with pupils. However, there is inconsistent practice across the school and is an area which the school has already identified for future development.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very experienced and qualified in their subjects.
- Very good relationships between students and teachers lead to a partnership in learning.
- The lack of independence in learning makes students too reliant on their teachers.

Commentary

27. The lack of consistency across the sixth form prevents teaching overall from being very good. The effectiveness of what works best is not evaluated and shared. In business education and mathematics, though teachers know their subject very well, and what is required by the examination syllabus, their didactic approach does not involve students in their own learning and inhibits their independence. This contrasts with physical education and drama, where detailed feedback to students on their performance encourages them to seek out for themselves ways to improve. Students persevere with their work and will readily debate and discuss, but teachers appear unwilling to step back and let them learn more from each other, in the way of the best history and English lessons.

Assessment

28. The quality of assessment of students' work is good. Assessment information is used well to track students' progress in all subjects. In physical education and history students are informed of their progress and given constructive feedback. Often students assess their own or their peers' work and this is used very well in art and design, drama and theatre studies to help students improve. In both mathematics and physics students are not given help as to how to improve and this is unsatisfactory.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **very good** in Years 7 to 11 and **good** in the sixth form. The opportunities for enrichment through extra curricular provision are **very good** and the quality of accommodation and resources are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of courses offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Very good provision of ICT facilities promotes its good use across the curriculum.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have very good support, allowing them to take a full part in the curriculum.
- Coverage of the curriculum is restricted in ICT in Year 9.
- The new building has transformed the school making it an inspiring place to work.

Commentary

29. The curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of students very effectively. It is very good in the range, quality of provision and in the resources to support the learning and achievement of all pupils. In English, mathematics, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages the curriculum is particularly effective in providing very well for the needs and interests of the pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to follow vocational subjects with very good provision made for all pupils to experience the world of work. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the school will soon be seeking an inclusion charter mark to acknowledge what has been achieved. Pupils from the dyslexia base take part fully in main school lessons and make confident contributions to lessons. Provision for pupils with English as a second language is good. Staff are aware of these pupils and in many subjects give good individual support to ensure that these pupils are not disadvantaged. Pupils have detailed individual language plans, which staff refer to in their planning. Overall, there is good provision for the gifted and talented. They are identified by name in all lesson plans. Very good levels of challenge occur in English, history, religious

education, art and design and music. There are plenty of opportunities for the gifted and talented to shine.

30. Access to ICT to support the curriculum is very good but insufficient time in Year 9 hinders the effective coverage of the ICT National Curriculum requirements. The school does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship, as was noted at the previous inspection.
31. The school is keen to develop the curriculum and has used funding effectively to improve the curriculum since the previous inspection. Several partnership initiatives promoted by the specialist technology status have been developed to offer a range of courses and experiences to pupils. Monitoring of the curriculum at senior management level is systematic with plans in place to improve provision where necessary.
32. Many pupils of all ages attend the rich and varied programme of activities, which take place outside the school day. The school organises a very good range of events and visits to extend pupils' experiences. These include dramatic productions, field trips, musical activities and overseas travel. There is extensive provision of high quality extra-curricular sport. Many different clubs provide for the full range of pupils' interests from chess to karaoke. Subject departments and learning mentors provide very good support for learning outside the school day including homework clubs, coursework support sessions and summer schools. Pupils respond positively to these experiences and achieve very well.
33. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has been totally rebuilt. Specialist accommodation is now of the highest quality with the latest in technology making this school a stimulating place in which to work. The greatest asset of the resources is the highly qualified staff and the commitment of support staff in ensuring that nothing gets in the way of learning and achievement.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of AS and A-level courses available for students to study.
- There are very good opportunities for students' personal development especially through extra-curricular activities.
- The range of alternative courses for students to study at the school is limited and sports opportunities are not built into the curriculum.

Commentary

34. The curriculum provides well for students to progress from GCSE to AS and A-level courses in order to serve the needs of the students who wish to continue their education at school. The school is aware that opportunities to study alternative courses at the school are limited but students receive effective advice and guidance about different courses available at neighbouring institutions. The quality of provision in drama and history is very good providing a stimulating and challenging experience for students. Students participate in the very good range of extra-curricular activities including theatre visits, field trips, sporting and musical activities and lectures by visiting speakers.
35. Opportunities and provision for personal development are very good and students become mature, responsible members of the school community. The majority of students successfully complete their chosen AS and A-level courses as progress is regularly monitored and advice given on how to improve and achieve well throughout their courses.
36. The sixth form is housed in a separate building where old and new meet very sympathetically. The Georgian mansion has been adapted to provide social and study areas

as well as seminar and lecture rooms, altogether a big attraction for students choosing this as their preferred sixth form.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure pupils' and students' care, welfare health and safety are **excellent**. The school's provision for support, advice and guidance for pupils' is **good** and **very good** in the sixth form, as are the steps taken to involve pupils in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff know pupils very well and their care and welfare is a very evident whole-school priority.
- The school has a wide variety of initiatives in place to support pupils' learning.
- The results of assessment are not consistently used to provide advice and guidance.
- The school's excellent links with its partner schools ensure smooth transition into the school.

Commentary

37. The care and welfare of all pupils are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are very well known to all staff. Excellent induction procedures coming out of the exceptional good links with partner schools ensure that pupils know the school very well before they start in Year 7 and are happy to come to school. Taster days in technology and other subjects introduce pupils to the variety that the school's curriculum offers. Summer schools for those at risk of disaffection, pupils with special educational needs and those joining the school without their friends from primary school instil a sense of excitement, anticipation and positive attitudes to school in all pupils. The school has very good procedures for child protection and health and safety in place.
38. The school has very successfully utilised available grants to establish a range of initiatives to ensure that pupils are fully supported with their learning. Early intervention with those pupils at risk of underachieving or of becoming disaffected with school provides very good targeted support for those pupils who need it most. Learning mentors enhance the school's values of care through support for pupils' learning and personal development. They work closely with those pupils for whom a mix of college-based, school-based and employment-based learning is the most appropriate route to success. The work of the school's social inclusion base provides care and support for the learning of those pupils at the greatest risk of disaffection and has had a very positive impact on the number of exclusions.
39. The results of assessment are not consistently used to provide support and guidance to pupils. All pupils are set targets but these are not always based upon monitoring of what pupils need to do next to improve their learning and make progress.
40. Pupils with special educational needs including those in the dyslexia base value the support that they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. Staff and pupils respect each other and confidence is built through continual reinforcement of learning and constructive praise. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that all staff are thoroughly briefed through the directory of pupil needs and individual learning plans.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have very good relationships with students and provide an excellent quality of care.
- Sixth form students receive good advice and guidance before taking the next steps in their lives.
- Students are routinely consulted and can clearly see their views being acted upon.

Commentary

41. The pastoral care of students is uppermost in the minds of the sixth form leadership and management. Students are well known to all staff and relationships are clearly very strong. The approachability of staff is a key strength of the sixth form and clearly demonstrates to all students that their care is an absolute priority. Sixth form tutors and the role that they fulfil are highly valued by students.
42. There is a very good programme of advice, information and guidance provided for students in the sixth form. Tutorials and outside speakers discuss higher and further education, careers and gap year opportunities, all of which make a strong contribution to students' personal development and ensure that they all are able to make informed choices about the next steps in their lives.
43. Students in the sixth form are regularly asked for their views on a variety of issues, both formally and informally enabling them to contribute to the work and development of their school. Students are consulted on the range of subjects offered in the sixth form and this clearly influences the option choices that they are provided with. This process clearly demonstrates to students that they have a voice that is being heard in their school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. The school's links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Technology college status has strengthened the extensive links with the community and other schools.
- Parents consistently receive very good quality information.
- The *Community Action Programme* makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Extensive links with further education colleges enhance the curriculum and personal development of pupils and students.

Commentary

44. The school has used its specialist status as a technology college to broaden links with other schools and with its community. These links make an outstanding contribution to the curriculum, personal development and the range of extra curricular activities for pupils and students. The *Community Action Programme* involves Year 10 students in routinely visiting elderly members of the local community to undertake gardening, housework and shopping or simply to chat and listen. This is a very powerful way of encouraging young people to face the responsibilities of citizenship.
45. The school provides parents and carers with very good quality information. Reports on their children's progress provide very detailed information on attainment and progress and the steps that pupils and students need to take to improve their learning. Regular newsletters, reports, the school website and invitations to visit the school provide parents with many opportunities to work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning and personal development. The school places great store in personal contact, with regular and ad hoc meetings held between staff and parents. Learning mentors, special educational needs staff, social inclusion base staff as well as teaching and support staff all see contact with parents and carers as an essential part of the care and support structure that the school has in place.
46. The school's curriculum has been strengthened by the exceptional links with further education colleges and other educational institutions. Pupils for whom the school's own curriculum does not fully meet their needs are supported through the skilled learning mentor programme and a mix of college courses, relevant work experience and school-based GCSE study.
47. Parents and carers are very effectively involved in planning for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils that are not managing well in school. They make contributions to individual education plans and are closely involved in discussions on withdrawal arrangements to the special educational needs and dyslexia base and the *Me²*. Pupil planners are used very constructively to monitor homework and to maintain communications between pupils, teachers, parents and carers.
48. Sixth form staff have established an impressive network of links with universities, colleges and employers. These links are instrumental in encouraging students to consider and take up places in higher education. Students are provided with every opportunity to explore all of the options open to them when they complete their studies at school and move on.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Governance is **very good**. Other staff with responsibility provide **good** leadership. The effectiveness of management is **good** throughout the school. The school has achieved well to overcome the barriers to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The commitment, energy and vision of the headteacher are to give all pupils the best education possible.
- The governors have a very good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and challenge the school rigorously.
- Management of the sixth form is very good.
- Management at department level is good but does not consistently monitor and evaluate accurately.
- The school uses financial planning effectively and applies the principles of best value well.
- The governors do not fulfil statutory requirements in ensuring a daily act of collective worship.

² Short for metamorphosis, where pupils are helped to cope with behaviour and other problems to transform them into good learners.

Commentary

49. The headteacher provides very good leadership, has high aspirations and rigorously drives to improve standards. He has a visible presence around the school and is very approachable to parents, pupils and staff. He has created a culture of teamwork between staff and the leadership team. The strengths of the leadership group complement one another and match their allocated responsibilities. The leadership of middle management is good and is improving through staff training and carefully- planned delegation. Seven departmental heads are presently on the National College for School Leadership *Leading from the Middle* course. Each department systematically undertakes self-evaluation reviews and carries out an annual analysis of examination results. These are shared with the leadership group. However, the judgements are inconsistent because the monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement are not sufficiently rigorous. The co-ordinator for pupils with English as an additional language has made a good start in organising formal systems for supporting these pupils and the area is now well placed for further development.
50. Procedures for performance management are good. There are clear links between formal lesson observations and annual reviews which then resource the very good provision for staff development. Procedures for staff induction are very good. Around a tenth of the teaching staff is newly qualified and they receive a thorough programme of support and development both in whole-school and departmental aspects. Provision for the recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff is very good, including providing places for students in initial teacher training. New members of staff are carefully introduced into the routines and receive constructive support and advice. The staff greatly value the high quality support they are given.
51. Governance of the school is very good. Governors are committed, know the school very well and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They work very efficiently through a well-organised committee system, which capitalises on their individual expertise. The governing body has a significant influence on the school's development with a clear focus on raising standards and caring for pupils. Governors provide valuable constructive support and challenge for school leaders. They have worked very effectively to support the school through an extensive building programme. The governing body does not currently have access to reliable assessment information from other schools, which would enable them to make comparisons to ensure best value. The statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not fully met.

Sixth form

52. The head of sixth form has an open door policy and a great concern for the needs of all students. The support, advice and guidance given to students on personal issues and future career pathways are excellent and fully endorse the care and concern shown by the very good leadership and management. The head of sixth form has a very good vision for where the sixth form is heading and has firm plans to adapt the curriculum to meet the changing needs of students. Findings are based on feedback from students, self-evaluation and monitoring of performance information. The provision for religious education in the sixth form now meets statutory requirements. The subject is offered at A-level and all students follow a general studies course that includes work in religious studies and philosophy.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income (inc B'Fd)	5,490,339	Balance from previous year	25840

Total expenditure	5,356,805
Expenditure per pupil	3637

Balance carried forward to the next	133534
-------------------------------------	--------

53. Financial management of the school is good overall and the school seeks to obtain the best services by applying the principles of best value.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

The school's provision for work-related learning is **good** and meets statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good insight into the world of work through the many opportunities on offer.
- There is not yet in place a system for assessing pupils' achievement.

Commentary

54. A good range of work-related activities takes place, which enable pupils to learn for work, about work and through work. All pupils in Year 10 take part in work experience that is well planned and gives them a good understanding of the skills, attitudes and qualities which are valued in the workplace. The school offers vocational courses and close links with a local college enable pupils, for example, those studying food technology, to gain a real understanding of issues such as health and safety, mass production and quality control in the workplace. Pupils have good careers guidance from teachers, careers advisers and the *Connexions* service. Good links with local businesses, industry days and talks by visiting speakers enrich pupils understanding of the world of work.
55. Work-related learning is well led and managed. There is a programme of work-related and careers activities in place. However, not all activities and lessons which contribute to work-related learning have yet been fully accredited. Until this is done their effectiveness cannot be monitored and pupils' achievement recorded.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is brisk and lively and inspires pupils to good achievement.
- Standards are above average by Years 9 and 11.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular provision to extend pupils' learning.
- There is very good leadership and management that give vitality to the subject.
- There is not enough close analysis of lower attaining pupils' work.

Commentary

56. In 2003 results obtained at the end of Year 9 were above the national average. GCSE results in English and English literature were at the national average. Results were similar in 2004.
57. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards in written English. By Year 9 standards are above average; this represents good achievement. The majority of pupils express themselves clearly in speech and the higher attaining pupils are frequently fluent and use a wide vocabulary. The majority can adapt what they say to the circumstances in which they are speaking. Pupils listen respectfully to the views of others and add the knowledge gained to their own understanding. For the majority, written work is above average but a significant minority have poor skills in spelling, punctuation and the use of vocabulary. In general, pupils' written work is weaker than their spoken English. The majority structure their work well and express ideas clearly. Standards in reading are generally good but when middle and lower attaining pupils read aloud for the class they speak too quickly and with little emphasis on expression or feeling. This detracts from the learning intended for the whole class.
58. In Years 10 and 11 standards are above average. For the majority, standards in speaking and listening are very good. Higher attaining pupils speak with confidence and argue points logically. They can use discretion about how they select and present their ideas. Lower attaining pupils can put their points of view clearly though in less depth. Standards of reading and comprehension are high. Pupils show keen interest in the issues raised in literature and they can evaluate literary techniques well. The higher attaining pupils produce some high quality written work but the written work of middle and lower attaining pupils contain basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Presentation and handwriting are generally good and redrafting is done to good effect. There is good promotion of reading throughout all

years. However, most of the very high quality world classics in the library remain unread. Drama is an integral part of the provision in Years 7 to 9 and is very good. It adds significantly to pupils' confidence in speaking and listening.

59. Teaching is good overall with excellent features in the majority of lessons. In general, teaching is brisk, lively and charismatic. The majority of teachers display exemplary skills in devising strategies and choosing topics that inspire and engage their pupils' interest. They are very good role models in how to use language to present positive approval and are similarly positive when pupils need reprimanding. Assessment and marking are very good and pupils know what they have to do to improve. There is good use of information and communication technology for research and presentation of work. There is also some skilful use of the electronic whiteboards that captures pupils' attention and keeps the focus clear in learning.
60. The work covered in literature makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is especially good in exploring spiritual themes such as good and evil, love, hate, spite, fear, well-being and other emotions.
61. Leadership and management are very good. There is clear vision and great energy directed at maintaining and improving standards and achievement. There is very effective organisation and teamwork. There is an inspiring range of extra-curricular activities that contribute to raising standards. There is a need for further analysis of each individual pupil's achievement to raise standards, particularly at the borderline C/D grades in GCSE. This is not identified clearly enough in self-evaluation. Self-assessment is extensive but the grades given are too generous.
62. There is good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have improved in Years 10 and 11. Teaching has also improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. There is a long-established and well-organised strategy for promoting language and literacy across the curriculum. This has been effective in raising standards. There is a teacher representative in every subject. All subjects make a good contribution by promoting the correct subject vocabulary and by helping students to use and write correct English. Standards are above average by Year 9 and Year 11. In general pupils communicate well in speaking and listening. They have good skills in reading and comprehension. There are good opportunities for students to produce extended writing. Provision in literacy for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is excellent provision in the dyslexia base.
64. The library is well used by students of all age groups. The stock is fresh and attractive and makes good provision for all interests. However, few students borrow the high quality world-renowned classic books that are in the library, though these make good provision for the gifted and talented pupils. There is specific time for reading on two mornings per week and all form groups have book boxes of fiction and non-fiction in their classrooms.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above national expectations and achievement is very good.
- Leadership promotes rising standards although monitoring of teaching and learning is insufficiently developed.
- Staff knowledge and use of languages challenge pupils to improve their own command by consistent practice.

- Feedback to individual pupils provides very good targets but systems for tracking pupils across time are underdeveloped.

Commentary

65. Standards in French, German and Spanish are well above national expectations for pupils reaching Level 4 or better in the National Curriculum by the end of Year 9, and above national expectations for pupils reaching Level 5 or better at the same stage.
66. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above national averages in all three languages. Pupils do very well in languages when their results are compared to other subjects. Results have improved over recent years. Standards seen during the inspection were above national expectations in Years 9 and 11 at this early stage in the year. It is evident from work in books that standards rise more quickly towards the end of the year as teachers prepare their candidates very well for examinations.
67. Pupils' achievement is very good in all three languages in at all ages. This directly reflects the high level of challenge and expectation the department has of its learners. Boys achieve as well as girls and make a very good contribution in class. There is no difference in the achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language.
68. Teaching and learning are both good overall with some very good features. Teachers have a very good command of their languages and most use the language very well in lessons to model, challenge and provide practice for pupils. Less good teaching involves too much use of English, a mixture of English and the foreign language or unnecessary use of translation. Pupils are made aware of lesson aims and expectations at the beginning of every lesson so know exactly what they have to do. Interesting, sharp beginnings to lessons either build on previous learning or provide a way into new learning. They all engage pupils' interest and set the scene well. Very good variety of activities and brisk pace ensure this interest is maintained throughout the session. Not enough importance is given to consolidating learning at the end of lessons. Setting work which meets the needs of all pupils within sets is not sufficiently exploited although this is to some extent compensated for by the very good marking and target setting which is common across the department.
69. The languages are very well led and well managed by a team of three specialists, one for each language, who provide very good models, especially in classroom practice. There is a clear commonality of approach and commitment to improvement. Shared procedures and documentation ensure fair treatment for all pupils, regardless of which language they choose to study. Pupils are particularly happy that their first choice of language made at the beginning of Year 7 is almost always honoured. This is because the department enjoys a full complement of specialist staff, committed to pupils' achievement. The monitoring of the team's work is done formally through the school's performance management system but less formal monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous. A new system for pupil tracking has recently been set up but has not yet been implemented.
70. There are many other very good features of the department which enhance learners' achievement. These include the use of a foreign language assistant in each language, pupils' own use of the languages in lessons, the contribution and involvement of boys and the use made of information and communication technology. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection, in particular in rising standards and the positive effect of the new accommodation.

Community languages

Provision for community languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New accommodation and newly-defined staffing roles contribute to improvement.

- Teachers' command and use of the languages provide very good models for learners to imitate but there is a lack of variety of activities.
- Support for individual pupils is very good but the behaviour of some boys in larger classes is not well managed.

Commentary

71. Urdu is taught from Years 7 to 11 and Bengali and Panjabi are offered in Years 10 and 11. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations in Urdu. In 2003, standards across all the languages were in line with national averages at GCSE level. In 2004, GCSE standards remained in line with national averages in Panjabi, fell below in Bengali and well below in Urdu. Standards seen during inspection were once again in line with national expectations in all three languages. This steady improvement is due to the positive effect the new accommodation is having in bringing together community languages and modern European languages as a team and to the efforts of the newly appointed community languages co-ordinator.
72. Achievement is good because many pupils who choose to study a community language do so as virtual beginners in reading and writing skills at the beginning of Year 10 but still make good progress, due to their own commitment and the high quality support they receive in small groups.
73. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory. Teachers make lesson aims clear so that learners are aware of expectations. They have a good understanding of examination requirements and pupil need, which ensures that pupils cover the syllabus adequately. A particular strength is teachers' command and use of the languages in lessons so that pupils have optimum exposure to models which enable them to develop their own skills – especially listening and speaking. Feedback to learners is very supportive, especially in Bengali and Panjabi. There is some very good practice, for example, in marking and target setting in Bengali, but these techniques are not shared, partly due to the peripatetic nature of the area. Pupils make less good progress when lessons are teacher centred and do not allow for individual development. There is a lack of variety of tasks and materials which means that learning is often mechanical and uninspired. None of the languages has yet adopted the guidance from the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 in order to introduce and consolidate learning as well as simply present tasks. The quality of behaviour management in Urdu lessons is at times a barrier to learning, with too much time taken up by the poor behaviour of some boys.
74. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The school is fortunate to have a community language teacher who has an advanced skills qualification and has recently appointed a community languages co-ordinator. This is already having an impact on integrating these languages into the modern European languages team in order to share good practice. There is a clear focus on improvement and a good understanding of what needs to be done. Monitoring of teaching and learning is as yet informal and so does not have maximum impact. The team has recently acquired a common scheme of work, which is used across the city but its quality is not satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory in maintaining the quality of learning in all three languages.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average.
- Very good vision and clarity of leadership are provided by the head of department.
- High expectations and levels of challenge are motivating pupils to raise standards.
- Teachers are very secure and confident in their subject knowledge.

- Teachers provide excellent support through extra lessons and national competitions.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
- Marking is inconsistent, resulting in insufficient constructive written feedback for pupils.

Commentary

75. This is a department with a very strong commitment to the raising of standards and one in which critical self-evaluation is valued. In 2003 standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average and broadly in line with the average for schools with similar prior attainment levels. Results for 2004 were similarly very good and well above the previous year's published national average. Boys' attainment was better than that of the girls. Results have been consistently above the national average and are rising faster than they are nationally. In work seen during the inspection pupil attainment by the age of 14 is well above national expectations. Achievement is good across all ability groups.
76. In 2003 the percentages of pupils obtaining a GCSE grade A* to C and those obtaining grade A* to G were both well above the national average. The performance of boys was better than that of the girls. Although dropping slightly in 2004 overall performance remained above the previous year's national average. In work seen during the inspection pupils' attainment by the age of 16 is well above national expectations. Higher ability pupils have the opportunity to gain an extra GCSE in statistics and achievement is good.
77. Pupils in all ability groups, across all year groups, achieve well as a result of their teachers' high expectations and good classroom management skills. In an excellent Year 9 lesson it was apparent that pupils were being challenged to achieve at the highest level and the National Numeracy Strategy for Key Stage 3 was having a very good impact. Opportunities for pupils to use information technology have improved since the previous inspection and are still developing. The school laptop trolleys have been extensively used with Year 7 pupils.
78. Teaching is good with some examples of excellent practice and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Learning is also good, with the great majority of pupils being motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers and willingly contributing to class discussion and questioning. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and are built upon trust, respect and good humour. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and are quick to recognise potential misconceptions that pupils may have. Pupils have the confidence to challenge assertions and, in the best lessons, learn well by exchanging ideas with each other. There is excellent support for pupils via extra school classes and opportunities to participate in national initiatives such as 'mathematics challenge'. The welcome extended to pupils as they enter the classroom and the stimulating classroom displays create a very good working atmosphere.
79. The department makes good use of the school assessment tracking system and most pupils are aware of the levels at which they are working. Pupils' prior attainment is used as a basis for planning work although its use as a tool for setting targets and monitoring progress is still developing. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers regularly collect in work and provide an indication of performance, although there is insufficient use of written comments that would help improve future performance.
80. Leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has a clear vision for improving standards. The departmental self-evaluation review, despite some over-optimistic assertions, provides strong evidence of her awareness of strengths and areas for development. She is a very good role model for other teachers and has high expectations of all pupils. Management is good. Considerable efforts have been made to create a good working environment and the quality of display in the classroom and on the corridor is very good. Marking is not adequately monitored and there is inconsistency in the quality of feedback which pupils receive.

81. There has been good progress since the time of the previous inspection. An extra-curricular programme that provides master classes for primary school pupils is helping to raise standards on entry to Year 7. New courses in modular GCSE mathematics and statistics have been introduced.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. Use of mathematics across the curriculum is good and there has been good progress since the previous inspection. The school has appointed a numeracy co-ordinator with the enthusiasm to make things happen. Each department has a numeracy policy and has a named representative to co-ordinate implementation. Guidance that is specific to each department supplements a very helpful numeracy handbook. Informal and individual guidance is also provided for colleagues as requested.
83. Pupils apply their numeracy skills in most subject areas. In geography coursework, for example, they make good use of their mathematical skills as they analyse, represent and interpret information. In physical education, pupils measure heartbeats, draw graphs and interpret the findings. In art and design pupils show an understanding of perspective and can work to scale. In design and technology pupils demonstrate good knowledge of geometric shapes, for example, within their jewellery designs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement in most aspects of the subject since the previous inspection.
- Examination and test results are now well above the national average.
- Information technology and scientific skills are now used to support learning about science.
- Assessment is not used well enough to help pupils to improve.

Commentary

84. Results in science in the national tests and examinations in 2003 were well above all schools nationally. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved each year for the last three years up to 2003 but remain below similar schools. In 2004 results dropped slightly but were still above the target set by the school. Pupils achieve well from their starting points in Year 7 and standards in lessons support this. For example, Year 7 pupils identified parts of a plant cell from the microscope slides they had prepared themselves showing good achievement from the start of the year.
85. At GCSE, standards of attainment have risen over the last four years and, in 2003, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades in double science was above national figures. However, both boys and girls did significantly less well in science than in other subjects. In 2004 the percentage attaining the higher grades dropped but nearly all pupils who took the examination attained a pass grade. The standards in lessons range from above to below average. For example, Year 11 pupils were working at well above average levels when explaining the changes in energy levels during different chemical reactions whilst Year 10 pupils had difficulty linking together previous work to help them with an experiment on reaction rates.
86. Pupils of all abilities achieve well when teachers' challenge and expectations are high such as a lower set in Year 9 describing chemical reactions and their equations. When teachers plan lessons to provide special resources and include plenty of reinforcement then pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Whilst the teaching assistants help pupils to

remain involved in the lesson, often their specific needs are not addressed. Many pupils who are identified as gifted scientists are in the upper sets and they achieve well when teachers present plenty of intellectual challenge. However, in other groups teachers often fail to provide different work to extend or challenge understanding for the one or two gifted pupils present.

87. Pupils learn well because teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. In most lessons teachers explain what the lesson will contain and often check progress at the end. In the better lessons teachers set a brisk pace and use plenty of different activities such as experiments and demonstrations to help pupils learn well. The very efficient technical staff play a vital part in supporting these lessons, which now take place in a full range of new laboratories. The use of ICT to support learning is much improved as pupils are given many opportunities for research or collecting information from experiments.
88. Where teaching does not result in such good learning it is because teachers' planning is over-ambitious or the focus of the lesson is not clear and progress is not reviewed. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory but detail in marking is inconsistent and rarely gives help how to improve from one piece of work to the next. The department is starting to use the wealth of information available about pupils' prior attainment to set target grades and track progress. Refinement of this will allow the information to be used throughout the year and shared with pupils, which at present is unsatisfactory.
89. After the previous inspection, the head of department put into place a development plan to improve standards in the department. As a result of teamwork and shared commitment, improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. All staff, including those new to the school, have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work well together. The head of department leads the subject well and has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and priorities for future development. Whilst some monitoring of work takes place, there are insufficient opportunities to share the good practice seen both in teaching styles and assessment methods.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is now meeting statutory requirements.
- Teachers have a firm grasp of their subject, but understanding of the assessment criteria is inconsistent across the department.
- Leadership is good, with a strong commitment to improving the standards and expectations of ICT, although performance data is not consistent or complete.
- Relationships, attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good.

Commentary

90. Standards in Years 7 to 11 are broadly in line with national expectations. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or greater at the end of Year 9 fell from 87 in 2003 to 72.6 in 2004, mainly because of the introduction of more rigorous assessment through the adoption of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 for ICT. However, there is some misinterpretation of the level descriptors, indicating that further staff development is needed. The department offers GNVQ and the GCSE short course, having discontinued Key Skills Course in Year 10 because it was inappropriate. Standards are average, though for many pupils the courses offered are still too easy, and so the department is investigating alternatives.
91. Achievement in all years is satisfactory, but there is not enough independent work in Year 9 to enable pupils to make better progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit greatly from the

information given to them by their teachers about the standards required to attain certain grades.

92. Learning and teaching are satisfactory because lessons are well-planned and teachers' subject knowledge is very good. However, assessment in lessons and rigorous questioning of pupils to establish their understanding are under-developed, which limits pupils' progress. Relationships in lessons are good, so pupils are willing to listen to each other and have their work held up for each other to review.
93. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. There is an almost relentless drive for improvement in ICT, through the school's self-review cycle. All teachers in the department wish to improve ICT, as indicated by the establishment of drop-in clubs for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Funding has been channelled into both equipment, such as interactive whiteboard and projection facilities in all of the ICT suites, and training, and an assistant headteacher and member of the department chairs a management steering group, indicating the senior management team's commitment to ICT. The use of ICT assessment information, for example, in terms of gender or ethnicity, is not yet embedded in the practice of the department. However, the ICT department is preparing to pilot a system that will enable attainment issues to be spotted very quickly by all members of the department.
94. The ICT suites have air conditioning, but some accommodation is slightly cramped, and one room's electronic whiteboard display is difficult to see from the back of the room because of the lighting arrangements. Links with primary schools are good, and the computer facilities are used for classes for parents outside school hours, but business links have not been fully developed.
95. The department and the school have made great strides since the previous inspection, especially in light of the fact that the new building has only been in existence for two years (and the new department for just one year). For example, ICT is now taught in all years, and this has contributed to the improvement in standards. The department has both the capacity and the commitment to improve still further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

96. The use of ICT across the school is now very good, not least because of the school's commitment to providing resources. Accommodation and resources are good, with a range of equipment and facilities available, including three class sets of wireless laptops and small suites of computers in several curriculum areas. The school replaces and upgrades computers on a regular basis, and plans for all staff to have laptops within two years. The school also has a network manager and two technicians, which help with the smooth-running of the facilities.
97. Teachers and pupils in all areas of the curriculum use the facilities for developing knowledge, skills and understanding in their own subjects. The electronic whiteboards have made a huge difference to the work of departments, with good or very good use being seen in most subjects. For example, in a music lesson the whiteboard was integral to a Year 7 lesson, and the pupils too were very fluid in its use. In a language lesson, pupils used the multimedia suite for digitised listening, whereby all pupils are able to access individual exercises simultaneously and without the delay usually associated with cassette tapes, the sound quality is extremely good, and the teacher can listen to what each pupil is doing.
98. In addition to the generic software such as word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets and Internet search engines, pupils are also confident in the use of specialised applications. For example, pupils in Year 9 use software to observe tomato growth in science, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 in art and design are able to manipulate images. Although the use of ICT across the curriculum has improved greatly since the previous inspection, there is currently no monitoring of the use of ICT or the standard of work undertaken in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils make very good progress in their acquisition of historical skills.
- Teaching and learning are very good and teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject.
- Leadership is excellent and fosters high levels of teamwork amongst teachers.
- Pupils demonstrate a very mature attitude to their studies and the subject is very popular.

Commentary

99. Standards in Year 9 are well above average and most pupils have very good background knowledge of the topics under consideration. Moreover, GCSE results in 2003 were well above average and the percentage reaching grades A* and A was twice the national average. The 2004 results show a similar picture and work seen during the inspection confirms these well above average standards.
100. Because of the way specific skills are taught at the start of each of the first three years, pupils achieve very well in understanding how historians come to their judgements. Pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is not their first language receive very effective support and also make very good progress. Their knowledge of the nature of evidence is accurate and they are already beginning to consider the reliability of sources. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good and, because of the high levels of intellectual challenge during lessons, most pupils express their ideas extensively and discuss different views of history with confidence.
101. Pupils benefit from a wide range of methods to meet their learning needs. In an excellent Year 11 lesson, for example, paired activities and relentless questioning enabled all pupils, irrespective of their ability, to play an active part. As a result, they made quite perceptive comments on the relative responsibility of the major powers for the outbreak of war in 1914. Similarly the requirement that pupils draw images to represent the paragraphs of a text on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria benefited pupils who learn more effectively from pictorial resources. Teaching and learning are, therefore, very good and teachers have a profound knowledge of their subject.
102. Leadership is excellent and teachers work cohesively and with real commitment to the success of their pupils. Management is very good and teachers are now looking to improve the consistency of advice offered to pupils on how they may improve their work. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards at GCSE are better, teaching has improved, resources for lower-ability pupils have now been updated and there is a range of fieldwork activities to support work in the classroom. The subject-area is well placed for development and further success.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2003 were well above average.
- The department evaluates its work rigorously.
- Lessons are well planned and structured so pupils' achievement is good.
- The range of teaching and learning methods used is not yet wide enough.

Commentary

103. The comparatively small number of pupils who took the GCSE examination in 2003 gained well above average results. School information indicates that results declined in 2004 but pupils still did as well in geography as in the other subjects they took. In the 2003 teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 results were above average and remained at the same level in 2004. These results represent good achievement for the pupils concerned when compared to their attainment on entry to the school.
104. In work seen standards in geography are above average and pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 9 and of Year 11. All pupils in Year 9 recognise geographical terminology and higher attaining pupils use this confidently and accurately. In Year 11 pupils collect geographical data and analyse this effectively to reach balanced conclusions, for example, about industrial changes in Leeds. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well, in line with other pupils, because they receive good individual support from teachers and classroom assistants.
105. All pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are consistently good. Occasionally teaching is very good. Teachers plan and structure their lessons well so most pupils are productive. The aims of the lesson are made clear to pupils and learning is checked regularly. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly so they know how well they are doing and how to improve. Good opportunities for fieldwork allow pupils to develop their enquiry skills. For example, pupils in Year 10 spoke enthusiastically about a recent visit to Skipton to study rivers.
106. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The department evaluates its work rigorously in order to improve standards. Priorities have been identified for development. These include widening the range of learning activities that pupils undertake and using a greater variety of teaching resources to maintain pupils' interest in geography. These strategies are designed to increase the comparatively low numbers of pupils currently opting to study geography for GCSE. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because standards have risen and teaching and learning continue to improve. The department has both the capacity and the commitment to improve further.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of courses in religious studies at GCSE has led to a significant improvement in standards in Year 11.
- Pupils achieve well because they have positive attitudes to the subject and benefit from good teaching.
- Leadership is good and staff work well together as a team.
- The department does not have a clear understanding of how to measure its progress through self-evaluation.
- Assessment is not yet fully effective in giving pupils advice on how to improve their work.

Commentary

107. Results in the GCSE examinations are rising. Most pupils take the short course examination, although the full course is also offered. In 2003 results were average at grades A* to G but below average at grades A* to C. In 2004, when the pupils were entered for short course only, there was a substantial improvement at grades A* to C, with 13 candidates gaining grade A*. Girls performed better than boys. These results represent good achievement when compared with subjects with a similarly large number of candidates, especially as students have only one fortnightly lesson in which to cover the syllabus.
108. By the end of Year 9 standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils generally achieve well. Most pupils have a firm knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other major world religions. They can also explain what they learn from religion, for example, in discussions on rules for living. Work seen during the inspection shows that higher attaining pupils produce imaginative, well written pieces of work, such as personal beliefs about how the world began, and that lower attaining pupils achieve well when they have writing models to help them in structuring their responses.
109. Standards in Year 11, at this stage in the school year, are average overall. Most students achieve well in understanding different religious standpoints on moral issues such as the termination of life, and the reasons for third world poverty. They also use ICT effectively for research and presentation of work.
110. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The main strengths of the teaching are teachers' good command of the subject, high expectations of pupils' achievement, and the focus on raising the literacy standards of lower attaining pupils. Classroom relationships are usually very good, so pupils learn well because they enjoy the work and are encouraged to take an active part in discussions. Lessons are generally well planned to cater for the needs of all pupils, and support staff make a positive contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language by providing helpful explanations and prompts that enable pupils to join in group discussions and to work purposefully. However, on occasion, a few pupils do not make as much progress as they should, because of the lack of appropriate learning materials such as models for writing, and because they are not challenged through direct questioning. Skilful preparation for the GCSE examinations is a strength of the teaching in Years 10 and 11. Simplified versions of questions help to clarify unfamiliar phrases, so pupils gain confidence in understanding what is required of them, and thus are able to give comprehensive answers. Assessment is satisfactory. Marking of work is carried out regularly but the different levels of attainment in Years 7 to 9 are not clearly defined, and assessment is not yet fully effective in target setting or in giving pupils advice on how to improve the quality of their work.
111. The department is well led with clear vision and purposeful direction. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been successfully resolved. The working partnership with a school in a nearby town is having a positive impact on the curriculum review as well as on teachers' professional development. It has also led to an improvement in resources, although there is still a shortage of artefacts. Management is satisfactory. Despite the facts that a recent review of pupils' results has been successful in identifying the need for a

change of examination syllabus, the department does not yet have a clear understanding of how to measure its overall progress through self-evaluation. Consequently there is a lack of rigour and consistency in its judgements. Good support from teaching assistants and administrative staff makes teachers' work more effective but a formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning takes place only once a year. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Although the time allocation for religious education is still limited for pupils in Years 10 and 11 the good teaching and learning results in good achievement. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the opportunities for reflection, the programmes of study and the importance given to group work and open discussion.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership and management is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive.
- The whole teaching team is very effective.
- The new scheme of work contains activities that interest the pupils.
- There is scope for even greater use to be made of ICT to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

112. GCSE results in 2003 for design and technology were above national averages. Results in food, graphics and textiles are better than those in resistant materials, particularly at the higher grades. There is a pattern of improvement year on year and in 2004 all pupils achieved a pass grade.
113. Teacher assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 shows that standards are above average. On entry to the school pupils' attainment in design and technology is varied and all pupils make good progress from this uneven starting point.
114. Achievement in technology for pupils of all abilities is good. Pupils are fully involved in lessons because tasks are clearly set out, carefully explained and there is a very good balance between direct teaching and practical activities. Pupils who have special educational needs do well. Their needs are carefully considered within teachers' planning and teaching assistants are skilled at providing a good balance between support and expectation.
115. The quality of teaching across all four areas of the subject is good. Teachers' planning is detailed, thorough and always identifies specific needs of pupils within the class and the literacy and numeracy opportunities that can be developed within the lesson. Pupils benefit from teachers' breadth of knowledge and a very well balanced curriculum with a very good range of activities to interest and engage them. Younger pupils making an item of pewter jewellery to be used as a gift based their design idea on geometric shapes as a starting point. The activity provided boys and girls of all abilities with the opportunity to produce a high quality product that reflected their own interest and culture.
116. Learning is good because teachers are very good at helping pupils with both designing and making skills and pupils are well behaved, keen to apply themselves to the tasks that are set. Relationships between pupils are good. They are encouraged to be independent and teachers are successful at promoting the safe, confident use of equipment.

117. The incorporation of ICT into technology is good and there are some excellent ideas for its use in the curriculum. For example, some pupils preparing salad that they had designed in a food lesson used a nutrition based programme to consider the food values of the individual ingredients. Progress for pupils working on final GCSE coursework during lessons is limited because ICT is not used as a matter of routine to enhance its presentation.
118. Standards of work seen during the inspection were good and often very good. Pupils' work is reviewed regularly and targets are set so that they know what they need to do in order to improve. This works well, particularly for the pupils who have been recognised to be more able with respect to technology. It works particularly well when teachers' questioning requires an opinion as an answer rather than a statement of fact.
119. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection and both leadership and management are very good. The new head of department is confident and experienced. Areas for improvement were identified and effectively implemented Schemes of work have been updated and consideration given to the use of examination and teacher assessment information to raise standards, particularly in resistant materials. All teachers now have more involvement and a better overview of all aspects of the subject and how it is covered.
120. Homework is routinely set and links well with the work done in school. The department has a very positive approach to supporting pupils. Drop-in sessions work well. Teachers' contingency plans, particularly in food for pupils who do not have the ingredients or equipment work towards promoting positive attitudes.
121. The presentation of technology has been well thought out, high quality displays link well with current topics being taught and the quality and ambience of the teaching areas are positive. Technical help is good quality but sometimes in short supply.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The focus since the appointment of the new head of department on raising standards is already bearing fruit.
- There is a good foundation in place for assessment, but it does not fully link National Curriculum levels to pupil self assessment in all topics.

Commentary

122. Examination results in 2003 were below the national average. This level remained in 2004, but the department gained its first A* grades, and current Year 11 pupils are working at a good standard.
123. Attainment on entry is above the national average, but there are a significant number, as in the Year 7 class seen, with attainment well below this level showing the wide range of pupil abilities. The proportion gaining higher levels at the end of Year 9 is steadily increasing, and by 2003 had reached the national average. In work seen in Year 9 standards are above this level, and achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve and attain as well as other pupils, as do pupils with English as an additional language. Anyone showing ability to shine is given the opportunity to do so. Display is very well used to celebrate pupil attainment and to inspire others. Art rooms are exciting places to work in.

124. The standard of work in Year 11 is above the national average, and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Many pupils are working at a higher level and very good work was seen in all lessons, such as work on papier mache relief heads and pastels and pencil drawing in a Pop Art style.
125. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils learn well and build self-confidence in a very good learning environment. They are consequently able to try out new things, and choose what works best for them. There is a strong sense of community and mutual support, and pupils of all abilities learn well. On occasion poor behaviour inhibits the learning of all. Teaching is well prepared and efficient, but above all it succeeds because the passion and enthusiasm of the teacher is transmitted to the pupils. The atmosphere in a Year 11 class was intense, with a feeling that everyone there shared a common purpose.
126. Leadership and management are very good, and developments since the appointment of the head of department have been great. His apparently relaxed approach belies a steely determination, and his commitment and enthusiasm are catching. There is already a good foundation for assessment, but it is not yet fully linked to National Curriculum levels. Links with community arts are good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good assessment scheme links National Curriculum levels to pupil self-assessment and target setting.
- The extensive extra-curricular activities are a very good feature.

Commentary

127. Examination results in 2003 were below the national average. The Year 11 group are already working at a much higher level.
128. Attainment on entry is above the national average, with many pupils showing clear prior experience and expertise in music. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above the national average, showing good levels of achievement. Those with special educational needs achieve and attain as well as other pupils, and those with English as an additional language also achieve and attain well. More able pupils such as the group of guitarists in Year 9 take full advantage of extension opportunities, and standards are good. A very good programme of extra curricular groups provides a significant extension to musical experience for many pupils, and the karaoke club involves many potentially disaffected pupils.
129. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good and pupils are working at well above average levels of attainment. Almost all of the small Year 11 group are working at a very high standard in their improvisation-based composition work. The best composition had clearly transcended the gap between sound effects and music, and the use of a chromatic ostinato was highly dramatic and highly effective. Pupils at this level take full advantage of extra curricular opportunities to broaden and extend their musical experience.
130. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons pupils learn by listening and analysis, by skill development, by building on previous work, by using technology to resource their work and from each other in group and whole class ensembles. Where learning is less successful it is through fewer opportunities to make music and learn by doing, Teacher expertise is clear, and planning linked to target setting is good. Above all relationships are good, building pupil self esteem, and developing pupil self-reliance on their musicianship.

131. Leadership and management are good showing both vision and determination. Consequently development over the last two years has been good. The music department provides a very good environment for learning, with positive consequences for pupil attitudes. There have been major improvements in ICT provision. Instrumental teaching provision is strong, involving many pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE are above average.
- Pupils in all years achieve well.
- The good teaching is characterised by very good subject expertise.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers.
- The indoor facilities and extra-curricular provision are excellent, and help pupils' learning

Commentary

132. Pupils' standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are wide ranging, but are mostly below national expectations. A minority of Year 7 pupils' standards are well below in gymnastics. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average. Standards in the current Year 9 are at the expected level, reflecting the lower ability of these pupils when they entered the school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in the acquisition of basic skills and their achievement is good.
133. GCSE results have risen over time. Results in 2003 were above average and the 2004 results rose further. The attainment of current GCSE pupils is above average and their achievement is good. Most pupils reach higher standards in their practical and course work than in the theoretical aspects of the course. The attainment of the majority of pupils in core physical education in Years 10 and 11 is average. Their standards are hindered by only having one lesson each week but their achievement in the short time allocated is good.
134. Pupils in all years develop well their skills in games and consolidate their knowledge of health and fitness. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 often take responsibility for the warm up section of the lesson and work independently and effectively. Pupils' analytical skills are not as well developed as their performance skills, especially in Years 7 to 9. As part of the excellent extra-curricular programme, which is attended by large numbers of pupils, many individuals and teams achieve very high standards in district and county competitions. These talented pupils are recognised by the department and benefit greatly from the many opportunities their teachers provide.
135. Teaching and learning are good throughout all year groups because most pupils have positive attitudes and very good working relationships with their teachers. Teachers consistently help pupils' understanding by reviewing previous skills at the start of lessons and consolidating knowledge at the end. Pupils' performance skills are improved because teachers' demonstrations, which are excellent in trampolining, provide good visual images. Teaching is closely matched to the needs of the pupils in each group, including those with special educational needs. Teachers, mostly manage the behaviour of some very lively pupils well. In a few lessons, pupils do not concentrate sufficiently and this lack of focus explains the lower attainment in GCSE theory work.
136. The joint heads of department provide good leadership and management for the subject. The use of outside sports coaches and the opportunity for pupils to take the junior sports leaders award in Year 10 furthers the community links very well. The self-evaluation report is

very detailed but further monitoring of teaching and learning would provide more secure evidence and lead to greater accuracy in the judgements. Department planning for full provision of statutory activities is hindered by the two-week timetable, which means that at one particular time in one week there are not enough facilities for all the classes. However, the rising pattern of GCSE results, the new team of teachers who are working well together and the new excellent indoor facilities have aided the very good improvement seen since the previous inspection. There is no all weather outdoor facility and this hinders learning in inclement weather.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge is shared effectively resulting in improving standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive but there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils' ability to investigate and analyse information independently is restricted because of a limited range of activities and access to resources.

Commentary

137. Standards in 2003 were average but improved in 2004. Pupils enter Year 10 with little knowledge of businesses and how they function but throughout the course they develop a good understanding of business organisation and become familiar with a variety of concepts. The application of these concepts to business practice is satisfactory. Achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory with good achievement for pupils with special education needs. Pupils have competent ICT skills, particularly in the business and communications course where they apply them effectively to business situations.
138. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' good subject knowledge is shared well with pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding. Pupils receive good support, particularly those with special educational needs but there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils to enable them to achieve as well as they can. Lessons are adequately planned but the activities do not always allow pupils sufficient opportunities to develop investigative skills and take responsibility for planning and organising their work. Access to a variety of resources is limited and inhibits the development of independent learning.
139. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has developed a shared view and commitment to developing a range of appropriate courses and improving standards. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. He has a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses but strategies to improve teaching and raise standards are not specific enough or effectively monitored.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education is taught together with citizenship which was inspected in depth.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations and pupils achieve well.

- Work is well planned and good resources ensure consistent approaches to teaching and learning.
- The department evaluates its work rigorously.
- Teachers know their pupils well and give them confidence to contribute to discussions.
- Systems for assessing and reporting pupils' progress are underdeveloped.

Commentary

140. Standards in citizenship are above national expectations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. This represents good achievement for pupils compared to their attainment when they enter the school. Citizenship, careers and personal, social and health education are combined and taught together as part of well-integrated programme of study. Pupils have a good understanding of issues such as their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The sensitive coverage of drugs, sex and relationships education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Careers advisors give clear advice to pupils on future subject choices and employment opportunities.
141. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils are taught by their form tutors who know them well and relationships are good. All pupils are given the confidence to ask questions and discuss their opinions. Pupils from all year groups take responsibility by serving on the elected school council, which has been instrumental in changing some aspects of school life, for example, changes to school uniform. Through the very good *Community Action Programme* pupils in Year 10 behave as responsible citizens by helping members of the community.
142. The leadership and management of the subject area are good. Work is well planned both within the citizenship department and by other subject areas. Detailed schemes of work and resource booklets have been designed and used successfully so pupils achieve well. The department evaluates its work rigorously and has identified priorities for development. These include developing the present systems of self-assessment so that pupils' progress is monitored and reported to parents in more detail.
143. Citizenship has not been inspected previously. The department has both the capacity and commitment to develop further to ensure that the ideals of good citizenship permeate school life.

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 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art & Design	15	80	80	13.3	24	30	29.9
Biology	13	84.6	65	38.5	11	34.6	20.6
Business Studies	34	73.5	76	17.6	16	27.6	26.2
Chemistry	13	100	73	46.2	14	41.5	24.1
Communication studies	30	100	86	40	24	43.3	32.0
Drama	17	100	87	41.2	20	42.4	30.6
Economics	17	82.4	74	23.5	20	31.8	26.4
English Literature	46	95.7	86	37	19	40	30.2
French	14	71.4	78	35.7	19	32.1	27.6
Design and technology	2	100	75	0	15	35	25.3
General studies	112	78.6	74	25	18	29.8	25.7
Geography	15	86.7	74	46.7	20	38.6	26.5
German	2	100	82	50	19	50	28.9
History	40	100	81	75	20	52	28.6
Mathematics	32	65.6	62	34.4	17	26.3	22.1
Music	1	100	87	0	21	40	30.7
Other languages – Urdu	1	100	83	0	43	40.0	36.2
Other social studies	47	91.5	70	23.4	17	33.8	24.1
Physics	24	87.5	69	43	33.3	36.3	22.7
Sociology	14	85.7	72	64.3	18	44.3	25.4
Spanish	1	0	79	0	18	0	27.3
Sport/PE studies	6	100	73	16.7	11	36.7	23.1
Business VCE	2	100	76	0	16	26.7	26.2

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 & Design	13	92.3	99	38.5	50	75.4	87.5
Biology	25	88	96	48	39	79.2	78.6
Business Studies	10	100	99	20	37	70.0	80.1
Chemistry	12	91.7	98	50	49	83.3	84.9
Communication studies	27	100	100	82	38	100.0	82.1
Drama	9	100	100	67	40	100.0	83.6
Economics	4	100	99	75	52	90.0	88.3
English Literature	36	94.4	100	55.6	47	89.4	86.5
French	3	100	99	66	52	93.3	87.6
Design and technology	4	100	98	0	35	65.0	77.9
General studies	76	99	95	49	31	86.1	73.1
Geography	13	100	99	46	45	89.2	84.0
German	1	100	98	100	48	100.0	84.8
History	18	94	99	72	45	97.8	84.6
Mathematics	22	100	97	63.6	56	96.7	88.8
Music	4	100	99	0	39	60	81.1
Other languages - Urdu	2	100	97	100	65	100.0	93.8
Other social studies	29	100	97	72	43	97.2	81.8
Physics	11	100	97	73	45	100.0	81.7
Sociology	14	100	98	71	44	98.6	83.6
Spanish	7	100	98	0	50	62.9	86.9

Sport/PE studies	6	83.3	98	33.3	31	63.3	75.2
------------------	---	------	----	------	----	------	------

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English Literature

Provision in English literature is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning lead to examination results that are well above average at A-level.
- Students' very positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their very good achievement.
- More variety in teaching styles is needed to ensure that all students take an active part in discussions.
- Leadership of the subject is very good and teachers work together very well as a team.

Commentary

144. Results at A-level in 2003 were well above average with a large proportion of higher grades. Students achieved very well because their results were in the top 25 per cent when measured against national results. Standards continued to rise in 2004 when the number of A grades exceeded those in other school subjects.
145. The standard of work seen in lessons and written work at this early stage of the school year is above average although there is a significant proportion of work that is well above average. Most students comment perceptively on the development of theme and character and the use of language in the texts they study. However, not all of them are yet writing at sufficient length or using quotations to best effect. Higher attaining students, including those who have been identified as gifted and talented, have a broad background knowledge of the subject and they write and speak with clarity and confidence, using well chosen quotations to support the points they are making. Overall achievement is very good. Students usually succeed in rising to the challenges presented to them because they enjoy the subject and are appreciative of the very good teaching and of each other's efforts.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Students increase their understanding and enjoy their work because their teachers have a very good command of the subject and an obvious enthusiasm for it. The practice of allocating homework to be done in pairs or groups is very effective in promoting students' collaborative working and their efficient organisation of research and presentation. Students become adept at evaluating their work and that of others because teachers know how to make assessment an integral part of the lesson.

There is generally a very good balance between the teacher's input and students' contributions, and most students are keen to take an active part in the lesson. However, there are a few occasions when a reliance on open questioning and whole class discussion allows a minority of students to make very little contribution to the lesson.

147. The subject is very well led and managed with clear vision, a keen sense of purpose and a constant focus on high achievement. There is a strong teaching team in which staff at different stages of their careers work together very effectively to offer a curriculum that is very well geared to the needs of their students. The department has a critical approach to its performance and knows how to use self-evaluation to move forward. Students benefit from good quality resources, and a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities makes a very good contribution to their social and cultural development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

148. All subjects make a good contribution by promoting the correct subject vocabulary and by helping students to use and write correct English. Standards are above average. In general pupils communicate well in speaking and listening. They have good skills in reading and comprehension. There are good opportunities for students to produce extended writing in all years. There is very good promotion of language and literacy skills in sixth form physics. Provision in literacy for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is excellent provision in the dyslexia base.
149. The library is well used by students of all age groups. The stock is fresh and attractive and makes good provision for all interests. However, few students borrow the high quality world-renowned classic books that are in the library. These make good provision for the gifted and talented and especially for students in Years 12 and 13. Volunteers from the sixth form regularly help younger students with reading. This helps to raise reading standards and also makes students in the sixth form more aware of the importance of literacy.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong subject knowledge base is provided by experienced teachers.
- Very good relationships exist between students and teachers.
- There is insufficient constructive feedback linked to the marking of students' work.
- There are insufficient opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

150. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. A-level results in 2003 were well above the national average with all students obtaining a pass grade and 82 per cent being at grades A to C. Students entered for AS level in 2003 obtained results well above the national average. In 2004 the percentage of grades A to C dropped to 35 per cent and 14 per cent were ungraded. In work seen during the inspection student attainment at AS and A level is in line with national expectations although there is a wide spread of performance.
151. Advanced level teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are very secure in their own subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are conveyed to students. Lessons are, however, teacher dominated and there are insufficient opportunities for independent learning. Very good working relationships exist between students and teachers, as a result of which students are comfortable when approaching their teachers to request help and guidance. Students appreciate the support that they receive from their teachers and are able to seek help outside of the normal school day. The marking of students' work is

unsatisfactory and there is a lack of constructive written feedback that would help improve future performance.

152. The teaching of key skills, application of number, is good and pupils enjoy working through their projects. They are aware of the requirements for success at each level and they are on target to achieve success. Opportunities for students to improve their GCSE grades have been established via night school classes in collaboration with the local college.
153. At sixth form level leadership is good and the head of department has high expectations. Management is satisfactory and there is good guidance for colleagues via the departmental handbook. There has not been sufficiently rigorous monitoring of marking and this has been identified as a priority for future development. Analysis of student performance has been established although more use could be made of subject-specific value added measures to measure progress and set appropriate targets.
154. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment have risen and the department has adapted to the demands of the new advanced level courses, although the issue of inflexible teaching styles has yet to be addressed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

155. Use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in most subject areas. Within physics, for example, students display very good mathematical skills as they collect, process and analyse statistical information. They use algebraic formulae with confidence and accuracy in scientific calculations. In art they display spatial awareness and good understanding of scale.

SCIENCE

Physics

Provision in physics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- AS and A-level results are consistently well above the national average.
- Teachers' realistic expectations and challenging work bring about good learning.
- ICT is used very well by teachers to support students' learning.
- Students have extensive opportunities for independent work.
- The marking of students' work and the setting of targets are not used to help them understand what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

156. Standards attained in A-level examinations since 2002 have been well above the national average. Student numbers have grown steadily during this period to the point where there are two teaching groups in both Year 12 and Year 13. Over two-thirds of the students starting the AS level course now complete the full A-level. Students' achievement during the course is good. They start the AS level course with GCSE results above the national average and attain A-level results which are well above the national average.
157. Teaching is consistently good. It is varied, interesting, well matched to the learning needs of the students and regularly challenges them to think scientifically. Students' learning is good because lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with the students. A brisk pace is maintained through a variety of activities involving the use of probing questions and practical activities that build on and extend the students' understanding of physics. Students share good relationships with the teachers and work in a mature and co-operative manner.

158. Students have extensive opportunities for independent learning. They complete a wide range of different tasks, including their assessed coursework assignments that effectively enable them to develop the skills of researching, sustaining arguments and speculating. The students have very good access to ICT and teachers use it very well to support students' learning in physics. They are also provided with an extensive range of support materials, including module guides and revision notes which are also available on CD ROM and the school's ICT network. However, students are not provided with sufficient information about what they have to do to improve their work. It is marked regularly but this does not provide the students with insights from their teachers about how to adapt and focus their learning. Students are also not provided with sufficient information about their likely examination outcomes or target grades based on their previous examination results and other assessment information gathered from their work during the course.
159. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a coherent drive for improvement based on the effective co-ordination of the teaching and some analysis of the examination results of previous students. The teachers work closely together and provide mutual support based on a clear sense of direction. The accommodation for physics teaching is excellent. The laboratories are well maintained and the department is well organised with a very good range of resources. The progress of the department since the previous inspection is good. Standards of attainment have risen and both the use of ICT and the leadership of the department have improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and teachers have a firm grasp of their subject.
- Leadership is good.
- Relationships and attitudes in lessons are good.

Commentary

160. The GNVQ Intermediate ICT course was introduced in the sixth form as a one year course in 2003. Two students gained a merit, and 17 obtained a pass. An AVCE course was also introduced, and the students taking it are now in their second year. Standards are above national expectations. Students are confident and competent users of the software, and are able to articulate why and how they have done the work. For example, a Year 13 AVCE student explained how she developed a website for a business client, using advanced software to achieve particular effects. Achievement is good, with all students making progress in lessons and applying the ICT skills they have learnt, such as programming in Flash, in new contexts.
161. From the work seen and discussion with students, learning is good in the sixth form. Students work independently and explore a range of software for themselves. The quality of marking and feedback would suggest that they have been taught well, though little direct teaching was observed during the inspection.
162. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The department is very strongly committed to improving ICT in the sixth form, as shown by the fact that the courses offered are under constant review, and the drop-in facility established for GNVQ students. The department does not fully use data on individual students to tailor the teaching to their needs, however, this has started to be addressed in the context of students for whom English is an additional language, who are given alternative instruction sheets via the interactive whiteboard.

163. Improvement in the sixth form is good, because examination courses are now taken in ICT and standards are now above expectations

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

164. Use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Where it is used, it is used well. For example, in physics students undertook data-logging using voltage sensors linked to laptops, whilst in business education students make good use of ICT across a range of applications, such as word processing and presentation software.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and significant numbers of students go on to read history in higher education establishments.
- Teaching is very good and students thrive on the high levels of intellectual challenge and achieve well as a result.
- Leadership and management are excellent and teachers work hard to give their students detailed advice on how to improve their work.

Commentary

165. A-level results were well above national expectations in 2002 and 2003 and the percentages of students reaching grades A and B were well above average. Moreover, in 2004, and from a large entry, over two-thirds of students attained at these higher grades.
166. In both Years 12 and 13, students achieve very well in their knowledge and understanding of key historical controversies. In Year 12, for example, they are already making quite perceptive comments on the significance of the *Six Acts* and they discuss whether England was close to revolution in the early 19th century with perception. In addition, students in Year 13 have a profound knowledge of the political crisis in Germany at the end of the First World War.
167. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject and their students benefit from the relentless and challenging questioning. Teachers inspire their students and, as a result, large numbers opt for further advanced study. In 2004, for example, ten students took up places on university history courses. Teaching and learning are very good and students speak highly of the staff.
168. Leadership and management are excellent and there is a real vision for how the subject may be developed. Moreover, because teachers are concerned to foster high levels of achievement, they mark work in detail and give their students extensive and accurate advice on how to improve their essay writing. There has been very good achievement since the previous inspection. Standards are better, teaching has improved and students are now not diffident in expressing their views orally.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and contributes to high standards.
- There is very good achievement as students build imaginatively on their ideas.
- There is very good leadership and management that inspire students.
- There is very good use of ICT to extend learning.

Commentary

169. In 2003 standards in AS and A2 were average. Results in 2004 improved to above average. However, the numbers of students taking art at AS and A level have been too small for meaningful national comparison.
170. In work seen, standards are above average in Year 13. The students are working on highly individual themes and research in good depth to gain inspiration for the development of their own ideas. They have very good skills in drawing and painting. Life drawing is particularly good. All Year 12 students are highly skilled and have made an impressive start to their chosen topics. There is good representation of tone and texture in all work. All students speak lucidly about their ideas and evaluate their work, identifying successes and also what they have to do to improve. In both years students use their sketchbooks well for experimentation. Achievement is very good as students build on their skills. They use ICT successfully for research and the development of their work. There is good provision for three-dimensional work including ceramics and this contributes to the success. All students are highly motivated and spend a considerable amount of time on their art outside of lessons. The practical and theoretical work is well integrated.
171. Teaching and learning are very good. Because students are taught by all three teachers they benefit from the wide range of specialist expertise. The teachers give very good one to one guidance and support in all lessons and this contributes to students' high achievement. Assessment, including self-assessment, is an integral part of all lessons and students know what they have to do to improve at frequent intervals.
172. There is very good extra curricular provision. The art rooms and art studio are available to students at most times of the day so they work extensively outside of lesson time. There is a link with a local school and also one in Germany that adds to students' experiences in art. There is an annual art trip to the USA that will take in Washington, Philadelphia and New York this year. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual moral, social and cultural development as they consider these aspects in the work of other artists and learn to find their own muse in art.
173. There is very good leadership and management and a vibrant quality pervades the department. The new leadership has a clear vision and intent to raise standards further and widen participation in the subject. This is evident in the larger group choosing art this year. There is good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have improved significantly. Teaching has improved and there are now an adequate number of computers in the art rooms.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in class work and in examinations.
- Inspirational leadership ensures very good teaching and learning, so students enjoy the subject and achieve very well.
- The excellent new accommodation for drama has a very positive impact on students' achievement.
- The wealth of extra-curricular activities provides students with excellent opportunities for personal, social and cultural development.
- The focus on critical assessment of performance enables students to improve their work.

Commentary

174. A-level results in 2003 were well above average, and students achieved very well. These high standards were maintained in 2004. By the end of Year 13, standards are well above average. This represents very good achievement, especially as not all students have taken drama at GCSE. Work seen during the inspection shows that students have built very well on the skills they acquired in Years 7 to 9, where drama forms part of the English curriculum. Their very positive attitudes have a decisive impact on their achievement. Relationships are excellent, and all students work together very effectively in groups. As a result, they create impressive performances that demonstrate a sensitive understanding of conflicting ideas, very good technical knowledge, efficient use of time, and an ability to evaluate and improve aspects of their presentation. There is no difference in achievement between girls and boys, and gifted and talented students express themselves very clearly in reviewing the strengths and weaknesses in performance.
175. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. There are no barriers to learning. Lessons move forward purposefully because teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and know their students well. As a result, the students themselves respond very positively and are confident in tackling new learning. Teaching is well matched to different needs, and lesson activities contain plenty of challenges for students to think things out for themselves and defend their points of view. Evaluation of performance by teachers and students is an essential part of every lesson, with the result that all students adopt a critical approach to their work.
176. Leadership is very good. The head of drama is an excellent role model, with clear vision and boundless enthusiasm for the subject. The subject provides high quality opportunities for students to develop their spiritual, social and cultural awareness. Achievement in lessons is strengthened by a wealth of activities, involving collaboration with local schools, annual school productions and workshops led by outside specialists in which students of different ages work together very effectively. Despite the lack of time available for administration, the subject is managed very well and departmental staff work very well together. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards have risen, the subject has a high profile in the school with its own department, and the splendid new drama accommodation enables students to become adept in using the most up-to-date electronic equipment.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average and students' achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good and teachers use interesting and varied ways to help students progress.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Students' attitudes are excellent and they have excellent relationships with their teachers.
- Students are very well informed about their progress and constructive advice is given to help them improve.

Commentary

177. A2 and AS level results in 2003 were above average and 2004 results showed similarly good attainment levels. Results indicate that students achieve very well in relation to their prior learning. There are 15 students taking the AS course presently and their attainment is well above average. The four students in Year 13 are attaining above average standards. The achievement of students is very good. Students attain high practical standards in their own specialist sports and have a good knowledge of the theoretical aspects. Their learning is particularly good because teachers give them many opportunities to discuss with one another and to relate the theory to their practical experiences. Students' personal exercise portfolios are very well presented and include good evaluative comments.
178. Teaching is very good and promotes very good learning. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that interest and challenge students of all abilities. Teachers' use of the electronic whiteboard in the new theory teaching room provides interesting visual stimuli in lessons. However, there are insufficient resources for students to research independently in the room. Students' files are marked thoroughly with comments that help students to improve their work. Students recognise and appreciate the effective way teachers help them to understand the examination requirements, for example, when planning their synoptic topic. Homework is used well to give students experience in answering examination questions and to consolidate their knowledge. Students are extremely positive about physical education, have excellent relationships with their teachers and take an active part in the subject. This helps their very good learning.
179. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The A-level courses have been established and standards improved since the previous inspection. Improvement overall is very good. Three teachers deliver each unit of the course. Students benefit from this diversity of expertise and from their different teaching approaches. The digital camera and video facility is beginning to be effectively used to improve students' observational and analytical skills. Students report how much they value the courses because they provide an accreditation linked to proposed careers in sports science, for example.

BUSINESS

Economics

Provision in economics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' positive attitudes and good relationships create a productive working environment.
- Activities do not give sufficient opportunities for students to take responsibility and work independently.
- Good subject knowledge effectively shared enables students to achieve well at A-level.

Commentary

180. Standards at A-level in 2003 were good. The majority of students achieved high grades but the numbers involved are too small to compare with national averages. Standards at AS level were in line with national averages. In 2004 A-level, the small numbers of students achieved well but AS results were below expectations. GCSE entry requirements to the course are flexible so when standards are compared to ability on entry students' achievement at AS level is satisfactory with some examples of good achievement at A-level. In Year 12 students gain sound knowledge and understanding of supply and demand, employment and economic growth. They learn to apply a range of concepts and understand their relevance to local and national issues. By the end of Year 13 students have a good depth of understanding of economic principles enabling them to apply concepts well to make effective judgements on market structures and government intervention when shaping the national economy.
181. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and is shared effectively, particularly with A-level students to help them to make satisfactory and in some cases good progress and achievement. Good relationships and positive attitudes of students create a productive and co-operative working environment. Lessons are adequately planned but the limited range of activities and access to resources means that students do not take sufficient responsibility for their learning relying too much on the teacher.
182. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has a clear view of the developments needed to secure and sustain improvements and raise standards, but the strategies to achieve this are not specific enough. Economics was not inspected at the previous inspection.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Personal, social and health education was inspected in depth and one lesson of general studies was sampled. In this lesson teaching was very good and students vigorously debated the legal position of religious education and worship in British schools.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This weekly session contributes very well to students' confidence and maturity.
- Students are well-placed to make informed choices about their future.

Commentary

183. There is a very well planned programme of lessons and activities. These cover all the aspects of personal, social and health education, careers and citizenship which are particularly relevant to sixth form students. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Teaching is good overall. Students are given the confidence to contribute to stimulating and challenging discussions, for example, about 'faith in our schools'. Standards are above expectations and students achieve very well. Students have well developed listening skills and express their opinions clearly.
184. All students receive knowledgeable and readily accessible careers advice from teachers, careers advisors and the Connexions service. They are well informed about future career options and university courses. Aspects of citizenship are covered well through opportunities for students to use their initiative and take part in activities such as the college council, assisting in lessons and hearing younger pupils read.

185. The programme is very well led and managed by the head of sixth form who has identified clear priorities for improvement. These include increasing the number of visiting speakers to enhance the programme further. The monitoring of activities is currently informal and a more rigorous approach is needed to ensure consistently high standards.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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