

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE LAKES SCHOOL**

Windermere, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112379

Headteacher: Dr David Selby

Lead inspector: Mr R F Spinks

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> February - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 271627

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11 - 18  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll; 758  
School address: Troutbeck Bridge  
Windermere  
Cumbria  
Postcode: LA23 1HW  
Telephone number: (01539) 462 470  
Fax number: (01539) 462 473  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr S Thomas  
governors:  
Date of previous January 2000  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The Lakes School is situated near Windermere in the Lake District. There are currently 758 pupils on roll, of whom 134 are in the sixth form. Three-quarters of the pupils from Year 11 stay on to Year 12, and the sixth form is large in proportion to the rest of the school, with pupils transferring in at 16 from other schools. A very small number of pupils are of non-local heritage. A small proportion of the pupils, six per cent, which is below the national average, are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of sixth-form pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than this figure, at 2.3 per cent, and much lower than in sixth forms nationally. A very low percentage of the total number of pupils, seven per cent, are identified as having special educational needs, and two per cent of the pupils have a statement of special educational need, both of which are below the national average. The school gained Sports College status in September 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2783	Rod Spinks	Lead inspector	
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector	
32082	Bill Lockwood	Team inspector	English Media studies
4706	Alicia Welsh- Kuligowicz	Team inspector	Mathematics
23396	Nick Daws	Team inspector	Science
15127	Bill Goodall	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
31863	Adrian Cornelius	Team inspector	Geography
12825	Niall Carr	Team inspector	History Business education Psychology
2754	Gina Butler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
16891	Richard Worth	Team inspector	Citizenship Music
32593	Frances Burgess	Team inspector	Religious education
15154	Ian Spode	Team inspector	Physical education
33244	Roisin Chambers	Team inspector	Special educational needs
3555	Carol Emery	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 7</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8 - 11</b>
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11 - 18</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>
<b>SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>	<b>20 - 22</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>23 - 54</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>55</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The Lakes is a good school** where standards and achievement at the end of Year 9, and in GCSE, are above average. Standards in the sixth form are average overall, with girls' results being above average. Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all subjects except religious education, where the locally agreed syllabus is not fully covered. The newly appointed headteacher, the leadership team and the governors have identified and begun to address the key areas in the school in need of further development to establish the school as a sports college. Despite the serious budget deficit, the school currently provides good value for money.

Based upon the limited information in the last inspection report, the school has made good progress since that inspection in all areas except the spiritual and cultural development of students.

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

- Above-average standards at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE.
- Overall good teaching with a significant proportion of very good teaching.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.
- Overall, the behaviour of students is good.
- Too many school policies and procedures are inconsistently applied across the school.
- The statutory requirements for the delivery of religious education are not met.
- The key issue from the previous inspection regarding multicultural education has not been sufficiently addressed.
- Links with parents are unsatisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Overall achievement is good.** Students make good progress in both Years 7 to 9, and in their GCSE examinations, in response to the good teaching they receive. Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved so that in 2004, they were **above average** based on the unvalidated data available. Standards in GCSE examinations have been **above average** for the last three years. Standards in religious education are below average throughout the school because the statutory curriculum is not covered fully. Standards in the sixth form are broadly average but girls achieve better than boys. Girls gain more A and B grade passes. Students with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9, and very good progress in Years 10 and 11, in response to the targeted support they receive, especially from teaching assistants.

Students' personal development is **good overall**. **Behaviour is good** both in lessons and as students move around the school. However, there are a small number of boys whose behaviour is not always well managed in a few lessons. Students' **moral and social development is good**. **Spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory overall**, as there is limited spiritual development through religious education lessons and **preparation for living in a multicultural society**. There are good opportunities for sixth form students to contribute to the learning experiences of younger students.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good**. **Teaching is good** throughout the school, with a good proportion of that seen being very good. **Teaching in Years 7 to 9, and for GCSE courses, is good and teaching is very good in the sixth form**. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan effective lessons, which promote good learning and ensure that students make good progress. On the few occasions that teaching was less than satisfactory, the management of students was inconsistent and a small number of boys did not make enough progress. Teachers mark students' work conscientiously but do not consistently indicate what students need to do to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with some good programmes developing in vocational education. However, the religious education curriculum is unsatisfactory. The main curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and drama. The care and guidance of students is satisfactory, with secure systems for child protection and an effective programme of personal, social and health education. There are good links with Connexions for the provision of careers advice. There are good links with feeder primary schools, which ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Overall, links with parents are unsatisfactory as they are not provided with sufficient information regarding learning programmes and students' progress to support their children effectively.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership of the school by headteacher, senior managers and governors is good**. **The management of the school at this time is satisfactory**. Managers, particularly heads of department, have worked hard to improve the quality of education in the last three years, but there are too many inconsistencies in the implementation of school policies to support and enhance learning. Senior managers have identified this and are already working to improve the policies and their use. Overall, governance is satisfactory. There have been many changes in personnel and this is leading to better systems for monitoring the work of the school and, in particular, the budget. There are now detailed plans to bring the school's deficit budget to balance and governors are aware of the need to do this without detriment to the education of current students.

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

**The majority of parents and students are positive about the work of the school**. Their concerns regarding behaviour are not supported by inspection evidence. However, parents are not well informed about their child's progress, as the current reporting process does not sufficiently identify what students know and can do, and what they need to do to improve. The use of homework to support learning is too variable, both in subjects and year groups, to enhance students' progress sufficiently. The school has recently begun a programme of

meetings with parents to seek their views, and when complete, the school will address the issues identified.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Fully establish the school as a Sports College with students, staff, parents and community.
- Review all school policies and develop systems to ensure they are consistently applied across the school, with the specific aim of improving the achievement of boys to match that of the girls.
- Seek ways to develop and enhance multicultural and spiritual experiences for students.
- Improve the quality of information provided for parents.

### and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that religious education programmes meet statutory requirements throughout the school, including the sixth form.

## THE SIXTH FORM AT THE LAKES SCHOOL

The sixth form has 134 students. Two-thirds of students from Year 11 stayed on in 2004, taking a wide range of A and AS level GCEs and vocational courses.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is **good**. Results in A and AS level GCE examinations are average overall, but have been consistently high for the girls. Vocational courses have also been successful. Teaching and learning have improved over recent years and are very good overall. Support, advice and guidance are good, there is a good range of academic, vocational and enrichment courses, and the sixth form plays a significant role in the school. The sixth form was not reported on in the last inspection. Finances are now monitored closely and the sixth form provides **good** value for money.

### The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High standards by the girls in examinations in both Year 12 and 13.
- Achievement, based on progress from GCSE, is good.
- Very successful vocational courses.
- Close pastoral and academic support. Students are given good and relevant advice. The teachers know them well.
- Very positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Very good teaching and learning.
- The sixth formers play a strong role in the school and community.

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

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is <b>good</b> . Good teaching and learning leads to good achievement.
Science	Provision in chemistry is <b>very good</b> . Enthusiastic teachers promote good relationships, leading to high attainment.

Humanities	<p>Provision in biology is <b>very good</b>. Committed staff ensure consistently above-average results.</p> <p>Provision in geography is <b>very good</b>. An excellent learning environment is created by very good teaching.</p> <p>Provision in psychology is <b>good</b>. There is effective leadership and good teaching and learning.</p> <p>Overall provision in religious studies is <b>unsatisfactory</b>, although provision in examination courses is good.</p>
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in media studies is <b>good</b> . Good achievement is supported by good teaching and learning.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is <b>good</b> . Very good teaching ensures good progress.

*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**

Students are provided with good guidance by subject teachers, which helps them to achieve well and make good progress. Support for students on vocational courses is also good, with some lower - attaining students achieving very well. A good range of information and advice is available for students regarding entry to Further and Higher Education as well as employment opportunities. There are opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the school when they support new entrants and take leading roles in extra-curricular activities.

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

Leadership and management in the sixth form are both **good**, despite recent changes and a re-organisation of responsibilities. Senior managers and the head of sixth form provide a clear sense of direction for staff and students. Pastoral support by tutors is good, as is the day-to-day management. The provision for vocational courses is expanding, and through co-operation with other schools in the 'South Lakes Federation', a coherent approach is being taken in the area. The senior leadership team and the governors are keen to ensure the curriculum provided continues to expand, and that the Sports College status enhances post-16 provision.

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

The sixth form students interviewed were very positive about the school. The concerns, raised by the students who responded to the questionnaire, were not supported. All felt they had good advice, although it had been better for Year 13 than Year 12. There was an adult they could relate to, there were good enrichment opportunities, their views were listened to, teaching was good, and they felt the school was well run.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall achievement is good and standards are above average at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations. Girls make better progress and attain better results than boys. Standards in the sixth form are close to the average, with girls attaining better results than boys. Standards have improved at the end of Year 9 in 2004 and standards have been maintained in GCSE and in the sixth form.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average at the end of Year 9.
- Standards in GCSE examinations are above average.
- Standards in GCE AS and A2 examinations are average, with girls achieving higher grades than found nationally.
- Standards in religious education are unsatisfactory.
- Standards in numeracy are above average.
- Boys do not attain as well as girls.
- Standards in GCSE French are well below average.

#### Commentary

1. Students enter the school in Year 7 having attained broadly average standards in national assessments at the end of Year 6. They respond well to the good teaching they receive and, by the end of Year 9, are achieving well to attain above average standards in national assessments. Standards in English are lower than standards in mathematics, and standards in science are higher still. Standards, taking all these core subjects together, are above average. Standards in the other subjects are broadly above average, with the exception of religious education where standards are below average. Progress is better in Year 7 and 9 than in Year 8 where some difficulties in organisation of the numbers have created some larger teaching groups.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.9 (34.7)	33.5 (33.4)
mathematics	36.9 (36.7)	35.7 (35.4)
science	34.4 (36.0)	32.2 (33.6)

*There were 113 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Students continue to make good progress in Years 10 and 11 as they follow GCSE programmes. Well-planned teaching focuses learning, and achievement is good. Overall, attainment in GCSE examinations is above average for the percentage of students gaining five or more grades A\* - C, and very high (in the top five per cent nationally) for the percentage gaining one or more A\* - G grades. In fact all students entered gained at least one such grade. The best results were attained in art and design, science, design and technology, geography, English language, German and

mathematics. Although there is some variation, girls' achieve better results than boys in most subjects, except for design and technology. Boys' results are much lower than girls in vocational subjects, which are overall below the national average.

3. Standards in French were well below average in 2004 because there were difficulties in providing effective specialist teaching in the subject. However, standards are improving, with more effective teaching seen during the inspection.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are rising slightly at this time, and that current students are on course to attain at least similar standards in 2005 to those of 2004. The school has set itself challenging targets for the attainment of these students.
5. Students with special educational needs are well supported, so they make good progress in achieving the targets set for them.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	67 (71)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (95)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	42.3 (39)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 113 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. Standards in the key skills of literacy and information and communication technology are broadly average, with numeracy skills well developed. In all year groups students showed good practical and investigative skills which, along with their positive attitudes and ability to work collaboratively, is positively enhancing learning and promoting good achievement.

**Sixth form**

7. Standards in the sixth form have remained at or close to the national average for several years. There have been slight fluctuations but evidence indicates that individual students have achieved as well as expected from their attainment in GCSE examinations. The school effectively uses the available data to monitor this progress. Of some concern has been the number of students who enter the sixth form but do not complete the course, or complete AS programmes but do not continue to A2. Inspection evidence did not identify that there were any school issues contributing to these figures, but that local and home influences were the more likely cause. Standards in vocational subjects vary from year to year, but students do make good progress and achieve well in many cases. Standards in science and information technology vocational courses are better than in business studies.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	89.8 (92.8)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	33.4 (44.6)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per pupil	258.5 (255.2)	265.2 (258.2)

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Students' attitudes to school are good. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. In the sixth form, attitudes and behaviour are very good. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory overall, although their social and moral development is good. Attendance is very high and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' spiritual development and their preparation for life in a multicultural society remain unsatisfactory, as they were at the time of the previous inspection.
- Students are interested in their lessons, behave well and very much enjoy the range of activities provided for them.
- Students' social and moral development is good and they form very good relationships with others.
- Sixth form students have very positive attitudes, behave very well and are good role models.
- Attendance is well above that found in secondary schools nationally.

### **Commentary**

8. The previous report identified the need to improve the provision for students' spiritual development. This remains unsatisfactory. Although students do have the opportunity for reflection during assemblies, it is usually too brief and the focus of reflection is not clearly explained. Across the school, there are too few opportunities for students to explore questions about values and beliefs or the deeper meaning of what they are learning. As a result, students' ability to appreciate and respond to spiritual aspects of life is unsatisfactory. Students develop a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions, but the school pays insufficient attention to developing their awareness of life in a multicultural society. Students show limited understanding of faiths other than Christianity and of the ethnic diversity of British society. This was identified as an issue in the previous inspection report and has not been addressed effectively. While ensuring that students understand what prejudice is, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities to develop enquiring attitudes towards other cultural traditions. Students have insufficient experience of ethnic diversity and traditions within the curriculum. There are few visits or visitors to offer students first hand experience of the cultural diversity and traditions of modern British society.
9. Most students have a positive attitude to their learning. They are well motivated when the teaching is good and the work engages their interest. Students generally settle quickly to work and persevere to complete the set tasks. They concentrate well, listening respectfully to teachers and other students. The very good relationships between students and teachers contribute to their good attitudes. Most students enjoy their learning and therefore behave well. However, the behaviour of a small number of boys, mainly in Years 8 and 9, is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not always manage this behaviour effectively, so that it sometimes affects the learning of others. The good behaviour is reflected in a low level of exclusions. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past four years. Students of all ages are very appreciative of teachers' efforts in providing the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many students are actively involved in clubs and other activities outside the school day. The

school productions are particularly popular and good numbers of students participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

10. Students' social development is good. They work well together in pairs or small groups and co-operate well with others. However, girls generally develop more confidence and self-esteem than boys, especially in Years 7 to 9. They are more likely to answer questions in class, lead group work and take a pride in the standard of their work. In Years 10 and 11, boys begin to take their studies more seriously and gain in confidence as a result. The relationships students form with their peers, teachers and other adults are very good. This helps to ensure that the level of bullying is low. Students develop a strong sense of right and wrong, treating their own and others' property with respect. Levels of vandalism and graffiti are low. Personal, social and health education allows students the opportunity to discuss moral issues and choices of relevance to their lives. In citizenship lessons, they gain an awareness of wider social and moral issues.

## Attendance

11. The level of attendance is well above that found in secondary schools nationally, and unauthorised absence is lower than in most schools. Most parents support the school well by ensuring that their children attend both regularly and on time, and inform staff promptly of the reason for any absence. The school encourages good attendance and all unexplained absences are followed up thoroughly. The level of attendance has risen significantly over recent years. Most lessons begin promptly.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.7	School data:	0.4
National data:	6.9	National data:	1.1

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

## Sixth form

12. Students have a very positive attitude to their studies. They attend very well and their punctuality is good. Behaviour is very good and students provide good role models for others. Students develop a mature approach to studying, particularly the skills of studying independently, and work hard to achieve their targets. They have a range of opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school community, mainly through the prefect system and school council.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed-period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
697	27	0
5	0	0
0	0	0

Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	1	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	48	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and high expectations enable students to make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan effective lessons that engage and challenge students.
- Students have good attitudes to learning.
- Teaching methods are well matched to students' needs and provide opportunities for independent and collaborative work.
- Support staff are well deployed and provide very good support to students.
- Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good.
- Assessment data is not always used effectively to set targets and students do not always know what they need to do to improve.

### Commentary

13. The following table lists the inspectors' evaluation of teaching during the inspection. The quality of learning matches this very closely.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 166 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (2%)	53 (32%)	69 (41%)	33 (20%)	8 (5%)	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.*

14. In the main school, teaching in one quarter of the lessons seen was very good or excellent in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Some excellent teaching was observed in English and science and some very good teaching was observed in mathematics, history, art and design, design and technology, physical education, geography, German, drama and information and communication technology (ICT). The main strengths of the better teaching include:
- teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan effective lessons that are well matched to meet students' needs;
  - very good relationships and good student attitudes within a positive learning environment where praise is used to motivate students;

- lessons have a clear structure, building on prior learning, and activities are stimulating and challenging;
  - a range of teaching and learning styles is utilised that allows for independent and collaborative opportunities which develop students' confidence;
  - enhanced questioning skills challenge students to reflect on what they know and improve understanding;
  - students are supported and guided by staff and they learn from their mistakes and successes;
  - teachers have high expectations of students to both achieve and make very good progress; and
  - effective behaviour management techniques ensure that students sustain concentration.
15. Teachers are using some of the approaches recommended in the National Key Stage 3 strategy to improve students' learning. Prior knowledge is effectively used to set the context for the lesson and then linked to the clearly shared lesson objectives. Lessons have a consistent structure and this enables students to know what they are expected to do. Lessons begin with brisk starter activities, which remind students of what they have learnt. Teachers give variable attention to the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills within their subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily to support teaching and learning across the curriculum and is used well in the teaching of English. In many lessons, the plenary is used to bring together key learning.
16. A strong feature of teaching is the way in which teachers provide good support for students with special educational needs. Especially when:
- individual students have effective support which is targeted to meet their needs;
  - good relationships and a positive learning environment enable support staff to combine challenging work with a sympathetic approach which helps build students' confidence;
  - support staff encourage students to sustain concentration and use praise and reassurance to motivate;
  - activities are well structured with clear progression which enables students to build up learning; and
  - high expectations combined with a 'can-do' approach develop students' self-esteem and they believe they can achieve.
17. In a Year 11 science lesson on electro magnets students made excellent progress because the well-developed activities enabled them to complete the tasks independently. The teaching assistants' close supervision and continual support and praise gave students the confidence to succeed and they persevered diligently.
18. Teaching was unsatisfactory in eight lessons in Years 7 to 11. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, students do not make adequate progress. The main reasons for this are:
- teachers do not manage behaviour adequately to ensure that students have a positive attitude to learning;
  - work is not closely matched to students' needs and therefore the inappropriate challenge affects student motivation and concentration; and
  - students do not understand what to do or how to improve their work because of poorly planned lessons.

19. There is no whole-school homework policy. Each subject area draws up its own homework timetable for the following term and communicates this to students and parents. Consequently, the amount of homework set by each subject is variable and there is no even distribution across the week. Homework is spasmodic and not always used effectively to consolidate learning in lessons.
20. The quality of marking is satisfactory. Marking of students' work is variable both in regularity and quality. In the best marking, teachers provide feedback on how well the student has done and give guidance on how to improve. Some teachers make general comments and do not provide enough precision on what students need to do to improve their work.
21. Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Students in Years 7 to 9 know their target grades for the end of Year 9 and likewise students in Years 10 and 11 know their target grades for the end of Year 11. The progress of students is monitored through the collection of data that determines whether or not they are broadly on track. The school does not have a central system that tracks students' progress through the National Curriculum levels as they move through the school.
22. Target setting is not effective, as students in Years 7 to 9 do not have a clear grasp of the level they are currently working at or how they can move from one National Curriculum level to the next. As a result, some students, particularly boys, lose the drive to achieve, their motivation wanes and they do not make the expected progress. In Years 10 and 11, the GCSE grading of tasks is referred to within lessons and students have a clearer view of the grade they are working at. Assessment is better in Years 10 and 11 because teachers have a good knowledge of the examination requirements and they match their assessment procedures to examination criteria. Subject departments have developed their own assessment systems. In the best-practice marking, student feedback, assessment and target setting come together to provide students with a clear view on how they are performing and how to improve. Where this is working well, as in design and technology, then boys and girls do equally well.

### **Sixth form**

23. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan for progressive learning and understanding. Lessons often use 'real life' situations, especially in vocational courses. For example, in a vocational ICT lesson, students were using real house survey reports to develop their document presentation skills.
24. Very positive students collaborate well, enhancing their own learning so that achievement is good.

### **THE CURRICULUM**

The school provides a curriculum that mostly meets students needs except in religious education where statutory requirements are not met. Sixth form choice is wide and there are good enrichment opportunities. Effective support is provided in Years 7-11 for students choice of future education or employment. The arrangements to support students with special educational needs are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The statutory requirements for religious education for Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form are not met. However, in Years 10 and 11, requirements are met for students following GCSE courses.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides good opportunities for most students.
- Careful planning ensures wide sixth form choice.
- There is wide provision for participation in sports, a dramatic production, music and art and design.
- Provision to ensure the good behaviour of all students is good overall.
- Staffing difficulties affect curricular standards in design and technology.

## **Commentary**

25. In Years 7 to 9, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, as well as drama, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. However, the religious education curriculum currently does not fully cover the locally agreed syllabus and does not meet statutory requirements. All students study French and German in Years 7 and 8. All study French and over half also study German in Year 9.
26. In Years 10 and 11, a good range of subjects is offered. Students study the core subjects of English, mathematics, double-award science and ICT, in addition to GCSE short-courses in religious education, physical education and PSHE. However, the core provision for ICT does not sufficiently stretch the majority of students. Students choose additional subjects from a wide range of GCSE courses. In partnership with the local college of further education, the school has arranged for students who may find the full range of GCSE courses difficult to have the opportunity to study vocational subjects including construction, childcare and health and beauty, to NVQ Level 1.
27. The school meets statutory requirements in all subjects except religious education. A good range of equipment is available to meet the requirement to use ICT in music to create and modify sounds. The length of the school day is in line with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidelines. The allocation of time to subjects is mostly appropriate but the time allocation for modern foreign languages is below that normally found.
28. Citizenship is taught as part of the PSHE programme, which includes appropriate education about sex and relationships, careers and the harmful effects of drug misuse. The course is organised by the head of each year group and taught by form tutors. There is no formal systematic monitoring of the quality of the teaching or students' progress. During the inspection, however, these aspects were judged to be satisfactory.
29. All students have the opportunity to experience all subjects of the curriculum. In English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and design and technology, students are grouped in classes that are organised on the basis of their prior attainment. In other subjects, they are taught in mixed-ability groups. The method of grouping is decided by each faculty. This arrangement is broadly successful, as teachers usually match work well to the differing needs of students. The school works

closely with outside agencies to make sensible provision for students for whom the full range of courses is not judged to be appropriate.

30. The quality of provision to prepare students for the next stage of education or employment is satisfactory. Work related learning is suitably enhanced by an Industry Day, visits by representatives of local businesses, mock interviews and a well-planned Careers Convention for Year 11 students. Students have good access to a well-organised careers library, attended by a member of staff each lunchtime. All students participate in a successful programme of work experience for two weeks in Year 10. They complete a diary whilst on their placement and are visited by a member of staff.
31. Provision in special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory overall. The SEN team consists of a co-ordinator, three part-time teachers and three learning support assistants. A weekly team meeting facilitates discussion of current issues, but is not used effectively to identify precisely where individual attention is most needed. Students' progress and achievement apart from those students with statements are not monitored or recorded sufficiently. Parents and students are insufficiently involved in setting and reviewing targets for learning and behaviour.
32. The English department does not teach the units for literacy support recommended in the National Strategy. Support in science, when it is available, is well provided by the special educational needs teachers and learning assistants. Lessons in a variety of subjects including English were, however, seen where support was needed, but not provided, and in others such as music, where support did not focus sufficiently on students' learning needs. This creates difficulties for teachers and students alike.
33. Working individually, special educational needs teachers and learning support assistants provide very good support, but their work is insufficiently co-ordinated. There is insufficient recording of students' reading, spelling and mathematical performances as they progress through the school. Some details of students' needs are available to teachers, but some (and, in particular, supply teachers) are often unaware of students' needs.
34. The curriculum is to be reviewed by senior managers and other staff. Planning is not underpinned by a whole school curriculum policy. A close relationship with the local further education college has resulted in the continuing development of vocationally orientated courses in Years 10 and 11. Most subject schemes of work are planned carefully and are of good quality. Those in science, art and design and design and technology, are very good. The scheme of work for core ICT, however, does not provide sufficient challenge for many students, and that for religious education is unsatisfactory as it does not give enough opportunity for multi-faith study.
35. A good range of extra-curricular opportunities, open to all students, enhances the curriculum. Over half the school's subjects offer support outside school hours, mainly with revision and coursework. Students participate fully in activities such as visits to France and Germany, trips to theatres, factories and art galleries, and field visits to the countryside and local towns. A satisfactory range of musical activities is provided. A very good proportion of students participate in sports activities, competing in sports in inter-school fixtures although the cost of travel is expensive. They are enthusiastically supported by the whole-hearted commitment of members of staff.
36. The school has a full complement of suitably qualified staff. There is, however, an incidence of long-term absence. Despite the schools best efforts to minimise the

effects of this, it inevitably causes some disruption and lack of continuity for students. The quality of provision and standards has been affected in a number of subjects, including modern languages and religious education. Good technical support is available in science, art and design and design and technology. There are not enough classroom assistants to fully support students with special educational needs.

37. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Accommodation for music is well equipped. However, it is cramped and hot in ICT.
38. The school's learning resources are sufficient and generally of good quality in most subjects. Computers are mostly located in ICT specialist rooms. Most other subjects have none, thereby limiting ready access to computers and the range of activities that can be attempted. The library is pleasantly furnished and well organised: the provision of books and materials varies from very good for history to thin for science.

### **Sixth form**

39. Overall curriculum provision in the sixth form is satisfactory. There is an appropriate range of both AS and A level courses and the range of vocational courses is developing. As part of the South Lakes Federation, the school is involved in developing coherent curriculum opportunities across the local area.
40. Although there are currently some staffing difficulties for delivering the physics and religious education curriculum, the school has made appropriate interim provision. There are adequate resources for the delivery of the subjects and good provision for students' personal study.

### **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The school has good arrangements in place to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of all its students. The support, advice and guidance provided for students are satisfactory overall. Students' views are sought, valued and acted on to a satisfactory degree. The induction arrangements are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school puts a high priority on providing a safe, healthy environment.
- Academic targets are not sufficiently well explained to students in Years 7 to 9.
- Students receive good personal support and guidance.
- Good induction arrangements help students to settle quickly into school life.
- The school council provides students with a regular opportunity to express their views but is under-used as a means of consultation.
- Sixth form students have a good range of information about opportunities beyond school.

### **Commentary**

41. The school has thorough procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its students. Regular health and safety checks are carried out and any issues addressed promptly. Risk assessments are fully in place. Health and safety in practical lessons such as science is very good overall and students learn how to work safely. Procedures for child protection comply fully with legal requirements. Appropriate records are kept when first aid or medicine is administered. Students feel safe in school and appreciate that all staff have their best interests at heart.

42. Academic support, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9, students know their targets but these are not explained to them in sufficient detail, nor are they reviewed often enough to have a significant impact on their learning. However, in Years 10 and 11, students have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to make their target grades. Marking is variable, but the best practice helps students to identify areas for improvement. Students with special educational needs are well supported through individual education plans and targeted help in lessons.
43. Good personal support, advice and guidance are available to students throughout the school. Almost all students state that they have a high degree of trust in their form tutors, head of year and other teachers. Students are therefore willing to share any problems they may have. In particular, bullying is dealt with sensitively and effectively when it occurs. Careers education forms part of the programme of personal, health and social education, and students have appropriate access to the careers service.
44. The school provides a good induction programme. The head of year and special educational needs co-ordinator visit all the primary schools to meet with Year 6 students and their teachers. Students have a good range of opportunities to visit their new school prior to admission. This helps to ensure that they settle quickly into the new routines.
45. The year group and school councils provide a forum where students' views and suggestions can be discussed. However, the school does not use the council system to consult students when changes, such as the shortening of the lunch break, are planned. Meetings are infrequent and a member of staff, rather than a student, takes the minutes.

### **Sixth form**

46. Students are provided with good support, advice and guidance by their tutors and subject teachers. The current Year 13 students state that they were well supported when they entered Year 12, but those in the present Year 12 report a less positive experience. Students have access to a well-stocked careers library that contains a wide range of information about universities, colleges and courses. A member of staff from Lancaster University visits to talk to students about university life and the range of courses on offer. Students receive individual support as they apply to university. A member of the sixth form chairs the school council but students have no specific sixth form committee.

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

The school's partnership with parents is unsatisfactory. Links with the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The information the school provides for parents is of inconsistent quality overall, and students' reports are unsatisfactory.
- Procedures to deal with parents' complaints and concerns are unsatisfactory.
- The school works well with other schools and colleges to offer a wide range of courses for students in Years 10 to 13.
- The school provides a resource for the community and has some effective links that enhance students' experiences.

## **Commentary**

47. The school provides parents with a wide range of information about its life and work, but the quality is variable. The prospectus and annual report of governors are well presented but both lack detail. In particular, information about the curriculum and homework requirements is limited. Students have planners, but parents and their children remain uncertain of the homework timetable. Over a quarter of the parents, who made their views known to the inspection team, had concerns about the limited amount of homework. Although the school provides a data report twice a year and an annual progress report, these do not provide parents with sufficient information about their child's work and progress. Data reports are very brief and some have been sent out without an explanation of the grades and levels used. Students' annual reports are insufficiently detailed. In particular, reports are over-reliant on National Curriculum Levels as targets. These are not clearly explained to parents, and therefore do not help parents to be active partners in their child's learning. The quality and usefulness of reports vary between teachers and departments; however, the overall quality is unsatisfactory. Parents of students in Years 7 to 9 have consultation meetings with the form tutor rather than subject teachers. This is unpopular with many parents.
48. The school has a complaints procedure in place but a significant number of parents do not believe that this is working effectively. Too often parents do not receive a prompt response to questions, concerns or complaints. They feel they are not consulted regularly, nor are their views taken into account when changes, such as the change in the timing of the school day, are planned. However, parents appreciate that the recently appointed headteacher has already met with parents in small groups. Local residents share parents' frustration with the lack of response to their complaints about trespass, students being out of school during lesson times and litter in their gardens.
49. The school works closely with its partner primary schools to ensure that the transition to secondary school is smooth and successful. A large number of students take part in sporting events with other schools. Links with local colleges are used well to provide a range of vocational courses for students in Years 10 and 11. The school also has links with a secondary school in the Czech Republic.
50. The school worked closely with the community on the successful Lottery bid for all-weather sports pitches and changing facilities. This initiative has resulted in improved facilities for school and community use. As part of the recently-achieved sports' college status, the school has plans to develop these links in a range of ways. The community uses school facilities extensively out of school hours. The school arranges a number of trips in the local area and visitors, such as the community police and theatre groups, enrich class work in some subjects.

## **Sixth form**

51. The school is part of a federation of local schools and this enables a wider range of courses to be offered in the sixth form. Students have the opportunity to discuss university courses and life with a visitor from Lancaster University and are encouraged to attend open days at university and careers conventions.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are good. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school as a Sports College. He is well supported by the senior management team who are working hard at ensuring the coherent development of the school. There has been good management of most departments to ensure that the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen, especially at the end of Year 9. The governance of the school is satisfactory now and governors have introduced more effective systems for monitoring the work of the school and the budget.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good, clear vision for the future development of the school shared by headteacher, staff and governors.
- Good management by most heads of department.
- Weaknesses in budgetary management have been addressed.
- Managers have not ensured that school policies are applied consistently across the school.
- Managers and governors have begun, but have yet to establish the school as a Sports College serving its local community.
- Governors have not held the school sufficiently to account for its work in the past.

## **Commentary**

52. After a difficult period in the school's history, including two changes of headteacher in the last two years and major personnel changes to the governing body, the school is entering a period which should provide stability from which to continue to develop.
53. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school, which has been shared with governors, staff, students and parents. He is aware of the current weaknesses in the consistent application of school policies and the monitoring processes needed.
54. The school has been well served by subject heads of department who have provided good leadership of their subjects and have managed improvements well. They have improved the quality of teaching through monitoring and feedback, which has raised standards, particularly by the end of Year 9. There remain weaknesses in the management of religious education.
55. The management of special educational needs has been good and students are well supported. The new co-ordinator has continued to ensure that the code of practice is met. The management of the limited number of support staff is very effective.
56. Managers at all levels have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that the school's policies have been applied consistently across the school. In particular, those for the management of behaviour; teachers' use of ongoing assessment information to promote improved achievement; the consistent use of homework to support learning; and the reporting of students' progress to parents need to be addressed.
57. The school, having achieved Sport College Status in September 2004, is not yet seen by the students, parents and community as having an important role to play in bringing them together in joint activities. The headteacher has begun a programme of consultation with parents, which will need to be extended to the community.
58. The current school aims and objectives do not relate sufficiently to the work of the school as a Sports College or to the need for a relentless drive to raise achievement and standards.
59. Weaknesses in budgetary management in the past have led to a serious budget deficit. The governors and senior managers, assisted by administrative staff, have now established more robust systems and have carefully planned to bring the budget to a balance over a number of years. They are also fully aware of the need to do this without detriment to the current and future students of the school.

60. Administrative staff provide effective support and the use of information technology systems makes their work more efficient.
61. Governors are also monitoring the work of the school more closely with a view to challenging its work and to drive forward development.
62. Inspection evidence clearly supports the view that senior managers and governors have the capacity to continue the development of the school to raise standards further and to establish the school at the heart of its community.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,844,438	Balance from previous year	-283,412
Total expenditure	2,849,211	Balance carried forward to the next year	-288,186
Expenditure per pupil	3,784		

## Sixth form

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The head of sixth form has very positive relationships with both staff and students and this provides a secure base from which further development can take place. The head of sixth form represents the school at the South Lakes Federation, which is seeking to develop coherent 14-19 provision in the area. The senior leadership team and the governors are keen to ensure that the post-16 curriculum continues to expand and that Sports College status enhances post-16 provision.

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Provision for students with special educational needs is very good overall. Achievement for students with special educational needs is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Provision for students with physical disabilities, vision or hearing impairment is very good and good for students at School Action Plus and School Action levels.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good identification, assessment and recording procedures, ensuring a smooth transfer to the secondary school for Year 6 students.
- Small-group teaching of basic literacy and 'coursework catch-up' is a strength of the department, enabling some students to make considerable learning gains in reading, spelling and comprehension.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support to individuals and groups of students.
- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department and the impact of interventions on student progress.
- There has been insufficient training for staff in the area of behaviour management to ensure that all staff have the skills to meet a diverse range of needs.
- There are insufficient links between the SEN and pastoral systems to provide consistent support to vulnerable children.

## Commentary

63. The school is an LEA designated provider for physically disabled students and has almost one hundred per cent access. Currently, three physically disabled students attend the school and a number of students with low incident high level needs. The Learning Support Department works closely with the Physiotherapy Team and the Vision and Hearing Impaired Services to provide very good support and ensure curriculum access to students who attend the school.
64. Provision for students with SEN is very good overall. Achievement by students with SEN is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Provision for statemented students, especially those with physical disabilities, vision, or hearing impairment, is very good. Provision for students at School Action Plus level is also very good and good for those at School Action level of the SEN Code of Practice. There are very good identification, assessment and recording procedures, ensuring a smooth transfer to the secondary school for Year 6 pupils. The Head of Year 7 maintains very good communications with feeder schools, ensuring the early identification of children who have special educational needs, including the gifted and talented. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) maintains satisfactory communication with a number of outside agencies, particularly physiotherapy and staff from the Hearing Impaired Service. Annual reviews of statemented students are thorough, IEPs are detailed and targets achievable. The Learning Support Department has six teaching assistants who provide very good individual support for statemented students in class and very good whole class support. Teaching assistants maintain weekly records of the progress of statemented students and those at School Action Plus level. Small-group teaching of basic literacy and 'coursework catch-up' is a strength of the department, enabling some students to make considerable learning gains. Identified students are withdrawn from class for up to one and a half hours a fortnight for intensive basic literacy intervention.
65. The department has built up good relationships with parents, but this area of the department's work needs to be strengthened in order to maximise the support available from parents in this crucial area of work. Stronger links need to be developed between the pastoral system and the SEN department, particularly in the identification and assessment of students with behaviour difficulties, to establish if the behaviour is linked to an underlying learning difficulty so that appropriate intervention may be planned. There has been too little good quality SEN training for all staff, especially in the area of behaviour management, to ensure that all teachers have the skills to meet the diverse range of needs within classrooms.
66. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the work of the SEN department to measure the impact of SEN intervention to ensure that resources are targeted effectively.

### **Standards and achievement**

67. Throughout the school, students with SEN are achieving as well as their peers. They respond to a wide range of material and many are developing into independent learners. They achieve across the full range of curriculum subjects and are fully involved in the life of the school.
68. By the end of Year 9, almost all statemented students and those at School Action Plus level of the SEN Code of Practice have progressed at least one National Curriculum level in all core subjects. This indicates good progress across the key stage. All students have achieved in line with individual expectations. Slightly more girls than boys progress two levels by the end of Year 9.
69. In Years 10 and 11, statemented students and students at School Action Plus level make very good progress bringing their achievement into line with their peers.
70. Some SEN students continue their education in the local college or as part of the 'Compact 2000' key skills course. A number of these students enrol and successfully complete their college course.

### **Teaching and learning**

71. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In lessons where teachers are aware of SEN issues and pay particular attention to the needs of all, students' achievement is very good. Where teaching is good, or very good, learning objectives are clear and planning reflects a range of approaches to meet individual need. In these lessons teaching assistants are enabled to maximise their effect and support the development of students' skills in thinking, reading and writing, and speaking and listening. Where learning is satisfactory, it is because teachers have not accounted for the range of needs in their planning and, consequently, fail to help all children learn through questions, discussion and paired working, creating opportunities for SEN students to learn from their peers. In many lessons, work was well matched to students' needs and this was linked to individual education plan strategies, enabling students to progress more rapidly. Where there is inconsistent use of individual education plan strategies and awareness of students' learning difficulties, there is uneven progress.
72. In very good lessons, there are very good relationships between staff and students. Students' views are valued and all are encouraged to contribute. Teachers have high expectations of students in terms of their behaviour and their work. In these lessons, students acquire new knowledge, develop their ideas and increase their understanding. In most lessons, teacher planning was very good, using different teaching methods and time productively.

### **Leadership and management**

73. The current SENCO has only been in the post for half a term and leadership and management are at least satisfactory. The SENCO is very clear about the direction she wishes the department to take, and she has the knowledge to build on the good practice that already exists. The SEN governor actively supports the department. The system for the identification and assessment of SEN students is robust. Teaching assistants are well deployed and a strong nurturing ethos has been created. Very good advice, in the form of 'The Blue Book', is provided to teaching staff which outlines characteristics of particular learning difficulties and possible teaching strategies. SEN reviews are well organised and thorough and involve parents and students. There are good recording and reporting systems and good strategies outlined on IEPs, which further need to be consistently implemented at departmental level if they are to impact on student progress.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is well led and managed.
- ICT makes a good contribution to learning.
- Procedures for curriculum target setting at Key Stage 3 do not ensure that students know what they need to do to improve.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.

#### Commentary

74. In 2004, the Year 9 national test results in English for students achieving Level 5+ were higher than in 2003. They were above the national average. In both 2003 and 2004, girls performed better than boys. In 2004, GCSE results at grades A\*-C for English were higher than in 2003. They were above the national average. In both 2003 and 2004, girls performed better than boys, but in 2004 the difference was much higher than seen nationally. In 2004, GCSE results at grades A\*-C for English literature were lower than in 2003. They were well above the national average.
75. Current standards are good in Years 9 and 11 and achievement is also good. In Year 9, students develop their speaking and listening skills with a wide range of pair and group discussion activities. For example, in one class students took part in group 'Pupil Theatre' presentations based on a scene from 'Macbeth'. Their reading is supported by purposeful tasks, which enable students to understand how language is used by various authors. The writing of higher-attaining students is well structured, particularly in relation to written responses to reading. Lower-attaining students, however, often produce work that is brief, with poor handwriting and punctuation. In Years 7 to 9, procedures for curriculum target setting are not consistently applied and do not sufficiently help students to understand what they need to do to improve. This affects the standards achieved by boys to a greater extent than girls, and reduces progress boys are able to make in Years 10 and 11. The current single-sex grouping in Year 10 has been well received by boys as well as girls, and students in both groups believe it is helping them to achieve higher standards. In Year 11, speaking and listening skills show a good awareness of audience and purpose. Coursework responses, to texts read, show that students can explain how the choice of language affects meaning. They are also able to reflect on the writer's presentation of ideas and issues. Higher-attaining students in Year 11 often write with a mature and fluent style. Lower-attaining students have difficulties with sentence structure, punctuation and spelling.

76. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons seen were at least satisfactory and many were good or better. Lessons are generally well planned, with clear learning objectives. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and match their teaching well to the learning needs of students. Relationships are good and students collaborate and support each other well. Teachers use questions well, enabling students to clarify and justify their thinking. The final part of lessons is not always used sufficiently to support students' understanding of key points from the lesson. Marking is thorough and is generally well focused and developmental. The use of ICT is a particular strength because students are able to experience and make a wide range of texts, including ICT-based information texts and moving image texts. For example, one Year 8 class had extended their understanding of the poem 'The Lady of Shalott' by producing a screen-based version combining illustrations, music and the written text.
77. The leadership and the management of the department are both very good. The head of department has a thorough and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the department. Improvement plans have been developed to address the needs of teachers and students. The head of department sets a very good example of effective teaching. Team members support each other well and contribute to professional development within the team.
78. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The last inspection report noted that a higher proportion of boys than girls were slower readers. This is still true. The department's improvement plans include the need for a greater focus on guided and independent reading.

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

79. The development of skills in literacy across other subjects is satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly in relation to writing. For example, in science and business education there is a strong focus on vocabulary. In history, students' writing is well supported through drafting. Modern foreign languages and ICT promote the appropriate and accurate use of language. There is less evidence of successful reading for different purposes, and library provision does not meet the needs of all subjects.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good or better teaching helps students achieve high standards in German.
- Teachers offer students excellent role models.
- The quality of departmental planning is at present too variable; it is very good in German but unsatisfactory in French.
- Boys contribute as positively as girls to most lessons.
- Students do not receive enough detailed advice on what they should do to improve.
- Strong commitment to improvement shown by the new departmental team is beginning to have an impact on below-average standards in French.
- The curricular arrangements in Years 7 to 9 are detrimental to the quality of students' learning.

### **Commentary**

80. Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were in line with expected national norms overall, but standards were much better in German than in French, and more girls than boys achieved higher levels.
81. A much smaller proportion of students was entered for GCSE examination in a modern foreign language than was the case nationally in 2004. Students taking German achieved standards well above average, but the standards of those taking French were well below average. Fewer than one third of boys in this year group had followed a GCSE course in either language; standards obtained generally fell short of girls' standards.
82. A very small number of the school's students pursue their language studies to AS or A level in the sixth form, but their record of attainment is good.
83. Current Year 9 students are progressing very well in German and standards are good, but in French, standards are still below average. In German, oral and listening skills are particularly strong and students produce written work that demonstrates secure understanding of grammatical concepts such as past and future tenses and word order. The ability shown by a higher achieving group to analyse grammatical structures in an unseen text was impressive.
84. French students of the same year-group do not display the same degree of linguistic confidence; most have difficulty constructing sentences beyond simple stages of language learning and frequently make basic errors of gender or verb forms. In contrast to German students, who can confidently and accurately engage in dialogue with the teacher or their peers, French students are often hesitant and rely on their teacher to complete whole sentences. Despite the excellent example of their teacher, their pronunciation is also poor.
85. The proportion of students taking a modern foreign language course in Year 11 remains low and teaching groups consist of generally more highly attaining students. At present they are making good progress in German and satisfactory progress in French. Most German students have developed reasonable fluency, make relatively few errors in speech or writing and are demonstrating a good range of vocabulary in their work. They have developed personal responses to topics relating to aspects of their daily lives and are able to express opinions about issues such as healthy living.
86. In French, Year 11 students show greater progress in their recent work than in their previous Year 10 work. In written assignments, they have clearly benefited from writing frames provided by their teacher to extend and enrich their responses. Many students now have an adequate record of personal work of a standard approaching the higher GCSE grades. This work reveals improved levels of accuracy and a developing capacity to write at greater length, to incorporate more complex structures and to make better use of connectives. In class, students show greater confidence in responding to written text than to the spoken word.
87. In all years, except for Year 7, it is evident that students' previous learning experiences in French have been confused, disjointed and incomplete, with the inevitable consequence that their store of knowledge and confidence in the subject has been badly affected and standards are below expectation. Progress has been more marked since September 2004, since the appointment of a fully qualified and experienced teacher.

88. Generally, teaching is good. This is despite the unacceptably large size of some classes and the limited time allocated to modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, which is considerably below levels found nationally.
89. Excellent planning in German ensures good progression in learning, but longer-term planning in French lacks coherence and does not satisfactorily develop student capability. Individual lesson plans, in both languages, state clear objectives that are shared with students. Well-developed activities, such as pair-work, question-and-answer sessions between students, recorded listening comprehension exercises and, above all, the authentic example of native speakers of the language allow students to practise their speaking and listening skills, and to further their understanding of the grammatical structure of the language. Homework tasks extend the work of the classroom and, from Year 9 onward, help students develop a personal written style, particularly in German. The least developed skill is reading, a casualty of the very restricted time available for teaching.
90. Two features of the teaching are notable for their effect on student motivation and achievement in lessons. Teachers use, to advantage, their good personal relationships with students to set a positive tone, which successfully encourages individuals, including boys, actively to participate – well over two-thirds of students in most classes. They also set clear expectations of behaviour, which ensure that lessons are securely focused on learning, without major disruption. In French this is less easily obtained, as students were not subject to consistent patterns of learning and classroom routine until the current academic year.
91. A brisk pace is set in lessons, learning objectives are met, on the whole, and students are clear about what they have achieved during the lesson. Time is well used; for example, teachers set up a paired starter activity during registration, they always give an indication of time allowed for each individual or pair task, they provide a sound balance of differing activities which appeal to different styles of learning and they recapitulate points of the lesson with selected students as they leave.
92. Although students' work receives very positive and careful marking, in keeping with current school policy, written assessment feedback does not regularly indicate (in terms of linguistic objectives) what students should do to move to the next stage of their learning. This is in contrast to verbal feedback in lessons, which is invariably focused on specific areas to improve.
93. Reflection on the great disparity between the number of boys and girls continuing with language study in Years 10 and 11 is prompting the department to introduce strategies likely to appeal to boys. For example, language games are features of lessons, merits are earned for appropriate achievement, boys have more opportunities to take the lead in class activity and students are encouraged to use ICT for some homework tasks. During the inspection, boys were seen to be responding well to teacher strategies; they were actively involved in lessons, on a par with the girls, and were frequently at the forefront of enquiry, for instance during a Year 10 German lesson where points of grammar were under discussion.
94. Most students make good progress in lessons because they are attentive, remain focused on their work during the lesson and co-operate very well in pairs or small groups. This was particularly productive in a Year 11 German class where pairs helped correct each other's work and both accuracy and style were improved as a

result. Students of German enjoy challenging tasks, even in the early stages of language learning; they feel confident enough to experiment and to articulate their ideas to the whole class. In these classes, lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs participate readily in class oral activities; elsewhere their needs, are not always met, and they feel unsure about their learning, especially where class sizes are large.

95. Recent changes to the departmental leadership are already providing a clearer strategy for development than existed previously, and the newly constituted team is beginning to address areas of its work where present standards are too low, namely in French. Both leadership and management are at present satisfactory, but have the capacity to bring about rapid improvements in the department. Action is also required to improve monitoring processes in the department and to create opportunities for good practice to be shared more systematically.
96. Since the previous inspection by HMI in 2003, the department has made satisfactory progress overall.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve very good results in Year 9 compared with national standards.
- The team of enthusiastic, specialist teachers is committed to developing students' mathematical skills and raising attainment.
- Good teaching and high expectations challenge students to make progress.
- Most students have a positive attitude to learning and want to achieve.
- Too few boys attain the highest available grades at GCSE.
- A minority of students lack the motivation and commitment to learning.
- Assessment is not used effectively enough to monitor student progress.

### **Commentary**

97. In 2004, students' results in national tests, taken in Year 9, were well above the national average. Results were also well above when compared with similar schools and prior attainment. GCSE results were also above the national average; however, there was a significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Girls' attainment was well above national averages, while boys were below with no A\* and A grades achieved. Standards seen, in lesson observations and students' work, show that most students in Years 7 to 9 make very good progress, whilst students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress. Lower-attaining students in Year 9 can draw reflections of three-dimensional shapes, while in Year 11 they can solve problems using ratio. More able students make very good progress and are challenged by topics at a higher level. Students in Year 9 competently complete trigonometry GCSE questions. Students with special educational needs are well supported, and they make good progress because teachers have high aspirations and expect them to achieve.
98. The quality of teaching is good and, in a quarter of the lessons seen, was very good. Teachers have high expectations of students, which contributes to their good achievement. There is very good lesson planning, particularly in the development of exemplar material to enhance students' learning. In most lessons, teachers

demonstrate very good subject knowledge and explain clearly the key concepts. There is a good balance between consolidating prior knowledge and developing new skills. Lessons are well structured to develop learning, starting with a brisk numeric starter and followed by well-matched progressive activities. Good questioning skills challenge students to reflect on what they know to improve understanding. Students respond well to opportunities to work together. They demonstrate confidence in their mathematical skills by readily coming to the board and sharing their methodology.

99. Occasionally, in lessons, effective behaviour management is not sustained and this interferes with the lesson progression and limits learning. A minority of students lack the commitment to learning; they demonstrate poor attitudes and their learning deteriorates. In some lessons, teachers concentrate on supporting individual students and do not regularly check that the rest are on task. Consequently, those students who require refocusing are not spotted early enough. Occasionally, lessons end abruptly and the plenary is not capitalised on to consolidate learning. Teachers regularly make very effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their teaching. This enables them to quickly access exemplar material to reinforce understanding and maintain pace. However, very few opportunities exist for students to use information and communication technology (ICT) to consolidate learning.
100. The effective head of department has a clear vision for improvement and provides strong leadership to a specialist team, which works hard to improve standards. Since her arrival, the department has reviewed all aspects of provision. The head of department regularly monitors lessons and students' work. Regular team meetings review standards and share good practice. The departmental development plan identifies strategies for improving provision and raising standards. Schemes of work for all year groups have been revised, with modules designed to match students' needs. Effective links have been made with feeder primary schools, and attainment data is used to place students in sets in Year 7. Work is regularly marked, and students are given clear information on how to improve their work.
101. Current procedures for assessing students' performance, as they progress through the school, need to be extended. Students are set attainment targets for the end of Years 9 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, students are encouraged to assess their own progress. They are given the topic objectives for the year and they evaluate their own proficiency. The student responses in the national tests in Year 9 are analysed and findings used to modify the Year 10 scheme of work.
102. Provision in the sixth form is very good. Teachers use their strong specialist knowledge to plan and deliver effective lessons, This, combined with very good attitudes to learning by students, means that they make very good progress.
103. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Results in the Year 9 national tests have improved considerably, with big improvements in 2004. Results at GCSE have improved, and are expected to rise further with the implementation of new schemes of work. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, particularly for students in Year 7 to 9.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

104. The teaching of mathematics, as a basic skill within other subjects, is satisfactory. There has been some whole-school training on the teaching and learning of mathematics and a policy developed. A mathematical timeline was produced for other

subjects to link into their schemes of work. Several innovative whole-school initiatives were undertaken, including mathematical 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire'. Currently, cross-curricular mathematics is not a school priority; there is no overall co-ordination, and practice across subjects is variable. In modern foreign languages, mathematical skills are reinforced through the calculation of ages, prices and distances, and in science through data analysis of experiment results.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above-average standards at the end of Year 9 and GCSE, but boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Teaching is good.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well through a variety of interesting and appropriately challenging class and homework activities.
- Students' investigative skills in handling apparatus, observing, measuring, recording and analysing data are developed very effectively.
- Teachers, technicians and other learning support staff work very effectively together to promote all students' learning.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT by students.

### Commentary

105. Students enter the school with broadly average attainment in science at the end of Year 7. In 2003, students' overall attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 was well above the national average by the equivalent of 2.4 terms' progress, and significantly, more students achieved the highest National Curriculum Levels of 6 and 7 compared with the national expectation. Unconfirmed results for 2004 indicate that 79 per cent of students attained Level 5 or above, which is well above the national average. Over recent years, the performance of students in the national tests at the end of Year 9 has improved consistently at a rate that is well above the national average. Girls overall perform better than boys. In 2003, girls' average attainment in national tests was better than boys' by the equivalent of three and a half terms' progress. The girls' lead over boys' attainment increased steadily between 2000 and 2003 and more than doubled over the period. Overall, achievement is good.
106. In Years 10 and 11, all students study double award science GCSE. In 2004, students' attainment was well above national averages, particularly at the highest grades. 73.5 per cent of students attained a GCSE grade of A\*-C compared with the national average of 52.2 per cent, and 100 per cent of students achieved A\*-G. Students performed significantly better in their science GCSE than they did, on average, in their other GCSE subject examinations, by just over a quarter of a GCSE grade. However, whilst 65.2 per cent of the boys attained A\*-C, a significantly greater proportion, 79.1 per cent, of girls attained these grades. Moreover, a greater proportion of girls attained the highest A\* and A grades, respectively, whereas very few boys attained these grades. These results indicate that all students continue to make good progress and achieve well in Years 10 and 11, but girls, especially the higher-attaining, make better progress than boys.
107. Standards observed in lessons overall are above the national expectation, because in every lesson students engage with challenging activities which promote the development of their higher order thinking skills. High-attaining Year 11 students applied their knowledge of respiration and photosynthesis to accurately explain the rates at which plants take in and give out, oxygen and carbon dioxide under different light conditions. Year 9 students worked in teams to effectively gather and sort information from a variety of sources to make succinct

presentations of the reasons for global warming. They clearly distinguished between causes and effects and correctly indicated uncertainty in predictions because of difficulties in interpreting data from different research sources.

108. Students in all groups, including those with special educational needs, are provided with carefully matched support to ensure that they succeed at challenging tasks and so all students make good progress. Students support each other's learning effectively during practical activities because they have been trained well by teachers to work co-operatively and safely. This boosts the development of their investigative skills in handling apparatus, observing and measuring. Students' ability to express their knowledge and understanding in written work is developed well because teachers provide the support necessary to ensure that most students complete the planning, interpreting, concluding and evaluating sections of their reports of science practical activities to a high standard. However, some students, and particularly lower attaining boys, do not respond effectively to the advice teachers write in their exercise books and teachers do not monitor effectively to ensure that they do. Consequently, these students make less rapid progress.
109. All students are encouraged to ask questions and to express their views fully and clearly in class discussions. Whilst these discussions deepen all students' understanding of science concepts, more girls than boys initiate and involve themselves in discussions, and because these students' specific learning needs are addressed, more girls than boys benefit from these discussions. Students' skills in expressing their science understanding in writing are well practised and developed through homework and lesson activities and so they are well prepared for answering questions in examinations. This contributes to the high attainment of students.
110. Teaching is good. It is often very good. All lessons are well prepared and planning benefits from well designed and comprehensive schemes of work, which have been compiled by teachers who have excellent command of their subjects. Teachers communicate learning objectives and instructions clearly to students and this ensures that they tackle activities with confidence and can proceed, individually and in groups, independently of the teacher. The level of challenge in tasks and questions is well matched to the learning needs of different groups and so all students achieve well. However, opportunities are missed to inspire, engage and motivate students through teaching science in contexts which allow students to exercise moral judgement and learn science from the perspective of different cultures. Lap top computers are used well by all teachers to produce imaginative and well-designed learning resources that are well matched to the learning needs of students. However, students have insufficient opportunities to advance their science learning through using ICT themselves.
111. Teaching in all lessons is characterised by brisk pace and interesting and varied activities which ensure that students maintain their concentration. The department has designed learning resources which practise and effectively develop students' skills in expressing their science understanding clearly in writing.
112. The effective implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Science Strategy is evident in all lessons. Well-chosen learning objectives are communicated clearly to students and so they effectively guide learning and help students to persevere with challenging activities. Starter activities quickly settle students and prompt them to recall knowledge relevant to the topic of the lesson. Plenary activities ensure that students consolidate and deepen their understanding by helping them to reflect on and apply their newly acquired knowledge during and at the end of lessons.
113. All teachers mark books in accordance with the department policy and this ensures that students receive written guidance to help them address their specific weaknesses. However, teachers do not always ensure that students act on this advice and so many students, particularly boys, do not benefit fully from it.

114. Technician support is very good and ensures that teacher demonstrations and practical activities make efficient use of time. Learning support staff boost the achievement of those students that they support directly and help ensure that the laboratory environment is conducive to all students' learning.
115. The department is well led and managed. Staff are supportive of each other's practice and this provides a robustness to the high standards of teaching. The department's development plan has identified appropriate areas for improvement. Monitoring of students' test data effectively tracks individuals' progress and helps the department to target support appropriately. However, the factors promoting the better progress of girls compared with boys have not been investigated sufficiently to provide an effective plan of action to further improve the overall progress of boys.
116. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with improved standards and achievement in response to improved teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory** and improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' achievement in the GCSE course is good and standards are improving in Years 7 to 9 because of the structured curriculum linked effectively to assessment.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The knowledge and capability of students doing compulsory ICT in Years 10 and 11 are below expectation because of limited opportunities in previous years and lack of pace and challenge in some lessons.
- Poor attitudes and behaviour by a minority of students, particularly boys, hinder the achievement and progress of students in some lessons.

### **Commentary**

117. In 2004, teacher assessments indicate standards at the end of Year 9 broadly in line with expectations. Standards seen in lessons reflect this, with examples of above-average standards in Years 7 and 8. Students enter the school with variable skills and knowledge in ICT. A well-structured programme provides opportunities for students to develop a range of skills in collecting, combining and presenting information, enabling students to make good progress in Years 7 to 9. They consolidate skills effectively and extend and develop their knowledge of modelling techniques using spreadsheets so that, by Year 9, they are able to apply a range of ICT skills, knowledge and understanding effectively in a variety of situations. Students with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
118. Standards seen, in the newly introduced GCSE course, are in line with national averages. Achievement is good, with students' making competent and confident use of ICT to communicate information in a variety of ways for different audiences. They are able to sort and classify information effectively and to use the Internet well to research and download appropriate information. Depth of knowledge, understanding and the use of more advanced procedures such as validation, a method to check data entered is correct, are developing well. Standards and achievement for students not taking GCSE are below expectation. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop and apply skills and knowledge in line with their capability to enable them to effectively use ICT independently. Standards in Years 10 and 11 have been affected

by the limited ICT opportunities and development in previous years. The achievement of students with special educational needs is similar to their peers.

119. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with examples of good teaching. Good subject knowledge is shared effectively, helping students to consolidate and improve their work. Lessons are well planned, with good opportunities for the majority of students to develop new skills and to apply them independently to tasks. However, some activities are not sufficiently challenging to enable higher-attaining students to make maximum progress. Where teaching and learning are good, students are clear about their current performance and what they need to do to improve. Teachers generally have good relationships and manage students well but the behaviour and attitude of a minority of student are unsatisfactory and hinders the progress and achievement of students in some lessons. The cramped and poorly ventilated rooms create teaching and learning difficulties for teachers and students.
120. Leadership and management are good. The priorities identified and strategies implemented to improve the provision for ICT, particularly in Years 7 to 9, have been effective, resulting in improving standards. The head of department has a clear view of the direction and developments needed to further raise standards in the compulsory lessons, and also to improve application and capability across the curriculum. Procedures for assessing students' work and tracking progress are making a positive contribution to raising standards. There has been good improvement over the last few years, although, the subject was not identified in the last inspection report.

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

121. The majority of teachers use the available ICT resources well in their teaching to motivate and engage students in their learning. The school has made positive efforts to develop the use of ICT in subjects, with provision planned into schemes of work and lessons. However, the use of ICT by students to develop their learning and capability is variable. There are very good opportunities in English, where it is well integrated into lessons and is a natural feature of teaching and learning. In design and technology, business studies and music, there are good opportunities for students to develop and apply a range of skills in different contexts to extend their ICT capability. There was no evidence of planned opportunities for the use of ICT in lessons or work seen in religious education or mathematics. The range of resources to support the development of ICT across the curriculum is barely adequate. Many of the computers need upgrading. Currently, there is no overview of what departments are delivering to support the coherent development of ICT application and capability as a support for teaching and learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good across all the years taught.
- Good teaching.
- Learning and study skills are developed from Year 7 to Year 11.

- Independence of students is helping them to pursue their own lines of enquiry.
- There is insufficient provision of ICT in classrooms.

## Commentary

122. The most recent results, at the end of Year 9, were in line with or above the national average. Many students enter Year 7 with average scores. This represents very good progress.
123. GCSE results, in 2004, for students gaining A\*-C were well above the national average. The proportion gaining grades A\*-G were in line with the national average. Over time, all results have been above or in line with the national average. Girls do slightly better than boys. There is value added in the results. Predicted grades for current Year 11 students indicate that an increase of grades A\*-C should occur. Standards at all levels are rising significantly. Standards seen during the inspection are average or above for both boys and girls. Students with special educational needs and gifted and talented students both do well in history. Achievement and progress are good over time.
124. The work of students, at the end of Years 9, shows that many girls and boys reach above- average standards. Progress is good over time and this is in part due to the positive attitudes of most students to their work. This was illustrated by an entertaining Year 7 class, who described in detail what it would be like to attack or defend a castle. Higher-attaining students reach above-average standards in both their oral and written work. Although some students work well independently, others are over-reliant on their teachers to provide them with information.
125. The work of students in Year 11 shows a significant number reaching above-average standards. From Year 7, most students use history vocabulary with increasing confidence. Too few students make enough use of ICT while in school. A few lower-attaining boys in Years 7, 8 and 9 do not work fast enough or show sufficient pride in their written work. A Year 10 lesson on crime and punishment, however, stimulated fresh explanations from girls and a few boys. Their work on the penal reformer, John Howard, was accurate. This lesson contributed to students' learning about being a citizen. The work from a small number of students was not penetrating or organised.
126. In Year 11, many students demonstrate steady progression in knowledge and skills. They develop their understanding of how the past is investigated. A lesson discovering the westward movement in America was aided by a suitable selection of 'mood' music. Teacher and students joined in the songs to raise empathy. They arrive at good judgements by learning to analyse evidence from many sources. The higher-attaining students demonstrate good levels of recall, although a few struggle to express what they know to their best advantage. Students now progressively show awareness that there are several interpretations of past issues and events. They are prepared well by teachers to undertake research and write up their findings.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some very good teaching was observed. Teaching materials are well prepared. Teachers are well qualified subject specialists who use their expertise to interest and motivate students. Students learn effectively because lessons are planned effectively and time is well used. Sessions are taught at a brisk pace. Students are active participants in the learning process. All students receive good curriculum guidance.

128. The history department is well led. Both leadership and management are very good and the work is characterised by teamwork. History teaching is monitored by the head of department and outcomes shared. Teaching, planning lessons, marking and assessment are checked and reported upon. Over the last couple of years improvement has been very good (history was not reported on in the last inspection).

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The positive learning environment created in most department classrooms.
- Very good relationships with most students.
- Good coursework/field studies programme across the school.
- Teaching and learning strategies do not always meet the needs of individuals or groups of students.
- Assessment and monitoring systems are not used consistently to improve the performance of students, especially in Years 7 to 9.

### **Commentary**

129. Standards are generally good, with attainment levels above average at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessment results in 2004 indicate that 92 per cent of students attain Level 5 and above; however, boys lag behind with 95 per cent compared with 100 per cent girls. At higher levels, the girls are further ahead (e.g. Level 6+: Girls – 79 per cent; Boys – 57 per cent). In GCSE, the subject is popular, with standards above average in recent years: GCSE results in 2004 produced well above national average A\*-C grades (85.3 per cent) with nearly 25 per cent with A\*/A grades; yet boys continue to underachieve at this level.

130. Teaching and learning are good across Years 7 to 11, with examples of very good practice. Teaching is a major strength of the department, generally creating a good learning environment. Teacher knowledge and delivery style is very positive, exercised with a strong student-friendly rapport, resulting in good responses from most students. Students exhibit good attitudes towards their work, demonstrate good levels of understanding, and a capacity to apply knowledge and skills to case studies, such as the impact of hurricanes on human activities, and the inequality of basic life resources in Brazil. This ensures good overall achievement. Very good practices were observed in Years 10 and 11 lessons addressing water transfer problems in the USA and issues relating to development indicators in contrasting world regions. However, there are small pockets of disaffected boys in Years 8 and 9 which depress the quality of the learning environment at times.

131. Strong features of the department include its well structured planning and policy documents. Marking schemes positively support the learning processes, but the assessment data collected needs to be used more effectively to enhance student performance, especially in Years 7 to 9. Teaching and learning strategies at this key stage need to be more transparent in addressing the needs of all levels of ability. However, public examination results are well analysed by the department to enable staff to identify future strategic needs. Students generally enjoy the subject, with all students having access to ICT facilities and good fieldwork opportunities. Aspects of

citizenship pervade most areas of geography teaching, with numeracy and literacy strategies inherent in most lessons.

132. Department leadership is good through a strong team ethos, with good collaborative planning and the sharing of good practice. A positive learning environment is created by constructive class management techniques, together with good relationships forged with most students. Accommodation is good, with the department housed in adjacent rooms. All rooms are light and airy, with good displays of both student work and other professionally produced materials, plus press cuttings of world issues and events. Resources are just sufficient to meet current needs. However, recent adjustments to capitation levels will impact on the department's quest to ensure quality provision for all students. Although not identified in the last inspection, there has been good improvement over the last few years.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school does not adequately deliver the locally agreed syllabus for religious education for students in Years 7 to 9 and those not following the GCSE course in Year 11.
- The school does not meet its statutory requirement in the delivery of religious education in the sixth form.
- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- The use of non-specialist teachers to deliver religious education is contributing significantly to the inadequate delivery of the subject.
- The occasional very good teaching is inspirational.

### **Commentary**

133. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Focusing particularly on Christianity, students gain an understanding of such issues as whether there is a God, relationships, the problem of suffering, right and wrong, and death. By the end of Year 9, they are able to outline Christian viewpoints on these issues and give a personal response to them. There is some study of Islam, for instance, looking at the life of Muhammad. Students in Year 9 begin their study for the GCSE short course in religious studies, and they cover topics such as marriage and the family, and sexuality. Across Years 7 to 9, most students are making satisfactory progress, although students with special needs, and the more able students, are not making adequate progress because they are not given adequate support or opportunities. Some boys are not making satisfactory progress because they are insufficiently motivated by the syllabus and the teaching.
134. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below national expectations. The majority of students are entered for the short course in religious studies and the results fall significantly below the national average. A small number of students are entered for the full GCSE course, and their results are well below the national average. In both courses, the performance of boys falls significantly below the performance of girls and students are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly true for students taught by non-specialists and in non-exam classes, where the teachers lack the subject knowledge to deliver lively and engaging work firmly rooted

in religious education. By the end of Year 11, students are able to describe Christian viewpoints on a range of moral and social issues such as marriage and the family, life and death, and social harmony. They are also able to give a personal reflection on ethical viewpoints. However, there is insufficient progress in their learning from the end of Year 9, and the students have no knowledge or understanding of faiths other than Christianity.

135. The quality of teaching and learning across Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. The majority of lessons are characterised by good pace, good use of time, a variety of activities, good classroom management and good behaviour management. The weaknesses of these lessons are that students do not show an immediate respect for the subject and the teachers have to work very hard to keep the students motivated and on task. Also, there is insufficient attention given to the religious content of the lesson, particularly the five key concepts, the subject-specific skills, and the requirement to study two other religions as well as Christianity, as described in the locally agreed syllabus. There is an over-emphasis on moral and social issues, and not enough attention given to belief, deity, worship and authority. There is insufficient attention given to developing a thorough understanding of religious concepts as a basis for personal reflection and evaluation.
136. A small number of unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Unsatisfactory teaching in one case was the result of inadequate subject knowledge by a non-specialist teacher. The teacher's lack of confidence in the subject resulted in poor planning, lack of pace, an inability to engage the majority of students, and disruptive behaviour, particularly from some boys. Another unsatisfactory lesson was the result of previous school policy, which allowed a group of disaffected students in Year 11 to opt out of following the examination course, as well as the lack of subject specialism on the part of the teacher.
137. The occasional very good teaching is characterised by excellent planning to meet the needs of the students. The students are energised, highly motivated and engaged in independent learning. Their prior subject knowledge is good and they are able to draw on this knowledge very effectively in their discussion. Their learning is firmly rooted in religious concepts and skills. The occasional good lesson shows evidence of good planning, good pace, a good range of activities with attention to learning styles, good subject content and the teaching keeps the students on task.
138. The marking of students' work lacks a focus on subject-specific objectives and there is little feedback in terms of subject knowledge, understanding and skills. This is particularly true for students in Years 7 to 9, although there is also insufficient feedback in Years 10 and 11 in terms of levels of attainment.
139. There is little evidence of work being differentiated to suit the needs of either the more able students or those with special needs. Differentiated materials were seen to be used only once with a lower ability set in Year 9.
140. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. This is entirely due to the fact that there is currently no specialist head of department, and the subject is being overseen by the head of faculty. For students in Years 7 to 9, there is inadequate coverage of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The majority of the work covered is based on Christianity, and although there is some work done on Islam, this is not sufficient to meet the statutory requirements. From September 2004 the students in Year 9 have embarked on the GCSE programme and

as this is entirely based on Christianity, this does not meet the statutory requirements for the subject. There is insufficient attention given to the key concepts and skills as identified in the syllabus. For students in Years 10 and 11, the syllabus focuses entirely on Christianity and although a small number of students on the full GCSE course study some aspects of Islam, the school is not meeting its statutory requirements for all the students. The unsatisfactory status of the subject, and of the leadership and management of the subject, is fully recognised by the school and by the head of faculty. The head of faculty is working extremely hard to develop the subject further. He has done lesson observations and joint planning with members of the department. However, he does not have the time or the necessary personal specialism in the subject to do this job effectively. The school needs to appoint a specialist head of religious education with urgency.

141. The resources in the subject are satisfactory for the current provision, but are not adequate for the school to deliver the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
142. The subject does not provide effective opportunities for spiritual or cultural development, including multicultural awareness. This is the direct result of the school not being compliant with the locally agreed syllabus. There are currently no links with faith communities.
143. Improvement in the leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 9 are above, and by Year 11 are well above, the national averages, particularly in resistant materials and graphics.
- Achievement is very good overall.
- GCSE results are consistently higher than the students attain in other subjects, with boys doing better than girls.
- Teaching and learning are good; planning is detailed and focused on improvement.
- The poor behaviour of some small groups of boys limits their learning and can disrupt that of others.
- Assessment is very good, especially on examination courses.
- Leadership and management are very good.

#### **Commentary**

144. Standards were well above the national averages by the end of Year 11 in GCSE in 2004. Students' results are generally higher in design and technology than in the other examinations they take, and the proportion gaining the higher grades is well above the national average.

Achievement is very good in Years 10 and 11, especially in resistant materials and graphics. Standards on entry in Year 7 are in line with the national average, but most students have had a limited experience of design and technology. By the end of Year 9, the standards, indicated by teacher assessments, were above the national average in 2004. Students in Years 7 to 9 have made good progress and have achieved well. The standards were not reported on in the last inspection. Boys are significantly out-performing girls overall. Students needing extra support receive work which enables them to succeed; as a result, all achieve well, and no particular group under-performs. Inspection findings mirror test and examination results for the current Year 9 and Year 11 students.

145. Teaching and learning are good overall. Each teacher works in their specialist area, but there is no specialist food technology teacher. Teaching in food technology is being provided by a range of teachers filling in. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9. In the most effective lessons, the teachers' preparation and classroom management are very good. Teachers use skilful, well-targeted question-and-answer sessions, keeping the pace brisk with no time wasted. Students' work is very closely controlled, with clear direction as to what is expected. There is a focus on skills and introducing students to the design process, as they move around the areas of design and technology, bringing in and assessing ICT where appropriate. When the targets for the lesson are less specific, and students are not given short, focused tasks to complete, they can lose concentration and some small groups of boys can be disruptive. The structure, recommended by the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, is used in all classes, with effective introductions highlighting the objectives for each lesson, and plenary sessions that review the progress towards them. Students usually respond enthusiastically, co-operate well and work productively. Teacher assessment is very thorough, each teacher identifying the level that a student is working at in each area. This is filed centrally and builds up to an accurate picture of how well students are progressing and achieving. The assessments are backed up with detailed marking and constructive comments.
146. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11. The examination courses are well organised and teaching is closely focused on the assessment objectives and, at the moment, completing the coursework. Guidance is given on targets and deadlines, and the students are aware of what needs to be done and by when. Students are informed regularly of their progress through good assessment procedures, including very good marking and one-to-one discussions. Overall, students who follow the teachers' guidance achieve very well. Those students who work independently and do extra research achieve even better, introducing elements of personal direction and ownership of the projects. ICT is used to research, print and illustrate the projects, but there is little development of ideas using ICT.
147. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department is well organised; he has created a good team who work together to develop the subject and overcome the staffing problems. These problems have affected results in some areas, but effective strategies have been put in place to overcome them. The analysis of results is very thorough and is used effectively to identify successes and areas for improvement. Links with other schools have been developed, such as the very effective use of an Advanced Skills Teacher in GCSE classes. The technician is deployed well to support learning. The department was not reported on in the last inspection.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are well above national averages and those of similar schools at both 14 and 16. Pupils achieve very well, especially the girls.
- Teaching is very good, with well planned and delivered lessons that result in very good learning by all groups of students.
- The accommodation is spacious, but in poor condition.
- Leadership and management are very good; the head of department is evaluating the subject well and planning appropriately to develop it in the future.
- The poor behaviour of groups of boys in some lessons limits their learning and can disrupt others' work.

## Commentary

148. The standards of achievement in art and design are very good when compared to national averages, and to the standards in similar schools. The results of the assessments by teachers for Year 9 students in 2004 were well above the national average. The work observed in lessons suggests that these marks were accurate, and students are progressing well. The girls were judged to be achieving much better than the boys, as is the situation nationally. The boys' attainment has declined over the years, and the behaviour of groups in some lessons limits their progress, and can affect the work of others. Although students have had little experience of art and design when they arrive at the school, their standards are judged to be around the national average at the start of Year 7. Work seen in class, and in folders, shows that students develop their basic skills very well through Years 8 and 9, and their imaginative work is very successful. Students are completing both two- and three-dimensional work to a high standard. All have sketchbooks, and most are developing their use very well, inserting resources and developing ideas thoughtfully. There is an emphasis on making it central to the students' research and development of ideas.
149. The standards achieved in GCSE examinations are very good. In 2004, the standards were well above the national average. The girls did much better than the boys overall, although their performance, relative to the other subjects they took, was lower. An analysis of data indicates that, overall, students are achieving better in art and design than they do in the other subjects they study in the school. The results have steadily improved over the past three years. Standards observed in the present GCSE classes and in folders are very good for all students. The work includes elements of art, craft or design. Students are supported well by their teachers, and complete work to meet the GCSE assessment criteria, with extensive personal work and research. Homework is completed very well: students realise the value of putting time and effort into their research, and their drawing skills have increased as a result.
150. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design is very good. There is some very good direct teaching of skills and techniques. When this happens, the students are clearly making very good progress. Assessment is very detailed and provides students with accurate and helpful information about their attainment and progress. Work is marked regularly and comments are supportive and give clear guidance on what students need to do to improve. The students, especially the girls, work very conscientiously. Their attitudes to art and design are very positive, and the pace and challenge of the lessons keep students involved when they are well planned and delivered. When a minority of students, mainly boys, are allowed to waste time and cause distractions, then the challenge is low and the results are unsatisfactory. ICT is used well in the examination classes; the ICT resources are satisfactory, but now out of date. Teaching assistants are used well to support individual students when they are briefed and given clear roles.

151. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department is evaluating the situation well to overcome staff absences and is making appropriate plans to move the subject on. The results of tests and examinations are analysed in detail and action taken to resolve any issues. The department organises a good range of enrichment activities, visits and exhibitions that help students' personal development. Recent improvement has been good, although the subject was not reported on in the last inspection.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The high-level commitment of the head of department to re-establish music within the curriculum and extend extra-curricular opportunities for students.
- The positive contribution of the department to the ethos and cultural life of the school.
- The assessment, recording and reporting of students' progress are insufficiently developed.
- The very good relationships developed between teacher and students positively impacts on recruitment and standards.
- The positive impact of the music curriculum on students' ICT capability.

### **Commentary**

152. Standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 are satisfactory, with attainment, at the end of Year 9, in 2004 approaching what was achieved nationally. In a Year 8 lesson, students were seen preparing for a whole-class performance in which everyone had to play their own individual musical line. The teacher explained clearly what was expected but then demonstrated what he might play to meet the performance criteria. This clarity lifted standards well and students demonstrated their individual creativity on the instrument of their choice.
153. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory overall and, for some students, good. The department operates an open-access policy and so students opt for the GCSE course with a wide range of musical skills. Some students are skilled instrumentalists or vocalists, while others have little background in performance but still want to be involved in the subject. In a Year 11 lesson, students were seen preparing for the GCSE listening examination. They were taken systematically through the demands of the exercise and they asked intelligent and well-informed questions to support their own learning. Although some students found it difficult to identify which musical period was being represented by the extract, the subsequent discussion and explanation consolidated their knowledge.
154. Students' achievement is good throughout Years 7, 8 and 9. The special support for identified students ensures that they engage in music making as fully as possible. Students themselves were seen to be selfless in their support for an individual, whose appreciation was clear. In a Year 9 lesson, students whose achievement was good had the opportunity of using specialist music software to support their composition and improvisation tasks. These opportunities contribute positively to students' overall ICT capability.

155. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 continues to be good for all students, including those with special educational needs. Year 10 students were seen working on memorisation strategies to ensure that they could identify major and minor intervals. What could have been a rather routine task was made memorable by students' sense of humour and mutual support. The excellent relationship between the students and their teacher supports progress and the consolidation of new learning. In Years 10 and 11, students' ICT skills continue to be developed so that composition work is produced to a high standard.
156. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Music teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good. Students expect to work collaboratively and for the most part they stick at the tasks set for them. Most of the work is of a practical nature and students become increasingly confident in playing instruments and singing. To ensure that sufficient progress is made, tasks have to be completed within a time limit and performances to demonstrate progress are a feature of most lessons. The teacher makes very clear what is expected and students invariably strive to meet the challenge. There is more to do to identify and challenge students who are musically gifted or talented in order to ensure that they make the best possible progress and attain the highest examination success.
157. In Years 10 and 11, students are generally highly motivated by the approach that the teacher takes. Relationships are very good and the teacher is keen to explain difficult and demanding musical concepts in a straightforward way. To support coursework compositions, the teacher gives unobtrusive advice and students appreciate the way that suggestions can either be accepted or rejected. The quality of teaching is good.
158. Students' learning throughout the department is also good. Lessons invariably start with a lively activity, expectations are made clear and the pace is lively. Practical work is tested frequently by playing together either in groups or as a whole class, and students are able to help each other improve.
159. The leadership of the music department is good and the management satisfactory. Day to day, the department runs smoothly and the work of visiting instrumental teachers is well co-ordinated. Departmental resources are well managed and instruments are treated well by all users. Computers in the department are in near constant use but great care is taken of them.
160. Current arrangements for marking and assessing students' work need to be improved. Once a system is in place, it will be possible to monitor students' progress over time and report that progress to parents in a more informative way.
161. The head of department is subject to high demands in terms of developing the department's curriculum while at the same time extending the range of instrumental and vocal tuition and extra-curricular performance groups. These competing priorities are managed with commitment and enthusiasm. The music department makes a positive contribution to the ethos and cultural life of the school. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection.

## **Drama**

162. On the basis of the drama lessons sampled in Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and lessons are purposeful and engaging. In one Year 8 lesson, a 'freeze-

frames' activity based on 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' was successfully carried out by all students because of good planning and the ability of the teacher to challenge any limited use of dramatic techniques. In 2004, GCSE results in drama were above the national average, although no students achieved A\* or A grades. To improve the quality of peer assessment, teachers need to make assessment criteria clearer. Students do not fully understand how well they are doing in drama or what they need to do to improve.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The provision in physical education is currently **good**, with significant capacity for further improvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching, especially with examination groups.
- The extensive range and take-up of extra-curricular provision, including the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.
- Leadership of the subject, commitment of staff and positive attitudes of the students.
- The developing links with clubs, community and local schools.
- Ineffective and inconsistent use of ongoing assessment to ensure appropriate challenge for all students.
- Insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning across the department.
- The limited range and opportunity for outdoor education and creativity within the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

163. GCSE results have followed a downward trend in the last three years. However, standards remained slightly better than the national expectation for maintained secondary schools in 2004, and increasing numbers are following the course. The school has recently been awarded Sports College Status and the prestigious Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards. Students regularly gain representation honours at national, regional, county and district levels in a range of team and individual sports. Within the lessons observed, standards were always in line with and often better than the national expectation. This is especially the case with examination groups.
164. Students, in Years 7 to 9, achieve well in hockey, football and dance, although Year 8 girls are failing to reach the expected level in badminton, where they show a lack of basic technique and limited tactical understanding. In football, students are able to play effectively, passing with competency and general accuracy; dribbling skills are well developed, as is tactical awareness. Within health-related exercise lessons, students show a good understanding of flexibility and cardio-vascular warm-up exercises, and principles of health and safety when applied to lifting weights as part of a fitness circuit. Dance is characterised by students composing sequences, which show qualities of stillness, use of gesture, changes of speed and variety of step patterns. Students make good use of appropriate terminology when describing their own and others' actions. Students with special educational needs are supported well to achieve their personal targets.
165. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is slightly better than the national expectation in core physical education, and significantly better within GCSE groups. In hockey, the

majority of students show good tactical awareness both in attack and defence when taking short corners, anticipating the movement of players and the track of the ball. In a GCSE theory lesson, students have well-developed understanding of the main attributes of an effective coach and are able to apply this to coaching in their own chosen sport. It is clear that all students, including those with special educational needs, achieved well within this subject, working effectively in both single-sex and mixed-group situations.

166. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 was consistently good, with some very good features, although one non-examination Year 10 lesson was judged as unsatisfactory. This was characterised by poor lesson organisation, inappropriate activities and a lack of student progress. Consistently high quality teaching was observed within examination groups. Planning is comprehensive, based on good subject knowledge and highlights specific learning outcomes, key words and appropriate methodology to ensure student motivation and high levels of learning. Marking is of a consistently high standard and staff make good use of data to track students' progress. The commitment of teachers, their emphasis on equality of opportunity and excellent working relationships create a climate where the expectation is to achieve. Where weaknesses exist, it is in the inconsistent use of assessments to ensure appropriate challenge within lessons for all students.
167. Leadership of the department is good and characterised by clear vision, a sense of purpose with a focus on student achievement, high quality accurate self-evaluation and strategic planning in place. Management is satisfactory and, overall, the department has continued to improve since the last inspection. However, the lack of regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning across the department has had a negative impact on the progress of more able and students who need additional support.
168. The increasing use of physical education facilities for whole-school activities is perceived as having an impact on continuity of learning within the subject.
169. The curriculum is heavily biased towards games activities to the detriment of creativity and outdoor education opportunities. However, it fully meets the statutory requirement and is enhanced by the very extensive extra-curricular programme, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, which is well supported by students and staff alike.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching is helping students develop good attitudes to work.
- Teachers have good knowledge of modern commerce, which is raising standards.
- There are supportive relationships with students, whose progress is well monitored.
- ICT provision and its use in the classroom are good.
- Literacy levels are too low.

### **Commentary**

170. Students' standards on entry at Year 10 are average. By the end of Year 10, they are just above average. Most students gain in confidence during Year 11 and the standard of their work by the end of that year is above average. Students' attainment at the end of Year 11 is close to average. Results in 2003 were above average. In 2004, the GCSE results fell and are now below national averages. Students who are currently on a GCSE course are expected to do well. Boys have out-performed girls. The clear assessment strategy used and the positive attitudes shown by most students cause their learning to be of a good quality. Students make good progress as they move from Year 10 to Year 11. Students perform as predicted. Writing is improving. There are a few errors in some scripts with regard to the use of standard English. Teachers are aware of these mistakes and set about remedying them.
171. The teaching and learning are good. The key skills of communication and number are taught well. Teaching is inclusive, ensuring that all students are challenged and supported effectively. In most lessons, all students are involved. Those with learning needs are provided with extra support. This means that these students progress at about the same rate as other students in the class. Students are taught to think and write analytically. They know about profit and loss accounts. Students are aware of current economic trends. All students receive oral and written feedback targeted at improving their work. Students need to show more independence in their research, particularly that undertaken at home. Teachers expect students to be engaged in their own learning and to contribute some originality in their writing. Not all do so. Group work is well structured and it is generally productive. A variety of tasks is normally introduced so that pace and momentum are maintained. As a result of this effective teaching and the positive attitudes of most students plus their hard work, learning is good.
172. Leadership and management are good. The teacher in charge of business education is hard working and well informed of modern commercial practice. All work in classrooms and outside visits are monitored for effectiveness. A variety of strategies is used to assess the quality of learning. Planning is good and effective. High expectations are communicated to students, who respond accordingly. Routines are established which support the efficient provision of business training. There has been improvement in business education over time, although not identified in the last inspection report. The control of the regular submission of work is a matter still to be fully resolved.

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

### **CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

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

- Citizenship is taught in different contexts for different children and this causes confusion for teachers and students alike.
- The arrangements for monitoring teaching, learning and standards in citizenship are unsatisfactory.
- The readiness of students to act as form representatives, year representatives and school councillors.

- The positive impact of links established with partners external to the school such as the Health Authority for Healthy Eating, the Police and Connexions.
- The diligence and commitment of the teacher responsible for the subject.

### **Commentary**

173. Standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 are broadly satisfactory, although on a small number of occasions, standards are unsatisfactory. Standards are best when students work willingly on imaginative tasks. In one Year 7 lesson, students were asked, without explanation, to sit in unfamiliar places in the classroom, according to hair colour. They were told that different standards had to be achieved by each group in order to be awarded the same number of merits. The resulting doubts and confusion gave valuable insight into the feelings and emotions of people subject to discrimination and prejudice. Some students were able to describe their feelings effectively.
174. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are good overall. Students were able to share their views about the fairness of the British criminal justice system. Students were given a list of serious crimes and asked to assign an appropriate sentence. Afterwards they compared their suggestion with the actual sentence handed down. Some were able to explain and defend their judgement where it was different.
175. Students' achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory overall. The support of teaching assistants has a positive impact on identified students' achievement. Students who listen attentively and respond to the suggestions made appreciate the contribution that they make. Relationships are good and support unobtrusive.
176. In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is good overall. When assemblies have a theme associated with citizenship issues, they contribute positively to achievement. An assembly focusing on local racism gave students an opportunity to examine, develop and reflect upon their own attitudes.
177. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7,8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, teachers confidently describe what students will be able to do by the end and set a rapid pace for the activities designed to get there. Students respond well to time limits on tasks and most complete what is required within the time set. In some curriculum areas, such as history and geography, there are frequent opportunities for teachers to develop students' understanding of citizenship issues. In geography, for example, students consider commercial globalisation and international inequality. Occasionally, teachers have to respond to immature behaviour but relationships are generally sound and support learning.
178. Students' learning is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Students' learning is best when they understand exactly what is required of them. Learning objectives in lessons sometimes need to be clearer and teachers need to give more attention to evaluating just how much new learning has been achieved both in lessons and over time. Although students hold strong views about some citizenship issues like criminal sentencing, there are other areas such as political democracy about which they are much less certain.
179. The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory overall, with both good and poor features. Leadership at subject level has been diligent and the provision of resources for the tutor team has been well managed, with a positive impact on standards. Teachers and students alike experience some frustration about the

relationship of citizenship with PSHE and the different delivery opportunities across subjects and year groups. The formal monitoring of provision across subjects and the assessment, recording and reporting of students' progress remain underdeveloped. Progress in this area may well have been delayed by changes in the school's overall circumstances.

180. The school now recognises the need to undertake a radical audit of provision in order to improve standards further, provide clarity for students and teachers and improve the limited quality of monitoring and assessment. A strategy is already in place and an appropriate timetable for these decisions has been agreed.
181. Although earlier judgements about the quality of citizenship provision are limited, it is now the view that improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory and that the school has the capacity to make further significant improvements in the delivery of citizenship and in standards achieved.
182. The PSHE programme seen during the inspection was focused upon the citizenship aspects.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

### *Level 3 GCE AS level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	9	71	78.3	29	21.6	100	28.5
Biology	18	90	63.5	40	10.4	87.8	19.8
Business studies	4	25	91.6	0	24.1	10	67.9
Chemistry	10	100	70.3	70	13.2	92	23

Design and technology	8	100	72.6	36	13.9	72.5	24.3
Dance	1	100	82	100	21.9	100	29.7
Drama	3	100	86.6	0	19.8	73.3	30.9
English	7	86	86.2	14	17.4	65.7	29.7
German	1	100	81.6	0	18.8	80	28.8
Geography	10	90	75.5	40	20.4	76	27
History	23	87	82.2	26	20.8	67	29.2
ICT	15	100	n/a	40	n/a	88	n/a
Mathematics	7	71	59.9	29	14.1	57.4	20.5
Media studies	13	92	n/a	15	n/a	66.2	n/a
Music	13	92	n/a	15	n/a	66.2	n/a
Physical education	7	100	72.2	29	11.8	74.3	22.8
Physics	10	50	66.4	10	14.8	38	22.4
Psychology	10	70	n/a	10	n/a	42	n/a
Religious studies	10	80	82.2	30	26.1	66	31.2
Sociology	8	63	72.1	38	19.6	52.5	25.9

**Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	10	100	98.3	60	50.2	96	87.1
Biology	27	93	96.6	30	40	69.6	79.3
Business studies	3	100	91.6	0	24.1	53.5	67.9
Chemistry	7	100	97.7	57	50	91.4	85.7
Dance	2	100	98.9	0	42.6	70	84.3
Drama	3	100	99.6	33	42.8	73.3	85.1
Design and technology	8	100	97.8	13	35	80	77.9
English	13	100	99.4	69	44.9	105	85.5

French	2	100	99	100	53.1	110	88.9
German	2	50	98.6	50	49.6	60	86.3
Geography	13	100	98.8	46	46.4	84.6	85.2
History	26	100	99	35	45.6	77.7	85.1
ICT	7	100	88.3	57	26.9	88.6	67.8
Leisure and recreation	3	100	90.7	33	18.3	80	64.6
Mathematics	4	100	96.8	25	56.6	85	89.5
Media studies	12	100	n/a	58	n/a	91.7	n/a
Physical education	4	100	97.8	25	30.9	70	75.4
Physics	5	100	96.7	0	45.3	60	82.6
Psychology	3	100	n/a	33	n/a	73.3	n/a
Religious studies	7	100	99.1	71	49.5	103	87.4
Science	5	100	97.4	20	44.2	84	82.5
Sociology	3	100	98.5	0	45.3	66.7	84.6

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Provision in English literature is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good specialist knowledge.
- Work is thoroughly marked so that students receive guidance on how to improve.
- There is good support for students' independent learning.
- Some students in Year 12 are not fully engaged in their learning.

#### Commentary

183. Standards and achievement are good. In 2004, the performance of students in GCE A level examinations at grades A-E was slightly above the national average. All thirteen students gained a grade between A-E, including nine at grades A-B. Performance at grades A-E was slightly higher than in 2003 when eighteen students were entered. At AS level in 2004, six students were entered and four received a grade between A-E. Students' dialogue with teachers shows a good understanding of language features and writing is mature and fluent. Students are able to interpret texts with an informed, analytical personal response and to structure essays cohesively.

184. Teaching and learning are good overall. In both Years 12 and 13, students receive supportive and knowledgeable specialist teaching. Well-planned lessons include opportunities to carry out group and individual research. In a Year 13 lesson, students were required to research suitable passages to construct a mock exam paper,

supporting their understanding of examination standards and their wider reading. ICT is well used to provide visual stimuli to support textual analysis. In Year 12 and 13, most students are fully engaged in stimulating activities. In Year 12, however, a minority of students do not take a sufficiently active part in the lesson for the teacher to satisfactorily assess their level of understanding. Marking is thorough and developmental.

185. The head of department leads and manages the subject very well. Teachers have high expectations of their students. Their enthusiasm for literature is excellent and contributes to the genuine commitment most students have to the subject. The subject is well resourced. The subject was not inspected in the last inspection.

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

186. Literacy skills are well developed across all sixth form subject areas.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics was not inspected in detail. It was possible to sample just one lesson in Year 12. Very positive students responded well to the very good teaching and were making very good progress towards AS examination targets.

### **SCIENCE**

#### **CHEMISTRY**

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

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

- Results are consistently well above national averages, reflecting students' prior attainment and ongoing commitment.
- The subject is presented in an interesting and engaging manner.
- Support for, and interest in, the individual are paramount.
- ICT based activities are underdeveloped.
- The course draws on real contexts to bring the subject alive.

#### **COMMENTARY**

187. There is a strong correlation between the students' science grades at GCSE and those obtained at AS and A2 levels. In 2004, there were six students in the A2 cohort; all gained an A-E grade, with four attaining an A or B grade. In 2003, five of the seven A2 candidates attained an A grade. Attainment is well above the national averages. Analysis of individuals' results show that, for the majority, achievement is at least good, usually very good, but never less than satisfactory. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm these results in both Year 12 and 13.
188. Teaching was very good in two of the three lessons observed. Lessons are carefully planned with logical sequences to check understanding of previously taught subject matter. Two of the three teachers, who deliver the subject, are experienced sixth form

practioners and students appreciate their friendly, engaging style of teaching. There is much co-operation and sharing practice within the subject.

189. In a very good Year 13 lesson, students were considering the pH of weak acids. Students were led through a series of short steps where the teacher checked their understanding at each stage. Students were expected to make their own notes around a concise summary that the teacher prepared step by step on the board. Students were brought to the board and were required to justify their answers and thinking. The approach was both stimulating and challenging. In a good lesson, students were discussing the operations of gas-liquid chromatography using prepared background papers, but drawing on a visit to a GlaxoSmithKline plant.
190. Students enjoy their chemistry lessons because they respect their teachers, establish very good relationships with one another and simply get on with their studies. Attitudes to learning are never less than very good. When they progress to university level education, chemistry provides the backbone to many students' degree studies. Links with local healthcare establishments and industries are well developed.
191. The leadership and management of the subject are both very good. The teacher responsible for the subject is passionate about chemistry. Monitoring of the progress of individual students is good. Where a student attains a grade below their potential, they are encouraged to retake an examination. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of individuals is a feature of this subject's provision. The teaching is well supported with examination questions and appropriate information texts. Students' own files were comprehensive and topics appropriately ordered. The use of ICT by students is underdeveloped.
192. There has been steady improvement from a very secure position, although not identified in the last inspection.

## **Biology**

Provision in biology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is usually very good, arising from the teachers' detailed planning and love of the subject.
- Teachers inspire students to do of their best.
- Opportunities for students to use ICT in the subject are in need of further development.
- Students are offered a restricted range of enrichment activities.

### **Commentary**

193. Biology results are broadly in line with the national scene, with some students regularly attaining high grades in both AS and A2 examinations. Girls' attainment is well above the national averages but that of the boys lags behind. When students' results are compared with their prior attainment, achievement is seldom less than satisfactory, usually good and sometimes very good. A large number of students opt for biology as their only science because of the interest that their pre-16 science studies create; these students do equally well as those taking two or more science subjects.

194. Students learn enthusiastically and diligently, and are particularly engaged when investigations are a feature of a lesson. Standards are above average. In a very good Year 12 lesson, involving the adaptation of plants to their environment, students were expected to consider which plants were best suited to survive and prosper. The manner in which the scene was set by the teacher encouraged the more able to think, and the weaker students to be stimulated. This was sixth form teaching at its best, stretching learners of all abilities.
195. Teaching is never less than good, and usually very good. The subject is popular and there are two teaching groups per year. Students say they enjoy their studies, are supported well, have very good relationships with their teachers and that their work is marked regularly. Every student questioned was pleased to have chosen the subject for AS and intends to complete their studies in the subject. The department's approaches clearly increase students' confidence during Year 12. Lesson objectives are shared with students and revisited throughout each lesson.
196. The subject's co-ordination changed hands in 2004. Three experienced staff complement one another's strengths. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The three teachers work well together, sharing both theoretical and practical lessons. Students appreciate their different strengths. The teachers' own interests bring enrichment and enhancement to the teaching of the subject. All staff convey a love of their subject.
197. Assessment is good; detailed records are kept of students' accomplishments. Where module results are lower than expected, students regularly resit papers to gain higher grades. Teaching in lessons is well supported with examination papers, questions and appropriate background documents. Students strive for places in higher education for degrees such as medicine, pharmacy and physiotherapy, at leading provincial universities and Oxbridge. Students' aspirations are high because the students share their goals with their teachers.
198. The subject has traditionally run an ecology studies course in the summer of Year 12. This is well received by the students. Links with higher education institutions, businesses and scientific establishments are less well developed. Opportunities for students to use ICT in lessons, for independent study and projects are restricted. There is a well stocked greenhouse that is effectively used for practical investigations.
199. Although not identified in the last inspection, steady improvement has been maintained from a good foundation.

### **Vocational science**

200. Two lessons of vocational science were sampled. The teaching was very good and positive students were making good progress. Relationships were excellent and formed the basis for a very supportive learning environment.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Vocational ICT**

A single lesson of this course was sampled. The Year 12 students were making good progress and achieving well. The teaching was very effective and appropriately used 'real life' materials relating to house surveys, which stimulated students to work very hard.

## **HUMANITIES**

It was only possible to sample teaching and learning in **history**. In the two lessons seen, teaching was never less than good, students made good progress and achievement was above average.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very good team of teachers with the capacity to inspire students to attain high levels of academic achievement within their specialist areas.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with a very good learning environment supporting students with a wide range of attainment; good progress is made over the two years.
- A well-structured field studies programme enhancing school-based studies.
- The department is well led, with evolving strategies in place for further development.

### **Commentary**

201. Standards are good in the post-16 phase and the subject is popular, with AS results producing a sound result base. Much of the A2 work seen demonstrated a positive progression over the two-year programme of study, and showed A2 candidates building well upon these results. In 2004, two-thirds of AS students attained pass grades A-E, with the 2004 results at A2 level producing 46 per cent A/B grades and 100 per cent A-E grades that are close to national averages, but down on 2003 standards. Overall, students achieve well.
202. The provision in geography caters for 20 students following A2 level and AS courses: 13 students on AS course; seven on A2 course. Teaching throughout the post-16 stage is of a high quality; challenging and inspirational, exhibiting very extensive subject knowledge within a rigorous learning environment. Such an environment engages students fully, bringing out the best of responses in terms of both conceptual understanding, knowledge and application. Well-structured and challenging fieldwork and coursework activities reinforce and support the learning processes, with learning and organisational skills being instilled via regular teacher reinforcement of key study skill techniques. A range of teaching sessions was observed in both physical and human geography. Students were very attentive and focused as energies were directed into considering tourism issues in Nepal, and the principles of coastal management. Students worked well collectively, responding to good teaching techniques. Learning processes are clearly followed and thinking skills are well developed. All students showed a capacity to apply fieldwork examples to written work, as well as the ability to describe stage and process in a mature manner in

dealing with synoptic paper issues. A peer evaluation exercise observed at A2 level was particularly successful, with the whole group fully engaged in the learning and evaluative processes. Levels of IT competence are high.

203. Department leadership is good, utilising the personal specialised skills of teaching staff, ensuring that both physical and human resources are of the highest quality to address the challenging needs of the AS and A2 courses. Strong collaborative management is a key factor as the staff operate as a close team. Accommodation is good, with the department housed in adjacent rooms. Rooms are of a good size, light and airy, with good displays of both students' work and other professionally produced materials plus press coverage of world issues. Students have access to ICT facilities within the sixth form area. Resources in the department are just sufficient to meet current needs, but additional resources may well be needed to sustain the future needs of all sixth form students. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection.

## Religious education

Overall provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**, although provision in examination courses is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not meet its statutory requirements for religious education.
- Standards in the examination courses are very high.
- The teacher of the examination classes has excellent subject knowledge.
- Students' work is assessed thoroughly and feedback is extremely constructive.

### Commentary

204. The school does not meet its statutory requirement to ensure a minimum five per cent curriculum time for religious education for all students. Less than five per cent of the student population is engaged in religious education through GCE A2 and AS level courses.
205. The attainment and achievement of students on the examination courses are very high. The attainment in the AS level examinations is well above the national average, and the school recognises that at both A and AS levels this is one of the highest performing subjects in the post-16 curriculum. More girls than boys choose to study this subject, but boys and girls perform equally well. Most students are well motivated and they are on track to achieve their target grades. The students are following the religious studies examination course, with options relating to the philosophy of religion and ethics. The Year 13 class have been taught by three different teachers and this has caused some apprehension among some of the students. The current teacher has worked extremely hard to build up their trust and confidence, and their motivation is now improving.
206. The teaching and learning in the examination classes are good. The teacher has a very good subject knowledge drawn from her academic qualifications, her teaching in schools and her teaching in higher education. She is giving the students excellent support in the topics being studied and she provides excellent guidance in exam preparation. In the lessons observed, students were exposed to discussions on a wide

range of philosophical viewpoints on conscience, and on issues of life and death. They were being encouraged to structure their notes to aid revision, and they were frequently challenged to source their quotations. The teacher very effectively adapts the teaching to suit the learning needs of the students, for instance, adopting a very different style with the single student in Year 12 from the style used with the group of students in Year 13, where there is more opportunity for group discussion. The students' written work shows very good knowledge of key concepts, technical vocabulary, theories and sources of authority. These are used with ease in their writing, and by some students in the discussions in class. Essays are well structured, well argued and make very good use of supporting evidence. Marking and feedback are very thorough, detailed and pertinent. The students are benefiting from enrichment activities such as attending a study day hosted by Lancaster University.

207. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory, but the management of the examination course is satisfactory. The school does not deliver the statutory requirement for all post-16 students. Within the examination course, the teacher is working very hard to effectively manage the teaching of only one student in Year 12, but it is not an ideal situation. The subject was not identified in the last inspection report.

## **Psychology**

Provision in psychology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Work is well matched to students' needs.
- Schemes of work indicate a variety of teaching and learning styles is employed.
- There is a variety of printed, electronic and personal resources available.
- Extra supportive reading which is essential is not completed by all students.

### **Commentary**

208. Psychology is a new subject for students entering the sixth form and as well as the usual facts and arguments to learn, as in any subject, there is a whole array of new technical language to come to terms with, and the real difficulty of thinking about themselves and others in an objective and analytical way.
209. Students enter Year 12 with average or above results in their GCSE examinations. The standards seen in Year 12 and 13 are above average. These standards are reached because the teaching and learning are good. Students' achievements in relation to the Year 12 entry standards are good. Retention rates are good. In 2004, AS level results were in line with national averages. The A2 level results, though based on small numbers, were below average for all grades. There is value added in the results obtained. In the sample of work inspected, the quality of most was good. More girls than boys study psychology and they do well. Predicted grades for 2005 suggest results will meet national expectations.

210. Teaching and learning are good. A variety of methods is used, from traditional in style to individual and group tasks. Students provide some original studies based on their own research and incorporating statistical testing. The teaching of examination technique is one important element of the learning. Students' work is of a good quality. There is a tendency to describe rather than evaluate a common limitation of most writing skills. The teacher is encouraging the students to evaluate, criticise, consider ethics and examine statistical weaknesses. There is a minority of students who have limited competence in English and mathematics.
211. Leadership and management are good. Students are welcomed to study psychology on the basis of their willingness to learn and apply themselves to the subject. Improvements to the provision of psychology have been made over time. The changes and improvements in quality and standards are good. Teaching and learning are evaluated, highlighting their effectiveness. Students feel secure and are able to take advantage of the opportunities that the sixth form provides. The subject was not identified in the last inspection report.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

No subject in this section was inspected in detail. However, a lesson on product design was observed. The teaching was very good and students were able to fully develop their design briefs to meet examination requirements.

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

### **Media studies**

Provision in media studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have very good specialist knowledge.
- There is good progression between media education within GCSE English and media studies at AS and A level.
- There is good support for students' independent learning.
- Some students need to develop their use of media language more fully.

### **Commentary**

212. In 2003 and 2004, the performance of students in A2 level media studies was above the national average. In 2003, all thirteen students entered achieved grades A-E, including six at grades A-B. In 2004, all twelve students entered achieved grades A-E, including seven at grades A-B. At AS level, eight students were entered and six students gained a grade between A-E. Standards and achievement are good.

213. This year there are 22 students following the course in Year 12 but only five in Year 13. In both classes teaching and learning are good. Teachers' specialist knowledge enables students to develop the subject-specific language necessary to analyse media texts. Students have a good understanding of media ethics and are encouraged to develop and share their opinions in a supportive atmosphere. For example, in a Year 13 lesson on public broadcasting, a brief research task into the role of public broadcasting led to a well-informed discussion in which students clearly extended their own thinking. In a Year 12 class, the ability of students to use an editing facility with confidence enabled them to make practical production decisions. Most students could express their understanding of media language, but some were having difficulty with this. Teachers give encouragement and informed advice to students. Students enjoy the subject, and feel that the media studies unit within GCSE English had engaged their interest and formed a good foundation for further study.
214. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is well resourced and receives valuable technical support. The subject was not identified in the last inspection report.

#### **Music in the sixth form**

215. A single Year 12 lesson was sampled as part of this inspection along with a scrutiny of work in progress. There are currently no Year 13 A2 music students. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students are aware of their musical strengths and weaknesses and respond well to the support given. They are able to work independently and have impressive musical skills. Standards are good and achievement very good.

#### **Art and design in the sixth form**

216. The sixth form provision was sampled, and is good. There are twelve students taking AS and six taking A level art and design. Their standards and achievement are very good, and all are progressing well despite the absence of one of their teachers, who was not replaced during the inspection. This is an unsatisfactory situation, but they have their own teaching space and are able to continue their work independently with guidance from the head of department. The teaching and learning are very good, and students' attitudes are very positive.

#### **Drama in the sixth form**

217. In 2003, the performance of students in GCE A level Drama was below the national average at grades A-E, but above average in 2004. There are currently ten students taking the subject in Year 12, but none in Year 13. In the Year 12 lesson seen, students studying possible set designs for a play by Lorca expressed their ideas confidently because the teacher clearly respected and valued their opinions. Students had a thorough understanding of what was expected of them in the examination and how to attain higher grades. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and competent specialist head of drama.

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

Only physical education was inspected in detail. It was possible to sample a lesson in leisure and recreation. Students were making good progress in response to the good

teaching they received. They demonstrated good levels of understanding of the concepts of selling holidays to people with differing needs.

## **Physical education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good quality of AS and A2 teaching, which ensures good progress and high value added achievement.
- Students' positive attitudes, levels of motivation, ability to take responsibility for their own learning and very effective working relationships.
- Extensive extra curricular opportunities.
- The limited range of recreational and leadership opportunities within the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

218. AS and A2 physical education courses are well embedded within the sixth form curriculum; however, numbers taking the subject remain low. This makes statistical comparisons using national data questionable; however, data indicates that AS students' achievement was in the top ten per cent nationally in 2003 and A2 achievement was significantly better than that of similar schools. There is no evidence of significant variations in achievement of different genders and all students achieve at a high level.
219. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. This is largely the result of detailed planning with very good subject knowledge, use of a wide range of stimuli – video, web based technology, task cards and a variety of teaching strategies which develop independence. Lessons are carefully crafted, using a variety of techniques to retain interest and increase already high levels of motivation. The teaching of key skills is well integrated into the curriculum with clear evidence of students being encouraged to communicate through a range of mediams, use information technology, work closely with others, develop study skills and participate in problem-solving activities. The climate created for high quality learning is a very positive feature and relationships are excellent. Students spoke highly of their teachers, the quality of the course and care and support provided.
220. The exceptional opportunities for extra-curricular provision in team games, dance and individual activities in some ways mitigates against the lack of core physical education provision within the sixth form, but not the limited range of accredited leadership opportunities.
221. Assessment is continuous and ongoing, with students having a very good understanding of grade criteria and how to improve their own attainment. Students benefit greatly from the quality of feedback and support provided by knowledgeable teaching staff.
222. The leadership of the department is good; systems are up to date, and schemes and lesson plans show careful planning. Staff work together constructively, undertaking moderation activities, academic monitoring, target setting and student mentoring. The subject was not identified in the last inspection report.

## **BUSINESS**

Business education was not inspected in detail. It was possible to observe two lessons in Year 13. Teaching seen was consistently good and students were making good progress towards their examination targets.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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