

INSPECTION REPORT

HOWDEN SCHOOL

Howden

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118084

Headteacher: Mr Roger Burman

Reporting inspector: Mr George Knights
3268

Dates of inspection: 20th to 23rd January 2003

Inspection number: 249859

Full 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

School address: Derwent Road
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Goole

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr I Leach

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3268	George Knights	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? Attainment and achievement How well are pupils and students taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed? School improvement and overall effectiveness
10176	Catherine Hinds	Lay inspector		Attitudes and behaviour How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19532	Elizabeth Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music	P16 Co-ordinator
30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30596	Jack Brown	Team inspector	Science	
2893	John Manning	Team inspector	English	
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
32216	Annie McCabe	Team inspector	Design and technology	
8090	Frank Turns	Team inspector	Art and design	
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	History Business education	
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Special educational needs	
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4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Howden School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18 years of age. It is situated in the small market town of Howden in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Its pupils live in a rural area surrounding the school, with about three quarters coming to school by bus. Almost all of the pupils come from six primary schools. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been just below average, though the ability of pupils in the current Year 7 is close to the average. There are 745 pupils on roll, making the school smaller than most secondary schools nationally. The school is rapidly increasing in popularity, but is not currently full. Many pupils come from homes with relatively low socio-economic circumstances. Employment in the area is close to the national average, though with many parents working in low-wage service industries. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Less than 2 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and even fewer have English as an additional language. The number on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number with statements of special educational need. Around four fifths of pupils transfer, at the end of Year 11, to sixth form or further education, though only a small proportion of these remain at the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Howden School is a rapidly improving school. It has many good features, together with some areas where it needs further improvement. Standards are improving because good teaching enables pupils and students to learn well. The headteacher's very strong leadership and management have ensured that the school has identified clear priorities for development and effective strategies for achieving them. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It takes effective action to improve standards in national tests and examinations
- It inspires loyalty from pupils, which is illustrated by their good attendance
- It creates a safe and caring environment, which enables good learning to take place
- It enables every pupil to gain benefit from all that the school provides
- It helps parents understand school life and encourages them to get involved in its work

What could be improved

- The skills of subject leaders, especially in the review and development of their areas of responsibility
- The contribution that the school makes to pupils' personal development

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the school was previously inspected in March 1997 has been good. Results in national examinations have fluctuated since then, but there has been a big improvement in GCSE results in the past three years. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. The curriculum has been broadened to take better account of the needs of pupils. Both leadership and management of the school have improved considerably, particularly in the past two years. The school has made good progress in dealing with the key issues for action identified in the previous report. Very good work has been done to improve the attitudes and behaviour of boys. This has led to good improvement in boys' attainment. Good progress has been made in putting into place a policy for language and literacy. The progress made in developing and implementing a strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching has been satisfactory. There has also been good improvement in provision for information and communication technology and for boys' physical education. The co-ordination of work with pupils having special educational needs has also improved. The school still does not meet the requirement for all pupils and students to be able to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14- and 16-year-old pupils and sixth-form students at the end of Year 13, based on average point scores in national tests, GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Key Stage 3 tests	C	B	C	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
GCSE examinations	E	D	C	E	
	2000	2001	2002		
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	C	*		

* National comparison data for AS/A Level results in 2002 are not yet available

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been improving at a faster rate than nationally in the past few years. In 2002, results in mathematics and science were average, but those in English were well below average, having been above average in the previous year. GCSE results have also been improving in recent years, with a rapid improvement in the three years to 2002. These improvements are the result of improved teaching, which pays attention to the needs of all pupils. The school met its targets in 2002. Pupils currently in Years 9 and 11 are working at the national average, indicating that they are likely to reach the challenging, but achievable targets, which the school has set itself for the coming year. Pupils are developing average standards in literacy and their numeracy skills are above average. The school has very few students in the sixth form. These students make good progress and results were average in 2001, with boys and girls doing equally well. These standards are likely to be repeated in next year's examinations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now good. Pupils are encouraged by good teaching to take a strong interest in their work and they often show excitement and enthusiasm in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school community are good. The school works hard to help pupils become responsible, independent young people.
Attendance	This is good. Attendance is above average, mainly because pupils like coming to school. The number of pupils with unauthorised absence is very low.

Steps to improve attitudes and behaviour have been successful. In the past year there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of pupils excluded. This reflects the school's success in helping pupils feel that good behaviour and a positive focus on their studies are worthwhile. The school takes great care to ensure that each pupil feels valued and cared for. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure in school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is good throughout the school and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good or better in around two thirds of lessons and is very good or excellent in around three tenths. There is, however, around one twelfth of teaching, which is unsatisfactory or poor. Teachers plan well, taking into account the needs of each individual. As a result, pupils and students learn successfully. Teaching in science is good. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory overall, but with too much variation to ensure that all pupils make good progress in this subject. English teaching is satisfactory. Work to improve pupils' numeracy and literacy skills has improved. Pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills well in other subjects and teachers of all subjects work successfully to improve pupils' literacy skills. In those lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not engage the interest or attention of pupils, whose learning suffers as a result. Sixth-form teaching is good or better in four fifths of lessons. As in the main school, teachers know the needs of their students well and provide activities in lessons that enable students to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. Regular review of the curriculum leads to modifications in order to provide courses that meet the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Careful attention is paid to individual needs and, thus, these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has very few pupils with English as an additional language. It analyses their needs carefully and successfully caters for them as individuals, thus, helping them make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Through lessons and other activities, the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but the contribution made by the school to pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Central to the school's success is that the individual needs of each pupil are well known and taken into account.

The school successfully ensures that all pupils are included in all subjects and activities that it offers. The school has taken steps to introduce a course in citizenship. This is being achieved mainly through modification and development of the personal, social and health education programme already in place. A significant amount of additional work is needed for the citizenship course to meet all requirements successfully. The way in which the school works to involve parents in its life and work is a strength. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children and about activities and developments. As a result, they feel involved and are committed to supporting the school in its work for further improvement. The school works hard to provide an interesting and stimulating range of activities for pupils to take part in beyond normal lessons. Assessment arrangements help to provide guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. Both parents and pupils value the work to establish a good programme of individual target setting for pupils. The school, through its taught curriculum and other activities, does not do enough to enhance pupils' spiritual awareness. Nor does it do enough to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-racial society.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good. Very strong, clear and incisive leadership by the headteacher has been central to the improvement that has taken place in recent years. He is ably supported by his team of senior and middle managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play an effective role in helping shape the direction of the school. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas where it needs further improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The evaluation of the school's general performance is satisfactory and is an improving aspect of management. More needs to be done to improve the evaluation of teachers' work.
The strategic use of resources	This is good. The school is well staffed and resourced. Decisions on how best to use resources are guided by identified priorities for improvement in the school.

The school is well staffed with teachers, who are committed to bringing about further improvement. The school's buildings are adequate and well maintained. Resource levels have improved, including an increase in the range and quality of equipment for information and communication technology. Whilst general evaluation is satisfactory, the evaluation of teaching and learning is not well enough developed to ensure the elimination of the unsatisfactory teaching that still occurs in the school. Some steps have been taken to develop and implement a programme of evaluation of teachers' work. Teachers have been trained in evaluation techniques, but work remains to be done for the evaluation process to be successful. The school's application of the principles of best value is satisfactory. Although governors fulfil most of their statutory duties they do not ensure that all pupils and students are able to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Before the inspection, 16 parents attended a meeting with the Registered Inspector. Questionnaires were returned by 77 parents (10 per cent) and additional comments were appended to 10 of these.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has high expectations of what pupils and students will achieve Pupils and students like coming to the school and make good progress The school is well led and managed Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements for homework The information provided for parents about the progress of their children The range of activities for pupils and students outside lessons

Inspectors concur with the views of parents about the school's strengths. Pupils do like coming to school. Teachers have good expectations and this helps pupils make good progress. The school is well led and managed. Parents are made to feel welcome and involved in school life and this is a strength. Inspectors consider that parents have no reason to be concerned about areas where some would like to see improvement. Homework arrangements meet the needs of pupils well. Reports on pupils' progress are of good quality. Parents are also kept informed through letters and meetings of the progress their children are making. The range of activities for pupils to take part in outside lessons is satisfactory.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The school shares a sixth form with a neighbouring school as a means of extending the range of subjects available for students. The combined sixth form has around 150 students, of whom 47 are based at Howden school. This sixth form is smaller than most sixth forms nationally. The sixth form provides a good range of AS and A2 level courses. Around a quarter of students, who completed Year 11 at the Howden School in 2002, have entered the sixth form. Roughly similar numbers of male and female students follow sixth-form courses at Howden. The number of students from minority ethnic groups reflects the composition of the school generally. The school accepts on to sixth-form courses all students whom teachers consider could be successful. As a result, the overall ability of students entering the sixth form is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Although only small in number this is a satisfactory sixth form. Teaching is good and students make good progress from their below average standard when they enter the sixth form. Leadership and management are satisfactory. In order to help overcome the limitations created by small numbers, the school has joined with a neighbouring school facing similar challenges to form a joint sixth form. Together, the two schools provide a good range of advanced level courses, with students achieving well against their standards at GCSE. It is unlikely that many of the students, who eventually go on to higher education, would have remained in full-time education beyond the age of 16 had the sixth-form course not been provided at Howden. In this respect, the sixth form fills an important need for the community. Currently, the responsibility for day-to-day running of the sixth form is separate from its strategic management and plans for improvement. This separation has led to a lack of coherent provision for students' personal development and for enrichment activities beyond examination courses. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.

Strengths

- Students achieve well across all subjects as a result of good teaching
- Students have very good attitudes
- The joint sixth form provides a good range of A Level courses

What could be improved

- Aims, vision and leadership and management functions
- Recording and monitoring of students' academic and personal development
- Aspects of the curriculum to meet students' needs, including their personal development.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements 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	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Standards are improving. Current students are working above the national average. Consistently good teaching and effective management of the department helps students to achieve well relative to their prior attainment.
Science	Good. Students have very good investigative skills. Teaching is consistently good, supported by good leadership. Students gain expected grades at A Level when compared to their prior results at GCSE.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Business	Good. Good leadership and management, together with good teaching, help students make good progress. Students attain average standards.
Geography	Good. Standards are improving and are now average. Good teaching by well-qualified staff secures good achievement. Students particularly value the individual support provided.
English	Satisfactory. Standards are below average in English language and average in English literature. In both subjects, students achieve well because teachers structure the activities carefully. Students lack confidence in essay writing.

Work was also sampled in physics, biology, history and art and design. In all these subjects, teaching was either good or very good, enabling students to make good progress and to achieve well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Satisfactory. Arrangements for assessing students' work are good at whole-school level and supported by good procedures within departments. Because progress in academic studies and personal achievement are not systematically recorded, the general monitoring of students' academic and personal development is unsatisfactory.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Satisfactory. An important decision to join with a neighbouring school to make the sixth form viable has resulted in wider choice for students and an improvement in standards. The responsibilities of key personnel are not clear because day-to-day management and strategic decision-making responsibilities are separate. Statutory requirements in religious education and collective worship are not met.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The way they are helped to settle in The level of challenge and accessibility of teachers How they are helped to study independently They are treated as responsible adults The range of courses available through the joint sixth form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of out-of-hours activities The support for personal development through their tutor time

Inspectors agree that students are given a good choice of A Level courses through the joint sixth form. Inspectors agree that the range of enrichment activities and openings for extending personal development, through taking more of a part in school life, are limited. Tutors do not always make good use of time in tutor periods to support their students.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, 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'.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. For several years, the attainment of pupils arriving at Howden School has been just below average. Recent changes in the school, leading to an improvement in the perception of what the school has to offer, have led to the school becoming increasingly popular in the local community. A consequence of this is that a larger number of more able pupils are choosing to come to the school. Thus, the overall ability of the pupils, who joined the school last September, was average.
2. In recent years, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have fluctuated a little, but have been close to the national average. Results have been improving overall in the past four years, however, at a faster rate than the improvement nationally. Results in 2002 were well below the average for similar schools.¹ This comparison should be treated with caution, however – see footnote. The greatest fluctuation in results has been in English. Recognising this, the school has taken effective measures to improve the management and leadership of this subject. There are signs that this is having a positive impact on the work of the department. There has been a small decline in mathematics results over the past three years, reflecting some difficulty in appointing and retaining good teachers in this subject. Again, incisive action has been taken by the school management to improve this situation. Over the past three years, girls have performed better in mathematics and English tests, though boys' and girls' results in science have been very similar. The differences between the results of boys and girls recently have not been as large as at the time of the previous inspection and this reflects good work to improve the performance of boys generally. Full details of 2002 results are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Key Stage 3 (Year 9) results 2002

Subject	Boys	Girls	Total	Standards compared to similar schools 2002 are	Recent school trends
English	Well below average	Well below average	Well below average	Very low	Lower in 2002 than in recent years
Mathematics	Average	Average	Average	Below average	Declining
Science	Average	Below average	Average	Well below average	Steady
All core subjects	Average	Average	Average	Well below average	Steady

3. The work of pupils currently in Year 9 is close to the national average and this represents good progress for these pupils since they joined the school. In subjects such as design and technology, art and design, geography and physical education, standards are above average. They are average in most other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), though below average in modern foreign languages. Pupils achieve well in most lessons. This is because teachers work hard to make lessons interesting, stimulating and challenging for pupils. Only occasionally, when teaching lacks this care for their needs, do pupils not make good progress in their learning.

¹ Similar school comparisons are made with schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school believes that this is not a reliable measure. There is some compelling evidence that the number of claims for free school meals at the school is significantly lower than numbers eligible.

4. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11. Results in GCSE examinations in 2002 were below average overall, though the number obtaining at least five GCSE grades C or above was average. As in tests at the end of Year 9, results were well below those of similar schools, but again this comparison needs to be treated with caution. Examination results in 2002 were similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Soon after that inspection, however, results declined. This trend has been reversed and results in GCSE examinations have improved dramatically in the past three years. Indeed, the improvement in results over the past four years has been amongst the best in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Full results are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Year 2002 GCSE / GNVQ (Year 11) results overall

	2002			Standards compared to all schools 2002 are	Standards compared to similar schools 2002 are	Recent school trends
	Boys	Girls	Total			
Percentage 5+ A*-C grades or GNVQ equivalent	47	53	50	Average	Well below average	Improving
Percentage 5+ A*-G grades or GNVQ equivalent	99	97	98	Well above average	Well above average	Improving
Percentage 1+ A*-G grades or GNVQ equivalent	99	98	99	Above average	Above	Improving
Average total GCSE points score per pupil	35	37	36	Below average	Well below average	Steady

5. As has been indicated, a great deal of hard work goes into ensuring that all pupils leave school with tangible evidence of their achievements. Work has been particularly successful with lower-ability pupils. This is reflected in the number of pupils leaving the school with five or more grades G or better, which is well above the national average. The school has also ensured that it is providing well for the most able pupils in the school and this is illustrated by the fact that the number gaining five or more A* to C grades is at the national average. The school acknowledges, however, that pupils of average ability have not done as well as they should in examinations in recent years. This is the main reason why overall results have been a little below average. The school has taken good steps to deal with this situation and there is strong evidence that teachers are now working hard to help all pupils achieve their full potential.
6. Results vary considerably from subject to subject. In 2002, GCSE results were above average in mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology. They were broadly average in drama and were below average in English language, English literature, geography, history, French and physical education. Generally, girls did better than boys in GCSE examinations, though this difference is far smaller than was the case at the time of the previous inspection. This is because teachers, in planning and teaching, have sought to help boys to fulfil their potential. Some impressive work in science resulted in boys doing significantly better than girls in 2002, the girls having performed much better than boys in previous years. Details of results in different subjects are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Year 2002 GCSE / GNVQ (Year 11) results by subject (percent A* to C grades)

Subject	School			National			Recent school trends
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
English language	39.2	54.1	46.6	49.5	65.3	57.4	Better in 2002 than in 2001
English literature	41.5	59.2	50.7	54.5	69.8	62.4	Better in 2002 than in 2001
Mathematics	54.1	55.4	54.7	49.3	50.0	49.7	Improving
Science (Combined)	58.1	48.6	53.4	48.8	51.6	50.2	Improving
Art and design		77.3	72.7		74.4	65.3	Improving
Design and technology	43.8	67.6	55.8	43.3	60.4	51.6	Improving
Geography	43.5	61.7	52.7	53.5	60.1	56.3	Improving
History	40.5	37.9	39.4	54.8	61.8	58.3	Improving
MFL French	32.7	44.4	38.8	38.8	54.8	47.2	Improving
MFL German	*	*	*		60.7	53.9	Improving
PE or sports studies			36.4			54.2	Steady
Drama			73.3			69.3	Improving

N.B. Gaps in tables indicate that there were too few candidates to make reliable comparisons. * - Comparisons for German results cannot be made as errors occurred in results reported by the examination board.

7. Students currently in Year 11 are working well and the standard of their work is average overall. This means that they are making satisfactory progress, building well on their achievements in previous years. Standards are above average in lessons in mathematics, science, design and technology, art and design and physical education and are average in all other subjects, including ICT. Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have encouraged pupils to take a pride in their work and to strive to do better. The school has paid careful attention to developing a system of target setting with individual pupils. This has encouraged pupils to recognise how they could improve their performance. This raising of pupils' aspirations is a deliberate act on the part of teachers and is a significant factor in helping to raise overall standards. It is beginning to be effective in improving the attainment of some pupils of average ability, mainly boys, who had previously been underachieving. The school has also introduced a mentoring system that provides individual support to a group of pupils, who find it difficult to maintain a good focus on study as they approach the end of their GCSE courses.

8. The school is committed to meeting the needs of all its pupils and to enabling all to be included in every aspect of school life. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants and are, thus, able to make good progress. As a result, they achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment and successfully meet their individual targets. The needs of pupils in wheelchairs are well catered for. Careful planning means that classes, which include these pupils all take place on the ground floor so that they can be included in all aspects of courses offered. Pupils in wheelchairs can, therefore, play a full part in lessons and, as a result, they also make good progress and achieve well. The needs of the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are carefully monitored. These pupils receive regular in-class help to ensure that they can follow lessons and some take part in a shared reading partnership. These pupils do slip back over holiday periods, but teachers keep good records and ensure that they make up any lost ground when they return to school.

9. Throughout the school, standards in reading and writing are average. Pupils read aloud better when they are given time to rehearse, as happens in drama. When they read new material they lack expression and are rather stilted. Pupils make good progress in their writing when they are able to develop writing for different purposes. Examples of this were observed in geography, where pupils use different forms, such as letters, reports and accounts, to cater for varied audiences. Pupils also write quite

extensively in modern foreign languages, but do so in few other subjects. Though spelling is largely accurate, some of the handwriting of the younger pupils is poorly presented. Standards in applying mathematical knowledge and skills are above the national average in mathematics, science, geography, history, design and technology and information and communication technology. They are broadly in line with national standards in other subject areas.

10. The school sets itself challenging targets for performance in national tests and examinations. These are based on the information held on pupils' prior attainment and are set to provide a degree of aspiration. The school met the targets that it set in 2002 and targets for future years are also challenging, but achievable.

Sixth form

11. Only a very small number of students enter the sixth form at Howden. The overall ability of these students is below the average when compared with all students nationally embarking on sixth-form advanced study. Nevertheless, good teaching enables these students to progress well during their study for AS and A2 courses. As a result, results in GCE examinations in 2001 were average². The results in 2002 were similar to those in 2001, but national results are not yet available to make comparisons for this year. Details of results for each subject are given in the table at the beginning of Part E of this report.
12. Both male and female students make good progress during their sixth-form study. Their hard work in response to the encouragement of their teachers means that sixth-form results are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. As is the case in other year groups, teachers pay close attention to the needs of individual students. This enables teachers to deal well with individual students, who may be having difficulty with their studies.
13. In the five subjects that were the focus of this inspection of the sixth form, students are working at above average standards in mathematics and chemistry and at average standards in English, business studies and geography. In most of these subjects they are achieving well and making progress, mainly because teachers know how to make the subjects interesting and understandable to the students. In both English language and English literature, achievement is satisfactory. In English language, students' speech and writing tend to lack the fluency to enable them to make good progress. In English literature, students are not helped enough to discuss their work in class to improve their overall understanding of the texts they are studying.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils now have good attitudes, both to their lessons and to school life in general. Parents, staff and pupils recognise and applaud the improvement in pupils' attitudes since the previous inspection. Pupils talk about how proud they now feel to belong to Howden School, both when they are in school and particularly when they are out and about in the local community.
15. Pupils are deliberate and purposeful when in lessons. They settle quickly to their work, concentrating throughout their lessons and completing required tasks. Pupils are stimulated to excitement and enthusiasm when teachers provide interesting and challenging activities. A Year 8 mental mathematics session, which began quietly,

² As only a very small number of students follow sixth-form courses at the school, comparisons with national figures need to be treated with caution, especially when comparing results in individual subjects.

became lively and animated as pupils added their own complications to the teacher's carefully considered questions. Pupils only become distracted from their studies when teaching is not good enough. In lessons where this is the case, teachers either fail to clarify and re-enforce exactly how they expect pupils to behave and study, or they provide work, which does not meet the needs of the pupils.

16. Many pupils live some distance from Howden and, thus, travel to school by bus. This has a bearing on the number of pupils participating in activities after school. Nevertheless, some pupils participate in clubs and teams and talk engagingly about their involvement. Over 100 were recently involved, either on stage or behind the scenes, in the production of a dance activity for a national competition. Weekly rehearsals were very well attended for months before the event.
17. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is good. This is a significant improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils talk with pride and enthusiasm about this improvement. They now know that they are required to behave well in lessons and recognise that this helps them to learn well. They know the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They are able to describe a clear and consistent system of rewards and sanctions and they consider that most teachers use these fairly. Permanent exclusion of pupils from school is now rare. The introduction of a new behaviour code has led to a dramatic reduction in the number of pupils excluded for fixed periods of time. This is because pupils understand the new code and respect its fairness and purpose. Pupils confirm that the school deals quickly and fairly with any incidence of bullying and they, therefore, feel very safe and secure in school. Those pupils with special educational needs, who have improvement in their behaviour as a target in their individual education plans, receive good support and, thus, make good progress in their personal behaviour management.
18. A significant characteristic of the school is the very good relationships throughout the community. Pupils genuinely enjoy being together and are very pleasant to one another. Friends greet one another eagerly in the morning and boys and girls chat together in the corridors and the playground throughout the day. Pupils support each other well in lessons. In a Year 7 personal and social education lesson, for instance, pupils were able to give sensible advice to classmates about how to improve their slide presentations because they were sensitive to their feelings. Pupils also get on well with adults. They comment that they like the staff in the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are easy and relaxed, but respectful. Pupils are only reluctant to listen to the teacher when they are not interested in the work provided.
19. A particular strength of these very good relationships is the ease with which pupils seek to ensure that all are included in school life. Pupils care for the needs of others, who have particular challenges because of their individual circumstances. They recognise that some pupils have particular disabilities and make no fuss about the implications of these situations. A group of girls, for instance, have given up chocolate in order to support a friend with diabetes. Pupils also accept that some have problems in behaving well and make allowances for them.
20. Pupils respect school systems because staff consistently guide and encourage them to recognise and value the purpose of doing so. They move around the school sensibly, taking particular care to accommodate the needs of those pupils in wheelchairs. They are proud of their environment, recognising recent improvements to the buildings. The grounds are very wet because the school is in a low-lying area. Pupils show commendable self-control as they resist the obvious temptation of the puddles. They willingly perform any tasks requested of them. Few pupils proffer

suggestions or organise their own activities, however, and doing so is not a strong feature of school life. Pupils are happy to have things done for them, but show some reluctance to use their own initiative.

21. Pupils attend well because they enjoy their school life and the school is careful to promote good attendance. Attendance levels are above average and getting even better. This is commendable and has a positive effect on the standards that pupils attain. The school tries very hard to dissuade parents from taking their children on holiday during term-time, but these holiday absences prevent Howden's attendance record being very good. Pupils arrive in good time for their lessons and this ensures that work begins on time.

Sixth form

22. Students respond very well to good teaching and are diligent and enthusiastic about their studies. They value the recent efforts made by the two schools to provide a good range of courses. They make it clear that because of the geography of the area in which they live they would be reluctant to travel to other sixth-form centres. Students form very good relationships with teachers and with each other. The added dimension of the joint sixth form provides them with further openings to broaden their friendship groups. There are few ways in which sixth-form students become involved with the rest of the school, partly because most will spend a considerable time each week travelling between the two school sites. As a result, only a handful of students help younger pupils with, for instance, reading and mentoring. This aspect of developing personal maturity is, thus, not as strong outside lessons as it is in the taught courses of the curriculum. Students cope very well with the travelling arrangements between schools, resulting in satisfactory attendance and punctuality to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Teaching in the school is good and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. In around three tenths of lessons, pupils learn very successfully because teaching is very good or excellent. Teaching is good or better in around two thirds of lessons. Improving the overall quality of teaching has been a major priority for the school in recent years. In particular, priority has successfully been given to ways of teaching that improve the performance and behaviour of boys.
24. The school has experienced a significant turnover of staff during the past two years and this has led to the appointment of a relatively large number of young and inexperienced staff. Good strategies have been put in place to support these new staff, who have benefited from being able to be part of the more general thrust to improve teaching in the school. Although these strategies have mainly been successful, about one twelfth of teaching in the school continues to be unsatisfactory or poor.
25. Teaching is very good in history, art and physical education. It is good in science, design and technology, geography and religious education. In no subject is teaching unsatisfactory overall. Teaching is equally good for both younger and older pupils in the school. A great deal of work has been done to encourage teachers to plan their lessons well and this is now a strong feature of most lessons. Because teachers plan well, work is interesting, stimulating and challenging for pupils. As a result, pupils work hard and show a real interest in what they are doing. Teachers have a good grasp of how to present their subjects well. This is a notable feature of teaching in history, physical education and art and design. The area in which there has been most improvement since the previous inspection is in classroom management.

Because of the careful work undertaken by teachers to reinforce the benefits of good behaviour in lessons, behaviour has improved considerably, especially among boys. In turn, this has led to improvements in the standard of their work.

26. Teachers are good at taking the needs of individual pupils into account when they are doing their planning. They, like pupils, have benefited from an increased focus on individual target setting, which identifies what each pupil needs to do to improve. This is seen in the ways in which teachers make good use of their assessment of pupils' work. Teachers provide clear and helpful guidance to pupils through the marking of their work. They also successfully use the outcomes of assessment to design tasks and activities, which meet the needs of pupils.
27. There continues to be significant variation in the quality of teaching in the school. Too many lessons are still either unsatisfactory or poor. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, this is usually because teachers have not given enough attention to their planning. Consequently, they do not focus enough on the needs of the pupils in their classes. In turn, this leads to pupils being asked to do work, which is either too difficult or lacks interest or stimulation. This results in pupils being bored and often misbehaving.
28. A common feature of many lessons is the way in which pupils are not very good at listening to one another. When teachers engage either classes or groups of pupils in question and answer sessions, pupils, who are not directly involved, do not pay attention to what other pupils are saying. Often they take this as a cue for private discussion. This means that they do not learn from the responses of their fellow pupils, or from the teacher. It also means that those pupils wishing to take part in the discussions find it difficult to do so. In lessons where this happens, teachers do not seem to be aware of how best to hold the attention of all the class. Other teachers are, however, very skilled at engaging and involving all members of the class and, when this happens, the whole atmosphere in the lesson is more purposeful and, as a result, pupils learn well.
29. Teachers build into their planning tasks for pupils to undertake beyond the classroom. This work, usually done at home, helps extend and consolidate pupils' learning because tasks are related to the work being done in lessons. Some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework being set. Generally, the range and size of tasks set for pupils are reasonable and tasks become increasingly challenging as pupils get older. The school makes provision for pupils to undertake some of this work in school, either at lunchtime or at the end of the day. This is good because it enables pupils to use the library and computer facilities to support their study. Occasionally, pupils are not good at organising their time to undertake homework tasks and would benefit from more guidance on how to do so, either from subject teachers or their form tutors.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Some particularly good examples of how best to work with these pupils were seen during the inspection in English and modern foreign languages. Teachers pay careful attention to the content of pupils' individual education plans as they prepare lessons. Many aspects of these individual plans are good, but targets tend not to relate specifically to each subject that pupils study. Hence, in some subjects, teachers do not have enough guidance to meet the needs of these pupils fully. Occasionally, this leads to inconsistent use being made by teachers of the learning support assistants. Briefings to assistants before lessons are not detailed enough for them to provide adequate help for pupils. Nevertheless, learning support staff provide effective and caring support for their pupils.

31. The school has effectively made use of the introduction of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy to help focus on teachers' classroom practice. Initially in mathematics and English, this initiative is now helping improve teaching in many subjects. The benefits of work related to the strategy are also seen in the improved application of pupils' language and mathematical skills in other subjects. Teachers of all subjects are aware of how, within their subjects, they can help pupils strengthen these basic skills.
32. The teaching of the skills of reading and writing are good in information and communication technology, as illustrated by a teacher showing key word cards to remind pupils how to construct a newspaper. In French and German, good emphasis is placed on correctness in grammar, but only occasionally do other teachers draw pupils' attention to ways of building up word-patterns. In drama, pupils are taught how to read plays expressively, using gestures and different intonation to put across character. Despite this good practice and some good reinforcement in English lessons in Years 7 and 8, not many teachers take advantage of the twice-weekly reading periods in tutor time to check pupils' progress.
33. Teachers in mathematics make good use of a variety of starter activities in lessons to reinforce number concepts. Good teaching in science, history and geography develops pupils' ability to draw and interpret graphs. In science and information and communication technology, teachers ensure that pupils manipulate and use formulae effectively. Consistently good teaching in design and technology helps pupils measure and weigh accurately. In other subjects, the teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory.

Sixth form

34. The sixth-form teaching undertaken in Howden School, as part of the overall teaching in the partnership of schools, is good. During the inspection, observation concentrated on the five subjects, which were the focus of the inspection, but teaching was also sampled in other subjects. In over four fifths of lessons seen, teaching was good or better. There was no unsatisfactory sixth-form teaching during the inspection.
35. In the five focus subjects, teaching was good in mathematics, chemistry, business studies and geography. It was satisfactory in English. Because the number of students in the sixth form is small, many teaching groups have relatively few students in them. Teachers use this to their advantage because they know the particular strengths and needs of students well and tailor lesson activities accordingly. In turn, each student is able to make good progress. Students are developing the confidence to ask for help and even the reticent students contribute in lessons because they feel safe and confident to do so in small groups.
36. Teachers are aware that many students have started sixth-form study from a relatively low base of attainment. There is, consequently, a tendency to limit the freedom that students have to take responsibility for their own learning. This is, for instance, a feature of some business studies lessons, where students are not encouraged to undertake the different sorts of analysis that would help them develop as independent learners.
37. The setting of clear individual targets helps both teachers and students. These targets help motivate students and guide teachers' planning. The marking and assessment of students' work is thorough and detailed, but, occasionally, teachers do not give extended written guidance to students on the most effective ways of preparing and presenting their work.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

38. The school takes care to provide a curriculum, which meets the needs of all its pupils. Regular review of the courses and subjects provided helps to guide planning for the modifications necessary to meet changing national requirements. As a result, the curriculum offered is both stimulating and relevant to pupils' needs.
39. In the first three years in school, pupils follow all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with a course in religious education that meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils are also able to study a course in drama. This course enables pupils to explore a range of moral and social issues through discussion and role-play. Linguistically able pupils can study French in Years 8 and 9 to complement the study of German, which all pupils study from Year 7. Recognising the importance of developing good computer skills, a course in information and communication and technology (ICT) is followed by all pupils in their first three years in the school. These skills are then developed and applied in other subjects, most successfully in modern foreign languages and in the 'Wired for Learning' initiative in geography in Year 7. The school is successfully beginning to embrace the principles of the ICT strand of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in ICT lessons.
40. As pupils approach the end of Year 9 they are provided with a good range of courses from which to choose the subjects they wish to study in Years 10 and 11. Although pupils are able to make choices, careful monitoring by teachers ensures that all pupils continue to study a good mix of subjects. This means that all pupils are prepared well, both for adult life and for continued study into the sixth form and beyond.
41. The course in Years 10 and 11 is designed in such a way that it meets statutory requirements. All pupils are able to follow a course in religious education and they are able, should they wish to do so, to take a short GCSE course in this subject. Around two fifths of pupils currently in Year 10 have begun to study vocational courses in science, ICT and business education. These courses have been introduced in recognition of the need to provide more variation in the overall programme on offer to meet fully the needs of all pupils. Consideration is being given to extending the range of such courses offered in future years.
42. All pupils are able to follow a course in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The course adequately covers the required elements of sex and relationships education and drugs awareness education. Whilst this provision for PSHCE is satisfactory overall, it requires further co-ordination in order to improve standards. Also required is additional training of those that teach this subject in order that they are able to provide consistent experiences for all pupils. Recent work has been done to modify the PSHCE course in order to meet the requirement to provide for citizenship education. Alongside this modification, a review has been undertaken of where other subjects contribute to citizenship education. This has enabled staff to prepare a list of citizenship topics within the PSHCE course, but, at the present time, overall provision for this subject is unsatisfactory. Senior managers are aware of this and have plans for improving work on citizenship, including enabling all pupils to receive accreditation at the end of the course.
43. The school teaches careers education and guidance from Year 9 to Year 11 as a separate subject. The emphasis in this course is on providing information rather than advice, with the intention of encouraging pupils to make their own decisions. The

careers education and guidance course is enhanced through liaison with a range of other agencies, including the Connexions service³. Successful visits, for example to Hull University, talks by visiting speakers and attendance at an industry day also help to widen pupils' understanding of the range of options available to them. However, whilst this course is adequate, it lacks vitality in its presentation and the necessary verve to challenge and stimulate pupils and raise their levels of aspiration.

44. One of the school's aims is to provide a challenging curriculum maximising the potential of all pupils. In order to fulfil this aim, all pupils have access to every subject and activity provided. The school pays careful attention to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs have access to all areas of the school's activities and to the same curriculum as other pupils. It makes particularly good provision for pupils with physical disabilities. Those in wheelchairs can, for example, take a full part in design and technology activities because the furniture and equipment are modified to meet their needs. This attention to detail contributes very well to all pupils' academic, personal and social development. The one significant area for further development, recognised by the school, is in ensuring that the curriculum fully meets the needs and challenges the work of the most able pupils⁴.
45. A key issue for the school to deal with after the previous inspection was the preparation and implementation of a policy for literacy development throughout the school. This has been dealt with successfully. Evidence for this is seen in many classrooms, where there are lists of important technical terms and the best examples give spelling hints too. In subjects such as English literature and design and technology, useful writing guidelines are provided to help pupils structure essay plans. An excellent key words booklet has been produced for pupils in Years 7 and 8 and key words for subjects are also provided in the pupils' planners. The school has begun to embrace many ideas from the English strand of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and has explored ways of promoting good literacy standards through work in other subjects. There is still some way to go to ensure that all teachers are consistently using the ideas from the strategy to raise standards of reading and writing.
46. The school has built effectively on the use of numeracy across the curriculum seen at the time of the previous inspection. Good examples of the representation and interpretation of data were seen during the inspection in subjects such as geography, science, history and design and technology. Pupils also model situations by using algebraic formulae in spreadsheets in ICT. As part of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, teachers in all subjects have been able to investigate the development and application of numeracy skills in their subject. To guide this, impressive work has been undertaken to ensure that standard conventions for units, graph drawing and setting out of calculations are used throughout the school.
47. Planning for the use of ICT is evident in most subject areas. The effectiveness of the use of ICT to support learning varies, however, from subject to subject. It is used effectively and makes a good contribution to learning in modern foreign languages. Here, pupils use a range of software programs to help with research and presentation of their work. In geography, involvement in the 'Wired for Learning' project has enhanced the work of Year 7 pupils. In the majority of subjects, improvement in the use of computers since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Some good features were observed in mathematics, English, business studies and design and technology. Year 11 pupils taking food technology, for instance, have made very good use of

³ The Connexions service is a government initiative to support young people aged 13 to 19 in preparation for adult and working life.

⁴ These pupils are often referred to elsewhere as gifted and talented pupils.

computer software to illustrate and present their coursework. Little use of ICT is made to support and develop pupils' work in art.

48. Currently, pupils' achievements in the development and application of ICT skills in other subjects are not properly recognised nor fully assessed. This is because the management and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is inadequate. No systematic check has been made of the work done in subject departments. Although most teachers have completed their training in the use of computer skills there has not been enough on-going support for them to help improve their use of ICT in lessons. The school realises that co-ordination must improve and additional personnel are being recruited.
49. The work undertaken to enrich pupils' curriculum experiences is satisfactory. All pupils are able to have a residential experience at some point during their time at Howden. Pupils are able to take part in a good range of activities, including concerts, productions and sporting events. Teachers enrich some lessons either by inviting guest speakers or by taking pupils out of school on visits or fieldwork trips.
50. The school has improved some of its arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development since the previous inspection. This work is satisfactory overall, with strengths in provision for moral and social development. Teachers, and senior managers in particular, recognise the importance of continuing to develop this aspect of the school's work.
51. The successful attention to improving pupils' behaviour has been a significant example of the school's intent to improve pupils' moral development. Pupils now know and understand how they should behave and respond in different situations. Pupils are also encouraged to care for others and to understand the impact of particular situations and conditions on the lives of other people, both in school and in the wider world. For instance, the school encourages reflection on a range of moral issues during assemblies. This was well illustrated during the inspection when Year 11 pupils were encouraged to reflect on the horrors of the Holocaust. Care for others less fortunate than themselves is also illustrated by the way pupils are encouraged to contribute to charities. For instance, pupils recently collected a 'mountain' of shoe boxes full of necessities for Romania. The entrance hall was piled high and deep with collections of beautifully decorated boxes.
52. Because of the need to improve behaviour and pupils' responses to one another, a strong focus has been placed on pupils' moral development. The school acknowledges that it has somewhat neglected to develop pupils' spiritual awareness at the same rate and this is the main reason why provision for this aspect of pupils' development is unsatisfactory. A notable exception to this is the good contribution made by the religious education department to this aspect of pupils' development. Here, both the content of the curriculum and the style of teaching help pupils gain meaningful insight into deeper feelings and experiences. Elsewhere in the curriculum, not enough attention has been paid to promoting pupils' spiritual understanding. The lack of a daily act of collective worship and the inconsistent use of a 'thought for the day' also represent missed opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual awareness.
53. The school helps pupils experience aspects of British culture by, for instance, arranging visits to theatres and galleries. This complements work in lessons. Religious education makes a significant contribution to this aspect of pupils' development. Teachers in geography, art, music and history also take care to develop good cultural understanding in their teaching. The history department makes a particularly significant contribution to pupils' personal development in rather subtle

ways. Many of the displays around the buildings have been produced by the history department and draw other pupils' attention to cultural traditions and dimensions. Whilst most departments draw pupils' attention to life in other cultures and in other parts of the world, not enough attention is given to the impact of living in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society that Britain has become.

54. Pupils are encouraged to work and play well together and this approach makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. In lessons, pupils are often encouraged to work together in pairs or larger groups and some are encouraged to undertake research in the library. These aspects of study are not consistently developed, however, in all subjects. Some teachers do not encourage pupils, for instance, to listen attentively to what others have to say. There is limited space where pupils can socialise at breaks and lunchtimes. Recognising this, good provision has been made through the use of the attached youth club premises. This is only big enough for one year-group to use the facilities each day, but, nevertheless, represents a very good addition. The dining hall, library and careers library also provide areas where pupils successfully develop their social skills as they work and relax together. Not enough is being done in the school to give pupils the chance to take responsibility or to develop a leadership role. The school council is temporarily dormant and there are no year-group councils. Staff and pupils praise the helpful mentoring system, which encourages a small number of older pupils to give a lead in helping others.
55. The school produces excellent planners, designed to help pupils manage their own work and lives in school and, thus, to make a strong contribution to this aspect of their personal development. Some pupils find these useful, but others fail to use them constructively. This inconsistency arises mainly because pupils are not given enough support by some tutors to ensure that they are used as intended. Currently, some pupils and their tutors do not see the potential of these sessions to contribute to pupils' personal development.

Sixth form

56. Since joining with a neighbouring school it has been possible greatly to increase the range of A Level courses on offer and the curriculum is now satisfactory. The school is aware of the lack of vocational courses, particularly for students not suited to A Level study. However, it has rightly decided to concentrate on providing an academic, rather than a vocational course. Teachers ensure that students, who would benefit from following a more vocationally oriented course, are given good guidance on where they can go to do so.
57. All students follow a course in general studies at their own school. This makes a positive addition to their overall course, but, as it is taught by one teacher, the breadth of approach is restricted. The weekly assembly for sixth-form students has been abandoned and, as a result, general studies time is often used for administrative matters. Although some religious education topics are covered within the general studies programme, the amount is not sufficient to meet statutory requirements. Very few other enrichment activities are provided and only a few students take advantage of the sports facilities available. Students receive careers interviews and guidance through the head of sixth form and a careers adviser with whom they may book an appointment. The school does not provide a separate course in key skills. Instead, each subject teacher takes responsibility for helping students develop their language skills and applying their mathematical and computer skills.
58. Students have 20 minutes with their tutor every day. Because some students need to be at the other school in the afternoon there is no programme of activities, which could

contribute to students' personal development. Many of them feel that time with tutors could be better used.

59. Sixth-form students become mature and sensible young people because the school cares for them and is sensitive to their needs. Teachers work hard in lessons, helping students take increasing responsibility for their own learning. The teacher's energetic style in a Year 12 geography lesson, for instance, ensured that tentative students became more confident as the lesson progressed. Teachers encourage students to think about and participate in activities beyond their studies. They invite speakers to come to school to talk about the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme or career opportunities in the armed forces. They encourage students to take responsibility for more than just their own learning, for instance, in helping younger students in drama lessons.
60. These activities are rare and are not well developed, promoted or co-ordinated enough to ensure that many students benefit. Students are critical of tutor periods because these lack interest and student involvement. Sixth-form students have not been involved in the school council and, thus, do not have this as a means of taking a leading role in school life. There is also no co-ordinated approach for ensuring that aspects of students' spiritual and cultural life are developed in the sixth form.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

61. Howden School takes good care of its pupils and this is a feature of school life recognised and applauded by pupils and parents. Staff pay careful attention to the health and safety of the school community. Risk assessments are undertaken, but individual departments are not yet held accountable for a regular and systematic programme of checks. The school uses the correct child-protection procedures. Training has taken place in the past, but this has not been up-dated recently. Thus, many newly appointed members of staff have not been adequately trained.
62. The identification of need is a key element of care arrangements. Parents are confident that staff know the pupils very well and instantly attend to needs as they emerge. This ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and always have someone to turn to for help and support. Staff provide comfort to troubled or worried pupils and administer first aid to pupils, who are sick or injured. The school has no medical room and this adversely affects the privacy offered to recovering pupils and the provision of first aid. Support staff make significant contributions to school life. They ensure, for example, that information about pupils' needs is communicated very efficiently throughout the school and to parents.
63. Pupils attend regularly because they like the school and they know the school carefully monitors their attendance and quickly follows up absence. The school carefully tracks holidays taken during term-time and can demonstrate the difference this makes to attendance figures over the last five years. This helps to dissuade parents from removing pupils during term for family holidays.
64. Staff expect pupils to behave well. Most teachers make it very clear exactly what they expect and praise pupils for meeting these expectations. They use the merit system well to promote good behaviour and good work. This approach is successful with the vast majority of pupils. Teachers are particularly good at managing those pupils, who find it difficult to conform. They respond very quickly to deteriorating or poor behaviour. For instance, a raised eyebrow was enough to avert a potential disturbance in one Year 8 mathematics lesson. Overall, the school has good

arrangements for promoting good behaviour. These are still improving as the school increasingly achieves a consistent approach. Staff manage poorly behaved pupils very well and plan and provide the support needed to improve behaviour. The inclusion unit is already a very good resource. The accommodation there is outstanding and the support offered is highly skilful and caring. The behaviour, attendance and attitude of a number of pupils have improved as a result. The unit, therefore, makes a vital contribution to removing the barriers to learning for a significant number of pupils. The unit benefits from very good links with other agencies. A multi-agency monthly meeting very successfully co-ordinates the support provided for pupils.

65. The school rarely uses exclusion as the ultimate sanction. It used fixed-term exclusion more frequently last year to ensure that pupils and parents recognised the new code of conduct. The number of pupils excluded for a fixed term is dramatically lower this year. This reflects the school's success in promoting good behaviour. The school community is one in which bullying or harassment, whether racial or otherwise, seldom occurs. This is largely because effective policies for preventing bullying and racist behaviour are successfully implemented.
66. Assessment arrangements are good. Most departments have clear procedures for marking and assessing pupils' work and use these well to identify improvement and to plan future activities. Assessment practice is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. It is still not as good in religious education and music as it is in design and technology and modern foreign languages, where assessment is particularly good. Here, teachers assess every piece of work and grade it according to criteria shared with the pupils.
67. The school helps pupils learn well by providing good support for their academic and personal development. Staff know their pupils well and carefully encourage them to try harder in areas of weakness. The school collects a good range of data about pupils' attainment and departments have access to this information. Departments monitor progress well and almost all analyse results to identify areas for improvement. Pupils recognise their current working grade in the departments where assessment is shared regularly with pupils. Teachers share subject grades with pupils and together they identify future target grades. Howden School produces good annual reports for pupils, so parents and pupils understand the areas for improvement. The school successfully introduced a pupils' review day for pupils and their parents last year. The value of this target-setting session has increased as the school improves its distribution of data to heads of year and tutorial staff.
68. Good procedures are in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs and arranging the necessary support and guidance for them. Arrangements for tracking their attainment and progress are good. The information provided from this tracking is used well to help review pupils' progress towards meeting their individual targets. This helps to raise standards for these pupils.
69. The school already uses a comprehensive system for tracking concerns about attendance, behaviour and attitude. This identifies and tracks any issues about individual pupils and enables the school to plan and provide the appropriate support. A strong feature of this support is the mentoring system for Year 11 pupils. Staff currently help about 30 pupils with one-to-one weekly meetings as a means of helping these pupils fulfil their potential in public examinations.
70. The school is in the process of establishing a system to track both the positive and negative aspects of pupils' personal development and to correlate this with academic

development. Teachers monitor individual improvement and needs, but do not analyse this data at group level. This prevents the school evaluating the performance of different groups of pupils such as the more able.

Sixth form

Assessment

71. Arrangements for assessing students' work are good, starting in September when students calculate their own GCSE points and estimate their AS grades. Many students feel that these estimates are modest and, thus, agree with their teachers to aim higher. Regular reviewing of progress, involving students and parents, ensures that students stay on target. The school gives them extra help if they are likely to fall behind. The overall assessment information on each student is held centrally, with all teachers having their own printed copy. In addition, departments maintain their own detailed records and keep students well informed about the level they are currently achieving.

Advice, support and guidance

72. Students receive good, impartial advice prior to entering the sixth form. The school has learnt from a mistake it made by accepting students for AS level when their GCSE base was not strong enough. This led to about half the year group in 2001 gaining low AS scores and leaving to pursue other more suitable courses at college. Students in both the upper and lower sixth appreciate the availability of their teachers to give advice on university courses and careers, based on their own experiences. This is supplemented by the availability of a careers adviser in school and the wealth of information they receive from the head of sixth form.
73. The advantage of the small sixth form is that students and teachers know each other well and teachers are alert to problems students experience in their studies and personal lives. There is also a good system for communicating absence or concern between the two schools. However, it is unsatisfactory that there are no records kept on individual students to provide an overview of their academic and personal development. Together with the fact that tutors do not see all their tutees every day, this is a gap in the monitoring to support students' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

74. Parents are very supportive and recognise the recent improvements in the school. They appreciate that their children like school and applaud the high expectations that teachers promote. They attribute this to good leadership and management. Comments on questionnaires, at the parents' meeting and in discussions reflect the improving attitudes of parents and the local community to the school. The school works very hard to establish very good relationships with parents. This commitment enables the school to benefit from additional help and resources and encourages parents to play an increasingly significant role within the Howden community.
75. Howden School welcomes its parents and encourages their involvement in school life. The entrance hall is well signposted, open and smart and lively displays illustrate aspects of the life of the school. The friendly and efficient reception staff ensure that parents feel at ease when they arrive. Parents increasingly help with aspects of the curriculum, such as talking about their own experiences of healthy eating, supporting the drama activities, or promoting rugby at Howden. For instance, parents enjoyed practising their historical knowledge as they created a time line in the history

department when visiting the school on open evenings. These contributions not only benefit the wider experience of the pupils, but also ensure that parents have a growing understanding of the school.

76. All staff work hard to involve parents in the education of their children. Although parents have no major concerns about the school, a few queried the implementation of the homework policy. Teachers allocate homework regularly, a feature of school life endorsed by the pupils themselves. All pupils have excellent planners and some make good use of these to convey messages to their parents.
77. Consultation is a strength of the school. The school seeks parents' opinions in order to improve aspects of the school in general and the partnership with parents in particular. It surveys Year 7 parents each year and can, therefore, identify shifts in perception. Most parents reply, showing a willingness to be involved. Parents of pupils with particular difficulties applaud the help the school gives to both pupils and parents. Parents comment that the school keeps in very close touch and always includes them in any discussion, consultation or action.
78. The school provides good information to parents. The prospectus contains the required information. Other information is interesting, detailed and informative. An attractive leaflet has, for instance, been prepared about the bid for specialist school status. The school wrote to parents explaining the Rumanian shoe box appeal and the potential impact of responding to this on pupils' personal development.
79. The governing body offers good support towards greater involvement of parents. Their annual report describes many aspects of school life in detail. This is well illustrated by the way in which it outlines the care, which the school takes to provide wheelchair access. The report omits, however, to provide the required information about special educational needs policy and practice.
80. Teachers write good annual reports for parents. These have improved since the previous inspection and now focus on pupils' achievements. Most reports describe what pupils can and cannot do and give guidance for improvement. Many give detailed targets for improvement. This is particularly true of those departments, such as design and technology, which assess pupils' work constantly and record these assessments for use in the reports. The history department produces especially good reports. They describe the detail of each pupil's performance within specific units of work. These reports are hugely informative and very readable.
81. The inspection team recognises the significant time and attention that all staff devote to developing a genuine partnership with parents. Both formal and informal contacts with the parents of pupils, who have special educational needs, are good. Parents and pupils are now actively involved in the review and target-setting process in line with the guidelines of the 2001 Code of Practice for special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

82. The school has improved considerably in recent years and is now held in high esteem within the local community. This improvement has happened because of firm, clear, decisive leadership of the school, especially from the current headteacher, who has been in post for two years. He has been ably supported by his colleagues and by an increasingly effective governing body.

83. Central to improvement is the fact that the school now has a clear set of aims. These are well articulated and accepted by all members of the school community. These aims form the framework about which the school has developed a long-term strategy for bringing about further improvement. Within this strategy, pertinent priorities are identified.
84. The headteacher has been careful to ensure that the improvements being made are sustainable. This has meant that progress in some areas has been faster than in others. The rate of improvement has been slowed by several changes of staff, but care has been taken to seek to appoint teachers, who are capable of moving the school forward. A re-structuring of the senior management team has been undertaken with the intention of strengthening leadership and improving accountability in management. Some posts in the newly designed senior management team remain to be filled. In the meantime, five senior management posts are, effectively, being filled by three people. Whilst their work has been very impressive in bringing about improvement, the lack of a complete management team has inevitably slowed progress.
85. The school's plan for improvement sets out the agenda for further development over several years. It is carefully constructed following wide consultation. It has, as its main focus, improvement in pupils' learning, brought about by improvements in teaching. Already there are clear signs of this aspect of the plan being successfully implemented. It also identifies as a priority the development of a sense of common purpose and teamwork. This aspect of the plan, too, has been successful. Teachers are now very committed to bringing about the changes necessary to maintain the climate of continual improvement in the school. Recent appointments have strengthened the staff team and the school is now in a strong position to get even better. Overall, the school's targets for improvement are carefully identified and are being achieved.
86. The governing body is much more active, influential and effective than at the time of the previous inspection. Governors give very good support to the headteacher and his colleagues. They are becoming more involved in helping shape the direction in which the school is moving. Through their effective committee structure they are actively involved in all aspects of their role. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to make sure that financial planning has been closely linked to priorities for development. Governors now fulfil their statutory duties, with the exception of ensuring that all pupils and students are able to take part in a daily act of collective worship, that sixth-form students are able to follow a course in religious education and that information about provision for special educational needs pupils is included in the governors' annual report for parents.
87. A major priority has been to enhance the management roles of middle managers. Heads of faculties and departments are now required to be more accountable for their teams of teachers and heads of year have a greater oversight of their tutor teams. This is all part of a move to make all aspects of the school more accountable. These middle managers have been given some training in how to undertake review and evaluation activities and many are beginning to develop these skills in action. Practice is still variable, however. A consequence of this is the continuing variability in the overall quality of teaching in the school. As these managers become more experienced in evaluation strategies, these variations will be diminished. The review programme will also be strengthened when the senior management team is fully in place because it will then be possible to support middle managers more effectively and hold them to account for what is happening in their departments and year group teams.

88. The report following the previous inspection highlighted weaknesses in the co-ordination of work for pupils with special educational needs. This matter has been dealt with well. Both the leadership and management of learning support are now satisfactory. Careful attention is given to the needs of individual pupils and the team of learning support assistants is managed in a flexible and supportive way. Some work remains to be done to bring all processes up to date. The implementation of the 2001 Code of Practice is not yet complete. The school has not yet, for instance, established clear roles and responsibilities, particularly for subject teachers, the key teacher and the co-ordinator for special educational needs, as described in this new Code of Practice. At the moment, the school is not fully utilising the skills and expertise of the co-ordinator in the wider role envisaged in the new arrangement.
89. Careful attention has been paid to the strategic use of resources. In a time of rapid changes of teaching staff, care has been taken to appoint well-qualified teachers. It has been necessary, in recruiting these teachers, to employ many, who are new to the profession. Recognising the potential challenge of so doing, good attention has been paid to the induction of teachers, who are either new to the school or to the profession. As a result, there is a strong sense of teamwork. One parent accurately remarked that 'it feels as if all teachers are now pulling in the same direction'. Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are in place, but performance management is not yet integrated enough with overall school improvement to ensure that its impact is maximised. Teachers are ably supported by a team of learning support assistants, who work mainly with pupils with special educational needs. There is also a hard-working, diligent and impressive team of administrative and support staff.
90. Good work has been undertaken in improving the fabric and appearance of the school. Programmes of re-decoration are complemented by attractive displays of pupils' work and achievements. Resources in departments are adequate and there has been good improvement in resources for developing pupils' information and communication technology skills. The library stock is adequate, but the library is not used well during lessons as a resource for research. Library use is not a common feature in departmental planning. Careful attention is paid to seeking best value in all aspects of the school's work. As a result, the overall improvement in resources has made a good contribution to improving pupils' learning and to raising standards in the school.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

91. Management of the sixth form is satisfactory. The headteacher and senior management team rescued the sixth form from closure by negotiating joint provision with a neighbouring school. The head of sixth form works hard in the day-to-day administration of the sixth form. He meets regularly with the managers from the partner school to discuss operational issues. However, at present, there is no clear structure of responsibilities for strategic planning and the vision for the future of the sixth form is not determined. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching in the sixth form are carried out by members of senior management.
92. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and generally has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. They have contributed well to dealing with the key issues from the previous inspection by supporting the joint arrangement to provide a wider range of courses and to make the

sixth form viable. As a result, the sixth form now gives satisfactory value for money and is not subsidised by the main school.

Resources

93. Overall, the accommodation and resources in the sixth form are satisfactory. Students have a common room, which they also use for study, and there are computers in this room for them to use. They have free access to the library and to the computer rooms when they are not used for classes. They are very happy with the arrangements for their private study and value the fact that teachers are very willing to help them, especially with computer work.

ASSESSMENT FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

94. Assessment procedures for these pupils are good overall. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and other teachers visit primary feeder schools to collect information before pupils arrive in the school. This provides good information upon which to make initial decisions about what support can be provided. Teachers also use a range of assessments when pupils enter the school. This good range of data is supplied to all subject teachers. The writing of individual education plans, or adjustment to existing plans, is based on this data. Teachers from the special educational needs service of the local authority are also involved in testing and assessment. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is carried out each half-term on both a formal and more informal basis. Written and verbal reviews from learning support assistants and subject teachers are also considered as part of this process. Individual education plans are adjusted as necessary as an outcome of this process and subject teachers and other staff are able to suggest targets. Provision for the initial identification of special educational needs is good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

95. In order to maintain and further the improvements being made in the school, staff and governors should give attention to the following issues.

Enhance and develop the skills of subject leaders, by:

- Providing more training, support and guidance in the skills of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning;
- Increasing their involvement in the performance management process in order to ensure that performance management is more fully integrated into whole-school improvement;
- Identifying and sharing good practice throughout the school.

(paragraphs 87, 89, 115, 127, 135, 159, 172, 178, 188 and 213)

Improve the contribution that the school makes to pupils' personal development. Three areas of work are needed to achieve this.

- Help pupils take more responsibility for their learning, by:
 - Requiring pupils to make better use of their planners to manage their work;
 - Enabling pupils to take more responsibility for aspects of school life;
 - Increasing pupil involvement in lessons and other activities;
 - Making better use of tutor periods to support pupil development.
- Improve pupils' spiritual and multi-cultural awareness, by:
 - Providing daily acts of collective worship, which genuinely promote pupils' spiritual development;
 - Making better use of the school's thought for the day;
 - Ensuring that all subjects contribute to raise pupils' spiritual awareness;
 - Improving the contribution that the school makes to preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic society.
- Improve the value and worth of tutor periods, by:
 - Ensuring that tutors make good use of information available to them about pupils to guide their work and further development;
 - Identifying a programme of activities for tutors to use with pupils;
 - Monitoring the quality of tutor periods in order to ensure that all pupils have a worthwhile experience in these sessions.

(paragraphs 29, 36, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 76, 86 and 100)

Sixth form

- Strengthen sixth-form leadership and management, by:
 - Improving clarity about sixth-form responsibility;
 - Clearly defining leadership and management roles and functions;
 - Strengthening management systems with the school's sixth-form partner provider.

(paragraphs 91 and 92)

- Improve the monitoring and recording of students' personal and academic development, by:
 - Defining the role of form tutors;
 - Establishing systems for form tutors to use information available to them about students' work and participation in activities outside lessons.

(paragraph 73)

- Improve the provision for students' personal development, by:
 - Developing a better enrichment programme;
 - Offering all sixth-form students an adequate course in religious education.(paragraphs 57 and 59)

In addition, the school should include the following in its action plan:

Main school

- Complete the implementation of a programme of citizenship education, which meets requirements.
(paragraphs 42 and 124–127)

Sixth form

- Enable all students to take part in a daily act of collective worship.
(paragraph 86)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	110
	Sixth form	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		78

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - 11							
Number	4	27	41	28	9	1	0
Percentage	4	24	37	26	8	1	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	3	11	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	18	64	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	698	47
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	117	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.2

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	78	72

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	31	53	57
	Girls	44	49	45
	Total	75	102	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	50 (74)	68 (75)	68 (67)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (40)	49 (48)	27 (23)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	62	55
	Girls	52	56	50
	Total	93	118	105
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (48)	79 (68)	70 (69)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (23)	50 (43)	35 (43)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	75	76	151

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	35	74	74
	Girls	40	74	75
	Total	75	148	149
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50 (38)	98 (94)	99 (95)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	35.7
	National	39.8

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	14	28

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All
School	7.1 (13.7)	13.0 (15.5)	11.0 (14.4)
National	* (16.9)	* (17.7)	* (17.4)

* National comparison data for AS/A level results are not yet available. Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
733	97	0
8		
1		
2		
1		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	331

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	24.6
Key Stage 4	20.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	2 224 359
Total expenditure	2 201 368
Expenditure per pupil	2 955
Balance brought forward from previous year	83 647
Balance carried forward to next year	-3 107

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	20.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	20.5
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 10%

Number of questionnaires sent out	745
Number of questionnaires returned	77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	44	5	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	49	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	64	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	65	14	4	0
The teaching is good.	18	71	5	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	55	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	47	4	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	56	6	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	45	52	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	57	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	57	13	3	10

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed satisfaction with the school and identified many aspects where there had been significant improvement in the past two years. Parents felt that the staff were dedicated and committed to the needs of pupils and students.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Most lessons are well planned and interesting to pupils.
- Older pupils use information and communication technology effectively to draft their writing.
- Marking is helping pupils to improve their work, especially in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the attainment level of boys in Years 9 and 10.
- Introducing a wider range of strategies to help pupils to listen more carefully.
- Taking better advantage of the time devoted to reading in Years 10 and 11.

96. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when English had some unsatisfactory elements in standards and teaching at all stages. Results are now closing on the average and teaching is better.
97. In national tests for 14 year olds, results improved between 1999 and 2001, but there was a significant dip in 2002. The results of boys in particular were well below the national average in this year. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards have been inaccurate and, as a consequence, further training has been provided to help them grade pupils' work more accurately. GCSE English results were below average in 2002. There was an improvement in the proportion gaining A* to C grades compared with the previous year, but the school was still some way below the national average. All pupils gained at least a grade G. Less able pupils made satisfactory progress. A large number were entered for English literature in 2002, where results were also below the national average. The difference in the performance of boys and girls was less marked at age 16 in English. In comparison with other subjects in the school, English results were below average.
98. Against this disappointing picture there are signs that the school has halted the slide and that standards are improving, especially among older pupils. Expectations still need to be higher in Year 9, where the boys have a poor attitude to work in lessons. The attainment of the current Year 7 pupils is higher than in previous years and they are achieving well.
99. Pupils approaching the end of Year 9 are working at average standards. More able pupils are very articulate. In a Year 9 lesson on 'Macbeth', the girls made perceptive comments on the likely tensions that might arise between Banquo and Macbeth himself. In some lessons, the discussion work is spoiled by persistent interruptions from a significant number of pupils. They find it hard to listen and this disrupts the learning of others. Teachers set clear time targets for work, but do not insist on quiet so that pupils can think for themselves. The effects of this are also seen in the writing. Work is very interesting, but often poorly presented with no thought for those, who will read it. Pupils do better when they use word-processors because they take pride in the layout and check their spellings. There are some good examples of fluent writing in the younger classes, where one pupil adopted the style of Martin Luther King with a dream that 'all evil drug barons would be brought to justice and made to pay for crimes against humanity'. Pupils read satisfactorily and learn from the very good

examples set by their teachers. They are encouraged to read in the library and those with reading difficulties have benefited from paired reading sessions with other pupils. Drama teachers give pupils rehearsal time for reading aloud and this helps them greatly.

100. Standards seen in Year 11 classes are in line with the national average, but Year 10 standards are lower. The approach to written homework is more careful, though few concentrate well on writing in class. There is not a climate of quiet working in many lessons. When this does happen, as in a Year 11 class for lower-ability pupils, boys in particular make very good progress in the lessons. The teacher tunes in to their needs and, without breaking the pace of the lesson, encourages them to develop their ideas. There are some good answers to questions set on literature and on the media. More able boys produce very clear and detailed responses, often using word-processors. Pupils read as expected at this stage, but the extra lessons devoted to reading in tutor time add little to their development because the range of reading and pupils' understanding are rarely checked. Discussion lessons are often lively and informative, but there is too much time wasted by the boys always looking for distractions.
101. The standard of literacy across other subjects is satisfactory. It is good in geography because pupils are made to think about the words they use and how they can improve their writing style. Drama teachers link work on plays to Shakespeare texts, which pupils study for examinations in English. In modern foreign languages, good emphasis is placed on the structure of grammar and teachers in most other subjects list key words in their classrooms. Teachers of information and communication technology and design and technology helpfully provide visual aids and writing frames to support pupils' written work. Literacy is not widely promoted in mathematics and music and in science the approach is inconsistent.
102. The teaching of English is satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and follow a clear structure. The better lessons build up in pace and difficulty as teachers skilfully introduce new layers of challenge at the right time. Too few teachers expect pupils to work hard in lessons. Pupils enjoy English, but they could work much harder. Teachers set homework regularly and this helps pupils to learn independently. The marking is usefully directed at how pupils can improve, especially in Years 10 and 11. In these classes, the teachers give very clear indications of the expected levels of achievement. This is not so apparent in earlier year groups.
103. The leadership and management of the subject are sound overall. The management of the subject has improved recently, with planning more coherent and teachers working well as a team. The department has a clear vision of how to raise standards and now pupils need the same direction to raise their expectations in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- In recent years, GCSE results have consistently been above the national average.
- Pupils leaving the school in recent years have achieved well, relative to their attainment on entry.
- The management and commitment of the head of department has maintained standards during a time of staffing upheaval.

Areas for improvement

- Consistency in the quality of teaching.
- A wider range of teaching styles, including the use of resources and group work.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils.

104. In 2002, results in National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were average when compared with all schools nationally. This represents good progress, given the mathematical ability of the pupils when they joined the school. There has, however, been a steady decline in mathematics results at the end of Year 9 since 1999, when standards in national tests were well above average. Most of this decline is accounted for by a decline in girls' results. The school is aware of this decline and has identified that it is because of difficulties in recruiting and retaining good teachers of mathematics. The school has taken decisive action to remedy this situation and to reverse the fall in mathematics standards in national tests. As a result of this action, pupils currently in Year 9 are working at average standards and making satisfactory progress. There is still some variability in teaching quality and this reduces the progress made by a small number of pupils, but this, too, is being dealt with.
105. In 2002, GCSE results were above the national average, with boys and girls performing equally well. In 2001, GCSE results were also above the national average, but, in this group of pupils, girls performed better than boys. These results represent satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11. Pupils currently in Year 11 are working at average standards, with no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. With more stable staffing, teaching is improving in the department and, as a result, pupils are becoming confident learners and are enjoying the subject. This is helping them to make steady progress in their work.
106. Pupils successfully apply their mathematical skills and abilities in many subjects. They manipulate formulae well in science and can apply them accurately when using spreadsheets in information and communication technology. They draw and interpret graphs to above average standards in several subjects. For example, in history, their ability to handle data enabled them to understand the causes of the Wall Street Crash. Pupils weigh and measure confidently and accurately in design and technology. The good leadership of the head of the mathematics department in creating links and holding numeracy training with other departments has improved standards across the school.
107. Pupils' attitudes, overall, are satisfactory, but vary enormously because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Occasionally, pupils work with enthusiasm. A Year 9 boy with special educational needs, for instance, showed genuine enthusiasm when fitting together two structures made of cubes. This joy was reinforced when the teacher asked the pupil to explain it to the class. The

mathematics involved in this discovery was well beyond what might be expected in this class. It was only possible because of the open-ended nature of the work and genuine discussion instigated by the teacher's high expectations. However, attitudes to learning in most lessons were just satisfactory because pupils were expected to learn by doing exercises from textbooks. Rarely are pupils able to work together, either to use resources or to try out ideas with one another. In a significant minority of lessons, behaviour was unsatisfactory because pupils became bored with copying information or were asked to do work they felt they already understood well.

108. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. In the few very good lessons seen, teachers challenged pupils and made them think hard about their mathematics, regardless of their ability. In these lessons, the teachers varied activities well to help retain the interest and motivation of pupils. However, most lessons are satisfactory because, whilst they structure learning at suitable levels and assess well, teachers rarely enthuse pupils. Some teachers make good use of computer demonstrations to illustrate graphs, but pupils rarely work independently on computers. All teachers make good use of activities to introduce lessons that enhance pupils' numeracy skills, as advocated by the mathematics strand of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. However, the main part of lessons is usually too heavily teacher-dominated, with even the best teachers expecting pupils to listen for too long. In too many lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. Some teachers have difficulty managing classes. This is because they take too long to start lessons and do not have the skills required to motivate pupils. Their expectations of pupils' behaviour or work standards are not high enough. Sometimes they resort to asking pupils to copy down information or repeat work previously done well.
109. Staffing has changed considerably over recent years and this has been a major factor in falling standards. When the department had stable staffing, pupils consistently made good progress. Difficulties in appointing mathematics teachers have partly been overcome and this is helping reverse the fall in standards. Some staffing problems remain, however. The school is working hard to overcome this problem. The new head of department has managed the department well under these circumstances. He has maintained standards at the end of Year 11 by astutely deploying his team of teachers and supporting them in their lesson planning and guiding them in the management of pupils.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in all years.
- Good use is made of practical investigations to help pupils understand scientific principles.
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- The good working relationship between pupils and teachers gives pupils the confidence to both ask and answer questions.
- The use of end-of-unit assessment to monitor progress and to set individual learning targets for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers to enhance pupils' learning.
- The monitoring of teaching to ensure consistency and the spread of good practice.
- The use of marking to give pupils more help and guidance.

110. The standard of pupils' work on entry to the school is below average, but it is improving. Pupils make good progress in science throughout the school. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm this progress. By the end of Year 9, standards are average and, by the end of Year 11, they are above average.
111. In 2002, test results at the end of Year 9 were average, as they have been for the past three years. Classroom observations and analysis of pupils' work show that standards are improving. This is mainly due to the introduction of new teaching schemes that provide a wider variety of learning activities for pupils. Pupils are also encouraged to improve their science because they are given individual achievement targets. Boys generally do better than girls, but the new approaches to learning have narrowed the gap between them. Pupils generally obtain better results in science than in English, but, until last year, not as good as in mathematics. Practical work is widely used to help students understand the underlying principles of science. This is particularly effective with pupils with special educational needs and, consequently, they too make good progress. Pupils make good use of their writing and speaking and listening skills. These are particularly helpful when pupils discuss their activities and present their own conclusions. Their mathematical skills are effectively applied in the collection and analysis of data and in the use of graphs to illustrate and interpret their findings. Although the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the previous inspection, pupils do not use it widely enough, either to support their learning or to present their work.
112. In 2002, results at GCSE were just above average with boys doing better than girls. All pupils gained at least a G grade in science. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are improving. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Girls are now achieving as well as boys in lessons. These improvements are mainly due to the added support given to pupils considered to be at the borderline of GCSE grades C and D. Girls benefit from this extra support by gaining in confidence and, consequently, taking a greater interest in their learning in science. This means that pupils with average ability are currently making the same good progress as the others. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to apply scientific method to their practical investigations and, hence, gain good marks in this aspect of the course. Pupils make some good use of computers in their experimental work, but generally ICT is not used frequently to aid teaching and learning. There is a shortage of suitable computers in the laboratories.
113. Pupils are usually willing workers and show an interest in science. However, on the few occasions where teachers do not make the behaviour rules clear or involve pupils in their learning, there is too much chatter not related to their work and pupils work more slowly. Pupils work well together during practical work, where they often combine in groups. They are willing to listen to each other. This is a positive outcome of the careful attention that teachers pay to encouraging pupils to value the contribution of others. The working relationships between teachers and pupils are good and pupils are, thus, confident to both ask and answer questions.
114. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils clearly benefit from planned learning activities like role-play, discussions, creative writing and practical work. Very good lessons fully involve pupils in their learning right from the outset. Such lessons start with an activity that immediately catches the attention and develops at pace with regular changes of learning activity and frequent checks of understanding. For example, at the start of a Year 10 lesson, pupils were amazed by the visual demonstration of the dangers of an unearthed electric heater. In the same lesson, a

clever demonstration of a current circuit breaker made learning easier, relevant and more enjoyable for the pupils. This was a good example of an enthusiastic teacher producing enthusiastic scientists. In a very small proportion of lessons, where teaching was clearly not as good, pupils were either involved in trivial activities or were not able to take part in a practical activity. The marking of books is, generally, not detailed or helpful enough, though there are some good examples of helpful comments. Pupils require more information on their strengths and areas for improvement in order to help them become more responsible for their own learning.

115. The department is well led and managed. The weekly departmental meetings are effectively used to monitor curriculum development and learning. A new scheme of work has been introduced for Years 7 to 9 and focuses on teaching and learning. Assessments are accurate and are used to set demanding learning targets for pupils. New teachers are well supported, but there is a need to review the work of all teachers in order to share the good practice in science teaching among all members of the department.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching helps pupils to learn well, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The standard of pupils' work is well above average in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology.
- The use of sketchbooks by all pupils.

116. Pupils make good progress in their first three years in school and, by the end of Year 9, standards are above average. In Years 10 and 11, good progress is maintained and pupils achieve very good standards in GCSE examinations.
117. Teacher assessments, carried out at the end of Year 9 in 2001 and 2002, for both boys and girls are well below the national average. Evidence of work seen during inspection suggests that these assessments were unduly hard. This provides evidence that teachers require some training in making accurate assessments of pupils' work. By the age of 14, most pupils can make observational drawings that are of above-average standard. Pupils have also developed good use of colour, tone and texture, resulting in finished pieces of work that have depth, vibrancy and are well composed. Students also gain a varied experience of three-dimensional art, often inspired by the work of famous sculptors. They develop sufficient skill to produce good standards of freestanding sculpture using a variety of techniques and materials. They can discuss their work satisfactorily using a basic art vocabulary.
118. In Years 10 and 11, pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress. This is reflected in their GCSE results, which have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above the national average. In 2002, all pupils taking art gained at least a G grade. The number of pupils gaining high grades was twice the national average. Pupils perform better in art than they do in others subjects with no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.
119. The standard of work of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is well above average in most aspects of the subject. By Year 11, pupils' observational drawing skill is above average, their use of colour is sophisticated and all their finished work is well

composed and has depth and vibrancy. Although pupils have developed a good art vocabulary, a number of pupils are reluctant to give a detailed description of how well they are achieving.

120. Teachers both expect and achieve very good standards of behaviour. Pupils listen and observe demonstrations attentively. They approach the work with enthusiasm, either individually or when working in a group. A clear set of classroom rules and routines ensure lessons start promptly and teachers are able to give further instruction and introduce new activities as the lessons progress. Pupils enjoy both the structure and pace of lessons and benefit from individual teacher support. Homework, personal study and research in sketchbooks all provide evidence that students are able to work independently.
121. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have a good command of the subject and are, thus, able to demonstrate artistic skills and the use of art terminology. This clearly helps pupils to develop their own artistic skills and vocabulary. Pupils' progress is good because lessons are carefully planned. They have clear objectives, a variety of activity and well-prepared resources, which are used creatively. The art curriculum is covered to a high standard. Most notable is the systematic approach to the development of observational drawing, composition and colour work. Much work is inspired by, and benefits from, reference to the work and techniques used by a range of famous artists. Lessons often involve individual tutorials ensuring that pupils of all abilities are well supported. The specific individual needs of all pupils are met and, thus, they make good progress. Teachers command the full respect of pupils, with whom they have good working relationships.
122. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has a clear vision of how the subject should be taught. Departmental documentation is clear and comprehensive. Development plans contain departmental and whole-school targets. With the exception of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, assessment procedures are accurate. They are thorough and involve a good mixture of pupils' self-assessment, individual review and the regular marking of work. The two art teachers work well as a team, with the head of department regularly monitoring lessons and providing on-going support each day. Homework is regularly set and marked promptly. Visits to galleries are regularly arranged.
123. Both teachers attend a range of external courses to improve teaching and develop their knowledge of the subject. The head of department provides in-house training as part of a genuine team approach based on mutual support. Although recent efforts have been made to improve teachers' expertise, the use of information and communication technology for both research and art-making is underdeveloped. Pupils benefit from links with the community, such as a current sculpture workshop with staff at Howden Minster.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The curriculum is planned well within the personal, social and health education programme and across all subjects.
- Citizenship makes a clear contribution to pupils' personal development.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of citizenship.
- The systematic assessment of pupils' work.

124. Citizenship education is in the early stages of development. It is taught as part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and supported by related themes and topics covered in other subjects. Topics are well mapped across departments and provide a clear and appropriate curriculum across all years. Pupils also have other opportunities to develop an understanding of responsible citizenship and the democratic process through activities such as elections to the school and year councils. The school council requires additional development if it is to make an even more worthwhile contribution to citizenship education. Overall, these activities have the potential to enhance the development of citizenship to ensure that, by the end of Year 11, pupils have a clear knowledge and understanding of what responsible citizenship entails.
125. Some elements of citizenship were observed in PSHE lessons during the inspection, but there was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of the overall contribution that PSHE lessons are making to citizenship education. The teaching of citizenship by a dedicated, but largely untrained team of teachers in PSHE is a matter of some considerable concern. There has been very little training for this subject since its introduction. The limited amount of time available to teach the subject effectively potentially lowers the standards that can be achieved in all years, but especially in Years 10 and 11.
126. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in citizenship are not in place and plans to introduce pupils' self evaluation are in the early stages of development. It is not possible, currently, for pupils or parents to know what progress is being made.
127. The leadership and management of the subject require development. The teaching of citizenship is well supported by a comprehensive scheme of work. There are, however, important areas that require urgent development. The monitoring of the contributions made by other subjects and the monitoring of both teaching and pupils' work are recognised as vital aspects needing attention. Well-focused training is needed to promote higher standards in PSHE and citizenship. Citizenship has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, both in terms of subject content and the use of teaching styles that encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes and values. The good progress made in some curriculum areas is a starting point for further development in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are above average.
- Teaching is good, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The use of assessment to guide pupils' learning is strong.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.

Areas for improvement

- Computer-aided design and manufacturing opportunities.
- The contribution of the subject to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Effective evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Accommodation, resources and timing of lessons.

128. Pupils enter the school with standards just below the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all years. Teacher assessments and inspection evidence show that, at the end of Year 9, pupils reach average standards. At the end of Year 11, standards are above average. Pupils attain equally well in all the specialist areas of this subject, making good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
129. The achievement of all pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. In 2002, results at GCSE were above average. The number of pupils obtaining at least a G grade was above the national average and there was also good achievement at the higher grades. The 2002 GCSE results maintained a steady improvement in design and technology results over the last four years.
130. Pupils have good attitudes to design and technology. They respect the resources and materials teachers provide for their use and work with concentration and enthusiasm. Behaviour is often very good. Pupils benefit from clear lesson structures, where teachers use established routines to ensure pupils settle quickly and are prepared to work. This means that good relationships have been established with teachers and between pupils. Pupils work well in teams and help each other responsibly. The department works hard to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are included in lessons, providing adjustable workbenches and liaising effectively with learning support staff to ensure that they learn successfully. Under the clear direction of staff, pupils handle tools, equipment, machines and materials with increasing confidence and skill and with due regard for health and safety. The subject contributes well to the development of pupils' social learning. However, not enough attention is paid to how the subject could contribute better to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
131. The specialist expertise of teachers is well deployed and the quality of teaching is good. Lesson planning is consistently good and teachers work hard to ensure that the limited resources available are used most effectively for the pupils' benefit. Where teaching and learning are good, teachers use questioning well to establish pupils' understanding, rather than just testing their recall of tools and tasks. Often, teachers plan lessons so that pupils can draw on their previous learning and this helps pupils to place the current work in context. As a result, pupils become more actively involved in their learning and improve their understanding. Learning is less effective when a small number of pupils are allowed to dominate question and answer sessions.

132. The department has written well-designed schemes of work, which ensure that the work increases in difficulty as it builds on what pupils have previously learned. These schemes of work show where contributions can be made to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy, but this needs further development within lessons.
133. Assessment is well managed and supports the effective learning of all pupils. In Years 7 to 9, each project is assessed using National Curriculum levels. This means that pupils understand how well they are doing and identify how they can reach higher levels. Every GCSE pupil knows the grade they are predicted to gain, based on their prior attainment. Where this has been well explained, pupils understand how their grades were established and many are determined to achieve above their predictions. In Years 10 and 11, teachers have prepared GCSE coursework guides to help pupils to organise their work and understand the criteria against which their work will be assessed.
134. The department offers an effective and varied curriculum. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory in all aspects of the subject. However, access to ICT networked rooms for group work using specialist design software is not sufficient and the department's ICT resources, particularly in computer-aided manufacturing for use in resistant materials and textiles, are inadequate.
135. Leadership and management of the department are very good and good progress has been made since the last inspection. The further development of evaluation of learning is now required in order to identify and share departmental strengths. Teachers have to work very hard to overcome the constraints of the relatively short time allocation for the subject and the short sessions timetabled. A comparative weakness is the lack of cleanliness in the workshops. Dust accumulated on equipment and work surfaces could constitute a long-term health hazard. Not all of the accommodation is satisfactory. Some rooms are inappropriate to the teaching requirements and furniture and other equipment needs updating.

DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching sets high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of moral issues.
- The accommodation and resources are positive motivating factors for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- More consistently good standards at GCSE.

136. Drama is taught to all pupils in Years 7 to 9 and is an option subject for GCSE. Standards are average at 14 years. Many lessons have good pace and energy. Teachers make pupils think hard. This encourages most pupils, including several, who find learning difficult, to try their best. For example, when they were asked to dramatise a play-script as if they were on video camera, responding to such commands as 'slow-motion'- 'rewind'- 'pause', most produced commendable performances. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their performances from Year 7 onwards, supported by the teachers' challenging and thought-provoking questions such as, 'Why is improvisation in a play not always a good idea?' Teachers also ask

pupils to consider how to get the best out of key lines in a play. This supports their literacy development and prepares them for work on Shakespeare in English.

137. Results at GCSE in 2002 were above the national average. In the current Year 11, attainment is below the national average and reflects standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2001. Pupils enjoy the subject and the more able articulate different dramatic conventions clearly, such as how 'thought-tracking' helps to develop characterisation while 'tableau' provides a symbolic snapshot from a scene. They benefit from regular practice at evaluating performances and this helps them to improve their own productions.
138. The quality of the teaching is good. Pupils are given very clear parameters within which to work in the drama studio. Teachers have good expectations of pupils and this results in lively and productive lessons. The drama curriculum is well planned to allow pupils the chance to consider moral dilemmas such as the plight of refugees, the horrors of racism and the importance of aspects of citizenship such as elections. Pupils also learn good social skills in their group rehearsals. The very good accommodation and resources are well used and add to the motivation of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers provide interesting lessons, which pupils enjoy and in which they learn well.
- The good contribution of geography to pupils' literacy development.
- Practical fieldwork contributes well to high-quality practical work for GCSE.
- The 'Wired for Learning' project supports both literacy and the use of computers and results in very high quality work in Year 7.
- The use of analysis of results in reducing areas of pupil underachievement.

Areas for improvement

- Chances for pupils to discuss issues and give verbal presentations.
- Extending the 'Wired for Learning' project into other year groups.
- The progress made by pupils in middle sets.
- Better use of National Curriculum levels to guide both pupils and parents.

139. Pupils arrive from their primary schools with very different experiences of geography. They make very rapid progress in Year 7 and continue to develop so that, by the end of Year 9, standards are at the national average. Geography is a popular choice for GCSE, especially for less able pupils, who, nevertheless, continue to make good progress. By the end of Year 11, standards compare favourably with national averages.
140. Teacher assessments of Year 9 in 2002 showed that pupils were close to the national average. The department is involved in a computer initiative, 'Wired for Learning', sponsored by International Business Machines (IBM). This is already raising standards of literacy and computer use in Year 7, but has not yet been extended into Years 8 and 9 where similar support would raise attainment. Progress made by more able pupils is good, whilst that made by pupils in middle sets is just satisfactory. This is particularly true for boys, who have difficulty in listening carefully enough to teachers and, who make slower progress because of this inattentiveness. Lower-ability pupils work hard and make good progress in carefully structured lessons that support them well.

141. In 2001, GCSE results were broadly average. They were average for A* to C grades and were above the national average for A* to G grades. In 2002, results were better, with the number gaining A* to C grades being above the national average. In both years, boys performed less well than girls and this difference was slightly greater than the national average. The department recognises this and is developing teaching styles to improve the progress of middle-attaining pupils, of whom the majority are boys.
142. Pupils clearly enjoy their geography lessons. Their positive attitude shows in their prompt arrival at lessons and in their generally good classroom behaviour. Pupils take great care with their presentation and many spend extra time undertaking research for their homework. They perform well, both in groups and when working on their own. This means that the amount and quality of classroom work is good. Whilst pupils are generally good at reading aloud, they are less confident in discussions, where they prefer to give short, factual answers. Few have developed advanced skills of evaluation and discussion and many, especially boys, can be inattentive when they need to listen to other pupils. Teachers know this and focus on developing speaking and listening skills, particularly in Years 7 and 8. This is beginning to improve standards in written, as well as spoken, presentations.
143. Practical work takes place in every year group and is a departmental strength. Pupils really enjoy this hands-on element and their fieldwork skills improve steadily. Year 8 pupils, for instance, measure the microclimate on various parts of the school site. This involves them in measuring temperatures and wind speeds and they use their numeracy skills well to chart and graph their findings and explain their significance. Pupils with statements of educational need play a full part in these practical sessions, as they do in all lessons. The learning support assistants ensure that these pupils contribute fully to lessons. When they attend school regularly, these pupils make very good progress. By the end of Year 10, all pupils use a wide range of research techniques to collect data in the nearby town of Beverley. Confident use of computers enables sophisticated analyses of the central business and shopping areas and pupils describe trends they discover and explain the reasons for them.
144. Teaching is good. Well-planned lessons enable teachers to share clear goals with pupils and this supports their learning. Teachers provide a range of activities and make good use of video and text-based materials. The most effective lessons are fast moving and contain clear reviews of what pupils have learned. Challenging homework extends pupils' knowledge and often involves the use of computers. Pupils know what they are expected to do and they work hard to achieve success. Clear progress targets and the regular and careful marking of pieces of work help them to improve. The teachers' written comments give good advice and acknowledge the efforts pupils make. Pupils currently do not understand the descriptions of National Curriculum attainment levels fully and need clearer guidelines if they are to monitor their own progress more effectively.
145. Well-equipped classrooms are bright, with attractive displays of pupils' work, specialist words and information on current worldwide issues. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes. Their sophisticated posters make powerful statements about the misuse of world resources. Pupils make their own subject dictionaries containing specialist geographical words and definitions and use these effectively to check their subject spellings.
146. A good feature of the department is the variety of teaching styles within and between lessons. Teachers share ideas and new staff are well supported. Well-managed

resources mean that pupils always have access to interesting materials that support the aims of lessons. The departmental staff share a clear vision for the teaching of geography and the pupils absorb teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning does not yet identify clearly enough the reasons for pupils' underperformance and this is limiting progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the use of computers and in the quality of teaching.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The teaching of history is very good, with some excellent features.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Very positive relationships exist that encourage and support learning and pupils' personal and academic development.
- Very good response and behaviour by pupils contributes very well to a good learning environment for the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Levels of attainment, particularly those of boys.
- Access to information and communication technology.
- Pupils' reading about history, both in and out of school.

147. Standards at the age of 14 have, in recent years, been below average, with girls performing better than boys. In GCSE examinations, results are below average. In 2002, overall results were below average, though girls did much better than boys. Their results were above the national average for girls, while boys' results were well below average.
148. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently approaching the end of Year 9 are working at average levels. All pupils make good progress in their first three years in the school. They develop a wide range of subject skills, including interpretation of evidence, prioritising of historical issues and the understanding of chronology. They use a wide range of materials, including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, guides for their writing and a range of primary and secondary evidence. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to analyse, for instance, the complex issue of which sections of the German population benefited from Nazi rule in the period 1933-1945 and which suffered. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with other pupils because their teachers know them well and provide effective guidance in lessons. The most able pupils make good progress, particularly through their oral contributions in class.
149. The attainment of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is average. Pupils effectively develop their analytical skills and achieve well in lessons. For example, Year 11 pupils analysed in depth the causes and the consequences of the great depression in the United States following the Wall Street crash in 1929.
150. Teaching is very good for pupils in all year groups. Teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious love for it and this commitment is strongly communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of methods that support learning well. Homework is set regularly and marking is accurate and detailed, thus, supporting pupils' progress, learning and

achievement. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to become independent learners, capable of evaluating their own performance. Such teaching effectively supports pupils' personal and academic development.

151. Pupils learn successfully. They behave very well, with high concentration and focus. Very good relationships underpin learning because pupils listen intently to each other and work well together in all years. In several lessons, the pupils work very effectively in mixed pairs, a method of organisation thoughtfully employed by the department, mindful of supporting the attainment of both girls and boys.
152. In all years, but particularly in Years 7 to 9, pupils' work displays a lack of wider reading. Reading skills are being developed and all pupils, including boys, are required to read. Some pupils, however, do not always pick up the relevant points of what they are reading. There are not enough textbooks to allow pupils to take them home in order to review or revise their work or prepare for the next lesson. Moreover, pupils are not able to gain regular access to computers to support their understanding of the subject or to ensure a high level of presentation of their work.
153. The subject is very well led and managed. The head of department has produced documents, which are informed and informative and, which underpin much of the good work of the department. She has a clear and realistic vision for the future of the department that encompasses the challenges and opportunities that are before it. She is a very good role-model of commitment to continually improving standards. In this, she receives excellent support from her colleagues in the department. Together, they form a strong team. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection and the department is well on the way to bringing even more success for its pupils in terms of both their academic attainment and their enjoyment of history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are good.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring and co-ordinating of cross-curricular provision.
- Consistency in the staff teaching the subject.
- Quality of provision for non-examination pupils in Years 10 and 11.

154. Teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed attainment to be below average. However, this was an improvement on previous years. There were no GCSE examinations in ICT in the school for 2002. Current Year 11 pupils are working on a GNVQ programme.
155. Overall, standards of work produced by Year 9 pupils match national standards. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their ability is below average. However, over their first three years in the school, pupils make good progress. This is the result of having an ICT lesson each week in all of Years 7 to 9. These lessons encourage pupils to become independent and discerning users of the technology. Boys and girls achieve at a similar level. Those pupils identified with special educational needs

achieve equally well and in some instances exceed expectations in relation to their performance in other subjects. They benefit from access to spell checkers and can present work with greater accuracy by using computer programs. All pupils have knowledge of their current level of achievement and are made aware of their target levels. They are able to work towards these target levels because they have a sound knowledge of word processing, spreadsheets, databases and control technology. Pupils work on web-site design and the more able pupils show a good level of critical evaluation of their work. Personal development is supported well through research into such topics as genetically modified foods and vivisection.

156. Pupils in Year 11 are working towards the completion of Part One GNVQ. The portfolios seen, and the work observed in lessons, show a level matching expectations for this stage in the programme. Current performance suggests a good level of completion of portfolios will be achieved. Pupils have a good understanding of the assessment criteria, knowing what is necessary to move from pass to merit or distinction levels. Pupils on this course make satisfactory progress. Those pupils not taking the GNVQ course do not make the same level of progress, but do continue to develop their ICT skills further because they study the subject for one lesson per fortnight. There are chances, in other subjects, to use ICT, but the quality of this experience varies from subject to subject. Some Year 10 pupils are taking an applied GCSE course in ICT. They are beginning improve their knowledge and understanding through examining the use of technology in business. Pupils are able to see the theoretical aspects of the subject applied because of the growing links the school has with local businesses.
157. Attitudes to the subject are good. Many pupils have access to computers at home and, therefore, understand the responsibilities that go with their use. Most pupils are willing to work independently and demonstrate that they are able to do so. When necessary they request assistance, from peers or teachers, in a polite and mature way. Pupils work well with teachers and with other pupils. Occasionally, their attention wanders, but this happens only when the lesson does not provide enough challenge or they are not actively involved. Some pupils in Year 11 not studying for an examination lack motivation, but those in the lower years concentrate well. Examination groups show a positive approach and a desire to succeed.
158. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some good and very good lessons were observed. The better lessons are well planned, with objectives that are clearly explained to pupils. Pupils are left in no doubt about what is required by the end of the lesson. Pupils respond well to full involvement in their learning and apply their knowledge, showing that they have a good understanding of the topic. Lessons follow a clear structure, using time efficiently and ensuring that pupils are productive. Where lessons are occasionally unsatisfactory, a lack of detailed planning and unclear instructions leave pupils confused. Expectations here are low and the challenge to pupils inadequate. This results in a lack of pace with pupils wasting time and learning little.
159. Overall, the day-to-day management of the department is effective, ensuring that programmes across all years are mostly taught to a satisfactory level. The co-ordinator's commitment to the subject shows in the good level of planning and support materials available to staff. Pupils appreciate the expertise and willingness of the co-ordinator to assist them. The subject is taught by a number of teachers for whom ICT is not a main commitment or specialism. This lowers the overall quality of learning and, thus, the overall achievement of pupils. Some monitoring systems are in place, but direct observation by the co-ordinator of lessons taught by others has yet to take place. This means that other teachers are not getting the support and guidance they

need to improve their teaching of ICT. Technician support is currently inadequate and network management is, therefore, the responsibility of the co-ordinator. The school recognises the heavy demands placed on the co-ordinator and is seeking to appoint a network manager and establish additional technician time. When this is achieved, the co-ordinator will be better placed to give a professional lead to colleagues. Improvements in facilities have ensured that the school now matches the national average for the ratio of computers to pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Results in examinations have been rising steadily.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There are very good relationships in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching in the department.
- Pupils' standards in listening and speaking.
- Teachers' and pupils' use of the language being taught.

160. Teacher assessments indicate that attainment at the end of Year 9 is below average. Results in GCSE examinations have been improving steadily. In 2002, GCSE results were average in both German and French, though the number of pupils gaining at least a G grade was above average. There were no significant differences in results between boys and girls.
161. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average at the end of Year 9 and in line with that expected at the end of Year 11. This means that pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Teachers prepare pupils well for GCSE examinations and this is the main reason for the improvement in results. Pupils with special educational needs, those, who speak English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic groups all achieve well. This is because teachers are aware of the individual needs of these pupils and provide work, which helps them to make progress. There are no major differences in attainment between the four aspects of the subject, but listening and speaking are not as well developed as they could be. This is because not enough emphasis is placed on developing these skills in many lessons. The quality of speaking was criticised in the previous inspection report. Although there has been an improvement, it could have been greater. This is because not enough attention is paid to developing activities in lesson, which require pupils to develop their spoken language. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. In many lessons, careful attention is paid to spelling and grammar and pupils are encouraged to write accurately. There is good use of computers to produce presentations, for editing and refining work and for research through websites. The school has had difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers of modern languages and this has had an adverse affect on standards. Nevertheless, standards have risen steadily since the previous inspection.
162. By the end of Year 9, pupils answer questions about such topics as where to go in town, shopping for clothes, hobbies and pastimes and how they spend their pocket money. The majority of pupils can listen to and understand the language being

taught. Pupils answer questions in the foreign language and try hard with pronunciation. Examples of longer, more sophisticated conversations using a variety of language and a range of tenses are limited because teachers often speak too much English. They do not encourage pupils to work together to practise and to vary their use of the language being taught. Pupils develop their reading skills through reading textbooks, authentic texts and worksheets to find the answers to questions. A majority of pupils are confident readers even when reading aloud in class. In their written work, a majority can write short passages from memory. The most able pupils, by the end of Year 9, write in a range of styles and use present, past and future tenses.

163. By the end of Year 11, pupils build on their understanding of the topics covered in earlier years and add others such as descriptions of family members, healthy eating and their opinions about school. The nature of the GCSE courses ensures a strong emphasis on speaking and listening and pupils become more proficient as a result of teachers focusing on these skills.
164. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, pupils' attitudes to work are good. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good and all pupils work well together. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The school trips to France each year provide a strong social and cultural dimension.
165. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is, however, too much variation. Whilst some teaching is very good or excellent some is unsatisfactory. There are two main reasons for unsatisfactory teaching. One of these is that the teacher conducts too much of the lesson in English. As a result, pupils' opportunities to understand the language being taught are limited and little learning takes place. The second reason is that work is not sufficiently challenging. This is illustrated, for example, by lessons where the teacher restricts pupils' learning by not encouraging anything more than one word answers in either writing or speaking. Where teaching is excellent, lessons are carefully planned to ensure that the work presents a very good challenge. There are a variety of activities conducted at brisk pace and pupils are actively involved in the lesson. As a result, pupils' interest is maintained and learning is very strong. This was seen, for example, in a Year 8 German lesson where pupils were learning how verbs take different places in sentences with different tenses. The teacher's clever use of flash cards, question and answer and pupils' involvement ensured strong learning of complicated language structures. Teachers make good use of homework as a means of helping pupils to consolidate their learning.
166. Very good procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Full use is made of the assessments contained in the commercially produced courses being used and of data supplied from GCSE results. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and teachers make very good use of this form of assessment to set targets and to give advice to pupils about how they can improve their work.
167. The accommodation for modern languages is very good and provides a bright environment in which to work that is enhanced by good displays of vocabulary and pupils' work. The present head of modern languages has been in post only a short time. Both she and her predecessor have shown very good leadership and management in maintaining standards through a difficult period with regard to staffing. The school has identified clear priorities for further development.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils are enthusiastic about music and achieve well.
- Teaching is supported by good musicianship.
- Very good accommodation stimulates both staff and pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Leadership and management to give direction and to support good teaching.
- Provision for GCSE to bring it into the timetabled day.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' work.

168. There was little teaching of music during the year from 2001 to 2002, until the appointment of a new teacher at the end of the academic year. At the time of the previous inspection, the department was thriving and both GCSE and A Level were being taught. Since September 2002, however, progress has been rapid and standards are now close to average. GCSE music has been introduced as an after-school class, but not enough evidence was available on which to base a secure judgement on standards.
169. There were no assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2002. In lessons seen, pupils' level of attainment in practical work was average. Most pupils play keyboards with the right attention to fingering and use the recording facility to create their own backing tracks. They understand that music can be built up in this way, by adding layers of sound. From Year 7, pupils are taught how to create chords and they use them to make a sequence as the first step in composition. The results are imaginative and effective compositions that show pupils understand the elements of music and how they fit together. However, the evaluation of their work is often fitted into the last few minutes of the lesson. Thus, it is rushed and not well planned and, as a result, the use of technical terms by pupils to explain what they are doing is limited. Nevertheless, many pupils are articulate and give their classmates helpful suggestions for improving their work. Most of the more musically able pupils, usually those, who learn an instrument, value the open-ended nature of the work and display a high level of creativity. Because they know what they want they eagerly apply themselves to their task, often working beyond what is expected of them. There are a significant minority of pupils, usually in lower sets or with special educational needs, who do not make as much progress as the rest of the class because they do not understand the task. Without direct support from the teacher their time is not used well.
170. Pupils are very enthusiastic about music and this is one of the major factors leading to good achievement. In Year 9, having missed a year of music, pupils are eager to compose their own music and to take part in the activities with the whole class at the beginning of the lesson. They work very well in groups and pairs and only rarely drift off the task, mostly when they do not understand what to do.
171. Teaching is satisfactory, but with significant strengths. Good musicianship is at the heart of lessons and pupils' enthusiasm to try ideas for themselves arises from the very good example they are given. Pupils' own efforts are supported musically so that they hear their ideas turned into real music. In an observed lesson, for instance, the teacher gave a good demonstration of how to record a chord sequence then improvise a melody above. This was based entirely on pupils' suggestions. Pupils are also set a good example of how to relate to each other, which means behaviour is good and

they are willing to listen to each other's ideas and performances. Their enthusiasm and good behaviour, however, mask the fact that learning is only satisfactory. This is because the main aim of lessons is not made clear and shared with pupils. Subsequently, when reviewing the lesson, pupils focus on how well the activity has been completed rather than on important skills and ideas. Assessment by the teacher is often generous and not linked enough to what needs to be improved. The listening to and appraising of music, to give pupils a rounded experience of music, are not given as much attention as composing and performing.

172. There is at present no head of music and leadership and management of the department are, thus, unsatisfactory. Substantial investment has taken place since the previous inspection to improve accommodation and this adds to pupils' enthusiasm. The essential management tools of development planning, a scheme of work and lucid assessment policy to support teaching and learning are being developed by the music teacher, but not adequately monitored by senior management responsible for music. As a newly qualified teacher, the teacher of music has a heavy workload, building up extra-curricular music, running GCSE after school and writing schemes of work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Insistence upon high standards of behaviour and good attitudes.
- The interest shown in the welfare and progress of all pupils.
- The provision of a range of challenging and enjoyable activities.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of facilities for field games.
- Greater emphasis on progression in health-related fitness.
- Development of a sustainable management structure.

173. The physical education department is well established within the school with a reputation for encouraging pupils of all abilities. Pupils enter the school with satisfactory levels of attainment. This standard is maintained throughout the school.
174. The lessons observed during the inspection were mainly in Years 7, 8 and 9. Overall, standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. Pupils are developing good skills in a range of sporting activities. They can, for instance, use a good range of strokes in games such as badminton. All responded well to the demanding challenges in health-related fitness. This is because they receive good encouragement and because teaching takes account of the needs of each pupil. Thus, all make good progress. Special arrangements are made for pupils in wheelchairs to follow an appropriate exercise programme and this enables them to be included in the physical education programme effectively.
175. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average. A strong feature of lessons for older pupils is the determination of pupils to do well, even in very difficult weather conditions. Pupils show a good level of physical fitness. A small number of pupils, mainly boys, have entered for the GCSE examination in physical education in recent years. The girls, who have done so, have gained good results. Results among boys have varied. Those, who have been able to cope with the written and coursework

elements of the subject have done well, but a significant number have not been able to do so and their results have been below average.

176. A feature of all lessons is the very high standard of attitude and behaviour shown by pupils. This is achieved by teachers showing a very genuine interest in the welfare and progress of each pupil whilst establishing very clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour. Pupils' very good attitudes are exemplified by the fact that all pupils are smartly dressed in appropriate kit for their physical education lessons.
177. Teaching is consistently good. In many lessons, it is very good due to very thorough preparation. This ensures that teachers communicate to the pupils, very clearly, what is to be learned in each lesson. Various activities are taught in blocks throughout the year. At the time of the inspection, several year groups were involved in lessons focusing on health-related fitness. There was a marked similarity in content of lessons for different age groups. This means that the level of challenge for older and more able pupils is not high enough to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
178. The head of department spends a very small amount of his teaching time within the department because of other commitments and responsibilities in the school. He has very good leadership qualities, which, together with staff good will, enable the department to function efficiently. However, many aspects of leadership and management are not being properly fulfilled. A good example of this is the lack of a comprehensive and rigorous programme of evaluation of teaching by the subject leader. Teachers in the department are very self-critical and this helps ensure that teaching standards are good. The lack of accountability to an active subject leader does, however, slow development and improvement in the department.
179. Comprehensive schemes of work are in place and this ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered. This has enabled the department to deal adequately with the gap in the programme for older boys, identified as lacking at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment is assessed and recorded regularly. The department provides a wide and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. The pupils appreciate these activities.
180. Indoor facilities for physical education are adequate. There is an extensive playing field, but it is very badly drained and this restricts outdoor games activities, especially in the winter months. There are plans to improve this. Meanwhile, field games are timetabled for drier parts of the year, but games coaching is inevitably limited by this restriction in the use of facilities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good teaching enables pupils to learn well.
- The department makes an effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The management of the religious education department.
- The use of assessment to guide pupils and to support more effective curriculum planning.

181. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average and are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11 and results in the GCSE short course are also average.
182. Inspection evidence shows that attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is at expected levels. There are some good examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work are useful aids to improve speaking and listening skills. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress.
183. By the end of Year 11, attainment is generally above average, but only average for those pupils following the GCSE course. Pupils are able to demonstrate a clear understanding of moral issues within a religious context. Because of good questioning by their teachers, pupils are able to express their views and feelings, for instance, about believers' baptism. However, their ability to analyse material in order to form judgements is not well developed.
184. Teachers are careful to make sure that all pupils progress at a similar pace. Thus, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Careful attention is paid to the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and they, thus, make good progress. Only with the most able could more be done to provide challenge and stimulus that would help these pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable.
185. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well, are motivated and they readily apply themselves to their work. When asked to work together, they do so sensibly and productively. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Good behaviour is an important factor in enabling pupils to achieve well and make steady progress.
186. Teaching is of good quality, with many very good features. It has a significant impact on raising pupil achievement, especially in Years 10 and 11. Planning is good. Lesson aims are shared with pupils in all cases. Teachers make good use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. They use discussion well to develop ideas and the worksheets they provide are carefully produced to match the needs of individual pupils. This enables pupils to learn from, as well as learn about, religion and assists them to maintain their interest and develop an understanding of religious principles and concepts. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and this helps create a good climate for learning. Extension work

and homework are used in a satisfactory way to allow pupils to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have good expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed and these are effective in contributing to pupil achievement. Through their teaching, teachers make a better contribution to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development than was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

187. Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. The current procedures do not provide a sound basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, although some helpful comments are made in exercise books, and the system for grading work requires further development. The department does not use levels of attainment nor does it set targets for pupils. Consequently, pupils are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. This is recognised as an area for development.
188. Arrangements for the management of the subject are in the process of change. However, the temporary arrangements are satisfactory. The head of the humanities faculty is currently also acting as head of the department. All staff in the department are working very hard to support improvement in religious education. Currently, there is no plan in the department to guide further improvement. The systematic monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work are also areas for development. The quality of display that celebrates pupils' achievement is high.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, five 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 2002.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	7	86		29		3.0	
Chemistry	3	67		0		1.0	
Biology	6	83		17		2.2	
Physics	2	50		0		1.0	
Design & technology, products	3	33		0		0.0	
Design & technology, food	2	50		0		2.0	
Business studies	3	67		0		2.0	
Computing	3	33		0		1.0	
Sport and physical education	2	100		0		2.5	
Art & design	2	100		0		2.0	
Drama & theatre studies	8	100		0		2.4	
Media studies	6	100		17		2.2	
Geography	9	89		44		3.0	
History	3	33		0		1.0	
Psychology	2	50		0		1.0	
English language	10	50		10		1.0	
English literature	7	86		0		1.0	
General studies	31	61		3		1.0	

GCE A Level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	2	100		0		4.0	
Chemistry	1	100		0		2.0	
Biology	1	100		0		6.0	
Physics	1	100		0		4.0	
Business studies	3	100		33		6.0	
Geography	3	100		67		7.3	
History	1	100		0		4.0	
General studies	5	80		0		3.0	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards in Year 13 are above the national average because teaching is consistently good.
- Achievement of students throughout the sixth form is good.
- Students have very good attitudes to mathematics. Students in Year 13 are particularly confident.
- Leadership and management are good and improving.

Areas for improvement

- The availability of software packages for individual use by students.

189. Standards of work seen during the inspection were average in Year 12 and above average in Year 13. These standards are achieved because the teaching is consistently good. Students' achievements in relation to standards at the start of Year 12 are good, especially since a significant proportion of the current Year 12 students had only studied intermediate level GCSE in Year 11. Students' determination and enjoyment of mathematics, particularly the very able Year 13 students, help them make good progress. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
190. Results at A Level GCE in 2002 were below the national average. Both students entered for the examination gained passes that were just below their expected grades. A significant number of students dropped out of the course before the examination. In 2001, results were in line with the national average at grades A and B and above the national average for grades A to C. Whilst results have fluctuated considerably in recent years, the department regularly attains higher grades, such as in 1999, when three of the nine students attained grade A and results overall were above the national average.
191. Currently, Year 12 students are achieving well. They recently have sat a module focusing mainly on algebra. Their work on past papers indicates that the attainment of the majority of students is just above average. This represents good progress from Year 11 because almost half of the students studied GCSE at intermediate level only. Currently, Year 12 students are in the early stages of work on motion and statistics. In work on motion they grasp concepts of velocity and acceleration very well because the teacher acts out graphs by moving at different speeds around the room to interpret the meanings of graphs. Students successfully learn the importance of correct terminology and units as well as the real-life interpretation of negative values. The teacher's use of 'Think positive!', for instance, effectively reminds students that they must always decide on a positive direction for motion at the start of any problem. This is a vital tool in solving problems correctly. In statistics they are in the very early stages of the course, but already show good recall of how data is graphed meaningfully and the notation and definitions involved.
192. Year 13 students are very confident. Results on modules to date show that most students are likely to gain one of the two highest grades. This is good achievement considering their previous GCSE grades. In an advanced lesson on algebra, the

students learnt well the advantages of how introducing a third unknown helps plot and solve equations with two unknowns. The teacher's expertise at improving students' use with a graphic calculator allowed them to experiment and make good progress with this new idea. In work in mechanics on projectiles, the students' work is also above the national average. The class and the teacher were observed engaging in high-quality discussion with a real sense of partnership. As a group they decided on the correct equations to use to calculate distances travelled by projectiles. The students showed a deep understanding of the mathematics involved by the end of the lesson.

193. The attitudes of the students are very good. Year 13 students show remarkable determination and a real zest for the subject. This is typified by the way two female students were determined to attend a lesson on statistics immediately after completing a modular examination in another subject. Overall, the students in both year groups enjoy mathematics because their teachers are confident, know their students' needs well and make mathematics appealing. Almost all students relish a challenge and respond very well to the practice of ensuring that homework is done because it is an essential feature of the following lesson. The most enthusiastic students read up on work independently and want to further their mathematical studies at university.
194. The teaching of mathematics in the sixth form is good. In some lessons, it is very good. Teachers know their students' attainment well. Relationships between students and teachers are good, enabling work in lessons to progress in a relaxed, but purposeful manner. Teachers engage the interest of students well with sharp, yet enjoyable, starter activities that involve both numeracy and literacy skills. Teachers place a clear emphasis on students reading the questions carefully. In one such starter activity, for instance, the teacher asked the students to identify two coins that added to 55p when one was not a 50p piece. They fairly quickly checked the wording to realise that the other coin could be the 50p. They were gripped from then on and were motivated very well. Teachers know their subject very well and have the confidence to mix lesson activities with a good range of explanation, discussion and individual problem-solving. They also make students think deeply by explaining solutions to others.
195. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has rightly shown great faith in a young colleague and has provided sufficient support so that they share the teaching of Year 12 and Year 13 effectively. The new teacher has shown great expertise with computer software and graphic calculator demonstrations. The department is rightly working on obtaining a range of computer software to allow students to practise on their own.

SCIENCES

The focus in this curriculum area was on chemistry, but physics and biology were also sampled. The teaching was good in the sampled lessons. In the physics lesson, Year 13 students were being challenged fully in calculations related to the brightness of stars. In the biology lesson, Year 13 students demonstrated good progress from GCSE in their understanding of inheritance and blood types. Analysis of students' files in the sampled subjects shows that the examination courses are being covered fully and that students are achieving at least in line with expectations.

Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is **good**.

Strengths

- Practical investigative work is good.
- Students are being developed as independent learners.
- Students are given good support and guidance.
- Very good working relationships give students the confidence to join in discussions.

Areas for improvement

- Information and communication technology is not used widely enough to enhance teaching and learning.
- The monitoring of students' files to pick up errors quickly.

196. The very small number of candidates at this level makes it unsafe to draw any conclusions about examination trends. Students generally achieve what could be expected when compared to their prior GCSE results. This is confirmed in the lessons observed and in the detailed analysis of students' files and tests. Students in Year 13 carry out sophisticated investigations and give good explanations for the chemical reactions related to the chemistry of carbon. There is no difference in the quality and quantity of work produced by male and female students. Students in Year 12 are making slower, but steady progress from the low starting point of some students.
197. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are structured and planned to involve students fully in their learning. Lessons, therefore, have clear focus and pace, with the emphasis on students having to think for themselves. Students respond to the high expectations and apply themselves diligently to their work, with the result that learning is good and understanding secure. On-going assessment is good. Probing questioning checks students' understanding and clearly reflects the teacher's good subject knowledge. Information and communication technology is not used often enough to enhance teaching and learning, though students make some good use of the Internet for research. Students are frequently assessed through homework and tests and are then set demanding learning targets. Some of the independent work in students' files is not marked and so errors can be left for some time before being noted.
198. Analysis of coursework, homework and students' files shows that students are able to carry out research and to learn independently. They are very capable at planning their own work. Students write most of their own notes, which greatly extends their understanding. They also correct and expand their work where the teacher indicates errors. This reflects a very mature attitude to their studies. Files are well organised and maintained.
199. Good leadership ensures clear educational direction for the subject. Students form very good working relationships with each other and their teacher. This gives them the confidence to exchange ideas freely and be ready to learn from their mistakes. Students are willing workers and show maturity in their attitudes to their studies. They receive good support and guidance and are clearly being fully prepared for the next step in their education.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No subject was inspected in this curriculum area.

BUSINESS

The focus in this curriculum area was on business studies. No other subject was sampled in this curriculum area.

Business Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching by committed staff leads to good learning.
- Students make good progress.
- The subject is well led and well managed.
- Good monitoring and assessment contribute well to students' progress.

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards of attainment in examinations.
- Encourage wider reading and methods to assist retention techniques.
- Increase access to information and communication technology.
- Offer vocational-orientated courses.

200. The small number of students at this school completing advanced level study makes it impossible to compare reliably the school's results with national figures. Because of timetabling arrangements, no Year 13 classes were observed during the inspection.
201. The standards seen in the student files and portfolios, in written work and in an interview with a student show strengths in the basic understanding of the subject matter and in steady accumulation of knowledge, which is well organised in the student's file. There are, however, relative weaknesses in analytical ability and particularly in the interpretation and analysis of data.
202. At AS level, standards reached by current students, as seen in their lessons and their written work, are average. Students confidently and accurately use appropriate business terminology. They demonstrate clear understanding of a wide range of business concepts. For example, Year 12 students, in their studies of the role of motivation in the success of businesses, accurately define the full range of leadership styles from autocratic to laissez-faire and effectively evaluate the effects of each style in motivating the workforce.
203. Given the students' prior attainment at entry, they make good progress. This is clearly seen in their lessons. Students' progress in lessons seen, however, is not fully manifested as success in examinations. This is partly because of their failure to retain knowledge and understanding over time and partly because of the lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject, which is essential for students to do well.
204. Overall, teaching and learning in the department are good. Teachers have a good rapport with students. Teachers have expert subject knowledge, which underpins discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided and this enhances students' learning. Lessons are carefully planned and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. However, there is

a tendency to over-provide such help for the students. This is partly at the expense of ensuring that they have enough practice in the kinds of analysis that will enable them to become more independent learners. Marking of work is very detailed and helpful, with good use of examination levels and grades.

205. Students respond well in lessons. Their attitudes are mostly mature and they sustain interest. Although most students maintain intellectual rigour, there is a tendency for some to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. This is particularly true for female students. However, there is no evidence to show that female students do not attain as highly as their male counterparts. Students have positive views about the subject. They particularly appreciate the very clear organisation of their courses and the clear feedback on their attainment and progress.
206. Resources are adequate. The department has some access to information and communication technology, but this is insufficient to support students operating at the advanced levels. This, together with a lack of up-to-date supportive literature, lowers the standards attained by students.
207. There was no comment about sixth form business studies provision in the previous report, but this is a rapidly improving area of the curriculum. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of department checks and analyses results carefully to identify areas in which teaching and learning can be improved. He sets clear targets for action, by both staff and students. The head of department has a clear vision for the future of the department. He is committed to continually raising standards and he is particularly well supported by his senior colleagues in the school. He recognises the need to augment current provision with more vocation-oriented courses, including GNVQ Intermediate and AVCE courses. He intends to build on the new applied GCSE course in business studies to add vocational provision in the sixth form in order to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of students in future years.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

No subject was inspected in this curriculum area.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No subject was inspected in this curriculum area.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No subject was inspected in this curriculum area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

No subject in this curriculum area was focused on in this inspection. Work was sampled in art and design. Here, overall provision is very good. The quality of students' finished work is above average, with students continuing to make good progress as they build on the good level of artistic skills developed previously. Teaching in the lessons sampled was very good. The number of students taking the subject is very small, but all, who follow the course, achieve good results in the A Level examination.

HUMANITIES

The humanities faculty comprises geography, history and religious education. The focus of the inspection was on geography. Lessons were also sampled in history, where the small group of students was effectively taught in tutorial style. Standards are below national averages in examinations, but are average in class and in the students' work. Religious education is not taught in Years 12 and 13.

Geography

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching enables students to make steady progress.
- A good rapport between students and teachers results in growing students' self-confidence.

Areas for improvement

- The reading that students undertake about geography.
- Students' verbal presentation skills.

208. Students wishing to study geography in the sixth form have several choices of institution in the area. As a result, only a small number of students take geography at the school.
209. With small groups of students following both AS and A2 courses, it is unsafe to make firm comparisons with attainment nationally. However, results in 2001 were above the national average. Results in Years 12 and 13 were similar in 2002, but no national comparison data was available at the time of the inspection. Overall, students make satisfactory progress, considering their previous GCSE results. Standards reached by current Year 13 students are average and the progress being made by the larger group of students in Year 12 is good.
210. Students enjoy geography. They arrive at lessons promptly and ready to work hard. They complete homework on time and this helps the teachers and students to plan for further progress. The quality of presentation of work is good, particularly with case studies and fieldwork. The students respect their teachers for their detailed specialist knowledge and value their willingness to help. Teachers are always available to provide extra advice and there is a very positive relationship between students and teachers. This means that less confident learners are encouraged to try out fresh ideas or go that one step further that can often mean higher grades. In spite of this, there is a reluctance to take part in rigorous discussions or verbal presentations. Students are confident enough when answering questions or describing situations, but less so when sharing evaluations. Part of this comes from insecurity in using the language of debate and hypotheses and this is evident in both boys and girls.
211. Another factor influencing confidence, especially among male students, is the limited range of reading and general world knowledge that restricts their making comparisons and contrasts between places, especially in the less economically developed areas. Teachers respond by being supportive, but there is a tendency for lessons to become over reliant on factual content at the expense of analysis. Well-maintained files lack evidence of independent annotations or additional study beyond basis texts. There is

an absence of academic ambition, as the result of which critical skills are often underdeveloped and this reduces the proportion of higher GCE grades obtained. Pieces of coursework are competently word-processed. Computers are used to log and process fieldwork data.

212. Teaching is good. Well-planned lessons have clear objectives and good use is made of modern texts that deal with current issues. Rarely are students able to read original articles in class, but teachers select appropriate case studies and set challenging tasks. The teachers work in their specialist areas and students experience a range of teaching styles that is wider than in many larger sixth forms. Marking is a strong point because teachers are at great pains to provide detailed written advice as well as clear assessments. The use of a standard feedback format ensures that students get a balanced range of comments from each teacher. Target grades are clear and students understand how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve further. The good features of marking do not extend to providing written guidance on the most effective ways of preparing and maintaining study files.
213. Overall, the management of the subject is good. Teachers plan carefully and use resources wisely. Well-developed procedures ensure the sharing of detailed information with the partner school and this results in an accurate picture of the progress of students on each campus. Partnership with different schools is also a strong feature of the use of field-study centres in Derbyshire. Closer monitoring of teaching would encourage wider sharing of the more effective teaching approaches. Little use is made of information and communication technology in the teaching of geography. Although students are confident users of word processing and access the Internet, neither they nor teachers have opportunities to use a wide range of modern technology. This limits the range of learning opportunities available to students.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus in this curriculum area was on English. Both English language and English literature are taught in Year 12 only as two separate subjects. Both subjects were inspected. No modern foreign languages work was inspected.

English language

Overall, the quality of provision in English language is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students' personal writing is lively and engaging.
- They enjoy the subject and prepare good supporting notes.

Areas for improvement

- Helping students to gain more confidence to initiate discussions in class.
- Improving the fluency of students' essay writing.

214. Entry to examinations in previous years has been too small to derive significant trends. Students currently studying the subject entered the sixth form with GCSE results that were below average. Standards at AS level are below the national average, but students are making satisfactory progress.
215. Students show a sound understanding of the necessary technical terminology when analysing language development. They can apply this in discussions in class, but they are very dependent on the teacher to keep the lesson moving. Students are

keen and maintain well-organised notes to help them to plan essays. Personal writing is lively and carefully matched to its intended audience, but written work analysing linguistic features lacks conviction despite helpful comments by the teacher. The major weaknesses in students' writing are inaccuracies in spelling and rather pedestrian sentences.

216. Lessons are interesting and students try hard to respond to the teacher's prompting. They can see the different techniques employed by famous orators such as Martin Luther King and Churchill, but they need reminders of the significance of figures of speech such as metaphor. Students do not understand common terms such as 'melodramatic'.
217. Teaching is satisfactory and this helps students to enjoy the subject and gain greater understanding of how language works. Students lack the fluency in speech and writing to achieve the higher grades at AS level.

English literature

Overall, the quality of provision in English literature is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Lessons are lively and the teacher succeeds in involving most students in discussions.
- Students have a good understanding of the way language shapes character in poetry and plays.

Areas for improvement

- More fluent writing in essays.
- Greater use of standard English in lesson discussions.

218. The number of candidates in examinations over recent years has been low. Results have been below average, except in 1999 when they were very good. The current Year 12 is attaining standards in line with the expectations of the course. Most students are making satisfactory progress.
219. Teaching is lively and engages the students. The good relationships encourage the students to try hard even when they have to read unfamiliar language. There is a good level of discussion and most students are involved in this. Spoken English is largely informal and does not give students the practice needed to develop their written style. They have gained a good understanding of the way Chaucer conveys humour in the 'Wife Of Bath's Tale'. Many students recall the key themes running through the poem and can explain the significance of the imagery used to show the main protagonist's character.
220. Essays show that most students are on course to gain average grades at AS level. They reveal good awareness of how language creates different moods in their analysis of Tennessee Williams's text. They explain the symbolism clearly, but they find more difficulty in expressing their own responses to the writing. There is little opportunity for them to discuss their work in class so that they can examine the effect of their words on a reader and develop their writing style.