

INSPECTION REPORT

LADY LUMLEY'S SCHOOL

Pickering

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121671

Headteacher: John Tomsett

Lead inspector: Bill Stoneham

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th September 2003

Inspection number: 259145

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1020
School address:	Swainsea Lane Pickering North Yorkshire
Postcode:	YO18 8NG
Telephone number:	01751 472846
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Norma Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lady Lumley's School is an averaged sized 11-18 community comprehensive school serving the small market town of Pickering and an extensive area of rural North Yorkshire. There are 1020 pupils and students on roll, including a growing sixth form of just over 200 students. The sixth form is average in size. In Years 7 to 11 there are marginally more girls than boys, but in the sixth form approximately two-thirds of the students are girls. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs at 8.7 per cent is well below the national average of 18.1 per cent. No sixth form students are identified as having special educational needs. Nearly all pupils are from a white British heritage. No pupils have English as an additional language and there are no refugees or asylum seekers on roll. The school has been successful in gaining national awards such as Healthy Schools, Sportsmark and the Quality Standard for its work experience and careers programme. The attainment of pupils' on entry to the school in Year 7 is above average, while students entering the sixth form have average levels of prior attainment. Though the area served by the school is large and diverse, with some parts of the catchment area still recovering from the foot and mouth epidemic in 2000, the socio-economic context is above average and the number of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average. Though the school is growing in popularity, few pupils leave or start the school between Year 7 and Year 11.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27407	Bill Stoneham	Lead inspector	Post 16 business studies Post 16 economics
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
23393	Brian Dower	Team inspector	English
12885	John Hunt	Team inspector	Mathematics Post 16 mathematics
8552	Wallis Hunt	Team inspector	Science Post 16 physics
21806	Patricia Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communications technology Post 16 Information and communication technology
22046	Josephine Jolliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language Post 16 French
28101	Andrew Lagdon	Team inspector	History Post 16 history
30114	Ann Kenward	Team inspector	Geography Post 16 geography
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art and design
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Music
23030	Caroline Runyard	Team inspector	Physical education
10807	Paul Quest	Team inspector	Religious education Post 16 sociology Post 16 health and social care
11508	Christopher Griffin	Team inspector	Post 16 English Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Lady Lumley's is a good school with some very good features, offering good value for money. It is inclusive, well led and managed and all pupils achieve well during their time at school. There is a very good and clear ethos based on personal development and valuing each pupil as an individual and pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful of others. It is a popular and growing school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are making a significant contribution to the good achievement of all pupils.
- Though teaching and learning are good in Years 7, 8 and 9 they are not sufficiently monitored
- Learning is enhanced by very good community partnerships, by the strength of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and by the excellent work of the careers department.
- The very good attitudes, behaviour and maturity of the pupils and students.
- The very good leadership offered by the governing body.
- Test and examination data are not used with sufficient rigour to enhance learning.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of teaching accommodation in science, business studies, drama, design and technology, economics, ICT, modern foreign languages and music has many limitations and constrains the development of teaching and learning.

Post 16

- The work of the careers department is very good.
- The very good standards attained by students in English literature A level and the excellent standards attained by AVCE business studies students in 2002.
- The very good contribution of students to the work of the school and the community.
- There are some weaknesses in management in that teaching and learning are not systematically reviewed, examination data is not rigorously analysed to set students targets, and the curriculum does not offer courses that meet the needs of the wide range of abilities of the students.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards have risen and the key issues identified in the previous report, with the exception of the provision of religious education in the sixth form, have been addressed well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	A	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	N/A	A	B	

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

The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Standards of work

at the end of Year 11 are well above average. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Standards in the sixth form are average, and achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Pupils and students attending the school have very good attitudes towards their studies and their behaviour is good overall, but it is very good in the sixth form. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory,** though there is no planned and co-ordinated approach for this provision throughout the school. Levels of attendance are above average overall and they are well above average in the sixth form. Punctuality to school and lessons is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school offers a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good in Years 7, 8 and 9; very good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Teaching and learning are particularly good in Years 10 and 11 because lesson planning is stronger, lessons have pace, more challenges are presented and learning is enhanced through independent and collaborative working. In the sixth form teaching styles are more formal and, at the time of the inspection, students were offered too few opportunities to research ideas for themselves and to work independently. Teaching and learning are good in most subjects and very good in drama and in science and geography in Years 10 and 11. In the sixth form, teaching and learning are very good in English. In Years 10 and 11 the community education programme makes a very good contribution to the learning of the pupils involved.

The careers department has developed an excellent programme that is an impressive feature of the school's work. However, some advice to pupils is not done by the careers staff. Advice about post-16 options is given by departments and some of the sixth form pastoral staff, which, in the recent past, has led to a minority of students being placed on inappropriate courses. In some areas of its work the school is hindered by its accommodation. The school cares well for its pupils and students, works well with its parents and has very good partnerships with its local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is very good. The governors are very supportive and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve further. The leadership of other key staff is good and the effectiveness of management is good. No judgement about the leadership of the headteacher can be made as he is new, though he has made a good start. During the recent interim period, when an acting headteacher was appointed, one of the deputies demonstrated very good leadership.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school; they believe it is a good school. Parents state that their children make good progress and that staff expect pupils to work hard. They also praised the induction procedures when pupils first enter the school. A view endorsed by the inspection team. Concerns were expressed about bullying, but the inspection team could find no evidence to support these worries. Parents also reported a desire that they are involved more in their child's education and that the quality of information sent to parents about their child's progress be improved. The inspection team support this last comment as they found the quality of written reports unsatisfactory. Pupils and students similarly believe the school to be good. They highlighted the good quality of teaching they receive and said that the school is well led. They would like to see staff treating them in a more adult way and the inspection team concur with the pupils' criticisms of the school's assessment processes. Insufficient information is given to pupils about how they can improve their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- The school leadership team should ensure the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve standards further by ensuring that test and examination data are properly used to set every pupil and student targets that are regularly monitored reviewed and evaluated.
- Improve the use of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching accommodation in science, business studies, drama, design and technology, economics, ICT, modern foreign languages and music.
- Improve the quality of written reports offered to parents.

For the sixth form

- Improve leadership and management by being far more rigorous in implementing the existing procedures for monitoring teaching and learning and analysing examination data to set students targets in all subjects; monitoring, reviewing and analysing students' progress against these targets; and broadening the curriculum by offering courses that are better suited to the wide range of abilities of the students.

And to meet statutory requirements:

- Teach religious education in the sixth form and have a daily Act of Collective Worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT LADY LUMLEY'S SCHOOL

The sixth form is average sized and growing with over 200 students studying advanced level courses.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form offers a **satisfactory standard of education** and its cost effectiveness is similarly satisfactory. In recent years achievement has been at least good, with students building on their success at GCSE and attaining above average standards in their A level examinations. Inspection evidence, however, suggested that the complexion of the sixth form is subtly changing and that the curriculum has not kept pace with this change. For present students, attainment on entry is average, and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, though they are sometimes hindered by the quality of accommodation. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good work of the careers department.
- The very good standards attained by students in English literature A level and the excellent standards attained by AVCE business studies students in 2002.
- The very good contribution of students to the work of the school and the community.
- There are some weaknesses in management in that teaching and learning are not systematically reviewed, examination data is not rigorously analysed to set students targets, and the curriculum does not offer courses that meet the needs of the wide range of abilities of the students.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English is very good . Standards are consistently well above average. Enthusiastic teaching underpinned by high expectations and subject expertise motivates the students and results in very good achievement. Provision in French is satisfactory . Standards are average and teaching and learning are good, though hindered by poor accommodation. Leadership and management are good.
Mathematics and Sciences	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . Standards of work are average and teaching and learning are good. Provision is satisfactory in both biology and physics, as is achievement. Standards are above average in biology, but average in physics. Teaching and learning are good in biology and satisfactory in physics. The leadership of both subjects is satisfactory.
Information and communication technology	Provision is satisfactory . Standards are average and the use of ICT across the curriculum is improving.

Humanities	<p>Provision in geography is very good. Standards are well above average and teaching and learning are very good.</p> <p>Overall, the quality of provision in history is good. Standards are above average and students' achievement is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good.</p> <p>Provision in sociology is good. Good teaching leads to above average standards and good achievement, but the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory as no clear structure exists.</p>
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	No subjects were inspected.
Visual and performing arts and media	No subjects were inspected.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is good . Standards are above average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good and target setting is used well.
Business	<p>Provision in business studies is good. Standards are average. Accommodation and resources, however, are unsatisfactory.</p> <p>Provision in economics is satisfactory as are teaching and learning. Attainment is below average but achievement is satisfactory. The quality of accommodation and resources is unsatisfactory.</p>
Health and social care	Provision in health and social care is satisfactory . Achievement is good. The subject is becoming increasingly popular, but leadership and management are unsatisfactory because no clear structure has been established.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The work of the careers department is very good and includes a two-week work experience placement. The high quality advice offered by the department allows students to prepare for the next stage in their education, or for the world of work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but the use of examination and other data to advise students by setting targets and to help them improve their standards of work needs to be more rigorous.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. A harmonious sixth form has been created but, as it has grown in size, the rise in standards has slowed. The management of the curriculum has not been sufficiently innovative to keep pace with the growth in numbers and the monitoring of teaching and learning lacks sharpness.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The students are very positive about their school. They enjoy school and they find the work challenging and demanding. Subject staff are helpful and approachable and the students comment favourably on the range of learning styles they are encouraged to adopt, something that was not often seen during the inspection. The students are more critical of the pastoral care, claiming that

staff do not know the students well as individuals. The students are critical of the careers education and guidance offered. These criticisms are not entirely supported by the inspection team. The careers department has a detailed programme that is well planned and relevant to the needs of the students. Where there are deficiencies in provision, they relate to the advice offered by other sources to a minority of students about which courses to opt for. The students were also critical of the use of assessment data to guide and inform. The inspection team support these comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Efforts have been made to minimise the use of shorthand notations, though some have been used. Throughout the report, the notation **ICT** refers to information and communication technology. The term **SENCO** refers to the special needs co-ordinator. An **LSA** is a learning support assistant and an **IEP** is an individual education plan. **PHSE** refers to the school's programme for personal, health and social education. Comparisons to national averages are based on data for the academic year 2001/2002, the last year for which national comparative data is available. Any reference to examination results in 2003 is to identify trends only. When the report was published national comparative data for the academic year 2002/2003 was not available.

No reference is made to pupils for whom English is an additional language. Very few pupils are from backgrounds where English is not the first language of at least one parent. None of the pupils are at the early stages of English language acquisition and all have good access to the curriculum. No sixth form students are designated as having special educational needs.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils in Year 9 have above average standards. Their achievement is good. Standards of work at the end of Year 11 are well above average. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Standards in the sixth form are average and students' achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well overall, but very well in Years 10 and 11 and in English and drama.
- Standards in most subjects at GCSE are at least above average, and in many well above average.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good
- Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory, but could be higher if monitoring and evaluation of learning were more systematic.
- The provision for developing ICT skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

1. In national test results in 2002, standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well above average when compared to all schools nationally. In comparisons to similar schools, standards were above average. They were well above average in English and mathematics, but were below average in science. This can be mainly accounted for by staffing difficulties. Since the start of the 2002/03 academic year staffing has been more stable in science and this is reflected in improved national test results for Year 9 students in 2003. Pupils enter the school with above average levels of prior attainment and the fact that these high standards are maintained, largely because of good quality of teaching, is indicative of good achievement. The standards for present pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are also above average. Lesson observation and analysis of work showed pupils' achievements to be good.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.8 (36.4)	33.3 (33)
Mathematics	37.8 (37.9)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	34.2 (35.2)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 154 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in GCSE examinations in 2002 were well above average when compared to all schools nationally and above average when compared to similar schools. Overall pupils continue to work well and improve their standards. Their overall achievement is very good. Present pupils in Years 10 and 11 are also working at levels that are well above average. The fact that they enter Year 10 with above average attainment, and that they continue to improve their knowledge and understanding because of the very good teaching they receive, results in very good achievement.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	61 (50)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (97)	96 (97)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	42.9 (36.9)	39 (39.8)

There were 153 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In the 2002 GCSE results, standards were above average in many subjects and were well above average in English language, English literature, German, history and business studies. It was only in ICT that standards fell below above average levels. Overall standards in ICT were average but they were below average in the attainment of grades in the A* to C range. The school has identified the causes of this and suitable remedial action has now been put into place. GCSE results showed a further improvement in 2003; indeed the unvalidated results are the best the school has ever experienced and the challenging targets set by the governing body are being met. The main factors contributing to these successes are the quality of the teaching and the commitment and willingness to learn of the pupils.
- For present pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 standards are above average in most subjects and are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In Years 10 and 11 standards are above average in most subjects but well above in English, mathematics, science and drama. As the inspection was conducted very early in the academic year, the difference between present standards and standards reached in recent examination results probably reflects that in many cases pupils had either only just started their examination courses, or were at best little more than halfway through the syllabus. It is acknowledged that as the academic year progresses standards will rise further because of the quality of teaching.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. They successfully enter public examinations. In lessons pupils' basic skills are sufficient to help them cope effectively

with their subjects. They make particularly good gains in speaking and listening and reading. Pupils quickly and efficiently used their indexing skills to locate map references, revealing good progress in the higher order reading skills of skimming and scanning. The school has not moved far along the road of identifying gifted and talented pupils and offering programmes specifically designed for their needs. However, based on limited evidence, because of the lack of identification, their achievement is on a par with that of their peers.

Post 16

- Standards reached in A level and equivalent level examinations in 2002 were above average. For girls standards were average, but for boys they were well above average. Many subjects returned 100 per cent pass rates and standards were well above average in English literature and general studies. In the AVCE business course, standards were very high and were in the top five per cent nationally. Standards were below average in drama and well below average in economics, French, design and technology and physics. The standard on entry for this year group was above average. They successfully built on this base and their achievement during their sixth form studies overall was good. The unvalidated examination data for 2003 illustrates that various trends are emerging as the sixth form grows. While some subjects, such as English literature continue to perform well, standards in other subjects are more variable and there is often a polarisation of grades towards either end of the grade range. This is noticeable in AS level results generally and particularly in subjects such as mathematics and general studies. In too many cases, especially at AS level, students failed to reach a pass grade standard. As the results are unvalidated, estimates of achievement are not possible, but as the sixth form has grown in size, attainment on entry has been falling. The modest performances raise issues about the quality of advice students are given about which courses to study, and how well assessment data is used to monitor progress and curriculum management.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	95.2 (93.9)	96.2 (89.1)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	28.6 (36.2)	39.4 (37.9)
Average point score per pupil	272.9 (266.9)	263.3 (N/A)

There were 80 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- For present students, standards are average. Attainment on entry is broadly average and teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is achievement. Achievement is good in most subjects and it is very good in English language in Years 7 to 11 and in physical education in the sixth form. Achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT in Years 7 to 11. No differences in achievement between female and male students were discernible.
- Certain factors are serving to constrain achievement and leadership and management need refining. Some students are struggling on the courses to which they are recruited. The advice they receive is deficient and this problem is exacerbated by a lack of monitoring of the quality of learning and the use of assessment data to set students target grades that are regularly monitored and reviewed. These problems can be highlighted in the AS level results in mathematics and general studies in 2003. The unsatisfactory classroom accommodation also serves to hinder the quality of teaching and learning in some subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to learning and to school life are very good. Behaviour in and around school is good. Attendance is good generally and very good in the sixth form. Punctuality is good across the school. The school makes satisfactory provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of

pupils and students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to learning and to school are very good with very good rates of attendance in the sixth form.
- Pupils and students are very well mannered, confident and very responsible, maturing very well as they progress through the school.
- The school promotes a strong code of conduct well, resulting in good behaviour, but a significant proportion of pupils, students and parents feel that bullying is an issue.
- Relationships are good at all levels and the school successfully promotes teamwork and collaboration in lessons, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to discover and value other faiths and cultures.

Commentary

9. The school promotes good attendance and punctuality well. For instance, there is strong and effective liaison with the bus services serving the school. Parents support the school's efforts well, especially in view of the distances involved from many homes. Attendance at school is well above average and though there has been an increase in unauthorized absence, the rate remains below the national average.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.4
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

10. Pupils and students are very keen to work hard and achieve their best in lessons and other school activities. For instance, in a Year 10 careers lesson pupils listened carefully to learn about the facilities offered by the school and many have already started to use the reference materials. Pupils and students are also very willing to take responsibility. This is particularly evident in the school council. During a full council meeting with the new headteacher, pupils were keen to ask questions and raise concerns on behalf of their peers.
11. The inspection team was particularly careful in investigating pupils', students' and parents' concerns about bullying. The level of concern is high and the school must not be complacent on this issue. However, following discussions, checks of records and many observations no evidence of any significant problems was found. Indeed, behaviour was good overall at the start and end of school, at lunchtimes, in lessons and assemblies, and as pupils moved between lessons. The school has established a clear code of conduct through good consultation and involvement of pupils, students and parents.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	976	52	3
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0

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

12. Provision for personal development is satisfactory. There is no planned and co-ordinated approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school. As a result teachers are not sufficiently aware of how their lessons can contribute. There is a need to develop a shared policy for the planning, teaching and monitoring of this aspect of curriculum development. Assemblies are held regularly and cover a range of social and moral issues. At present there is no theme for tutor times, which are mostly vehicles for administrative issues. The school acknowledges that it does not fulfil the statutory act of collective worship, a situation noted in the previous report.
13. Pupils understand the need for rules and order in society and this is shown by the calm and orderly way they move around the school. Teachers are good role models and enforce standards of behaviour around the school. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities through work on the school councils and the prefect system. With the exception of work undertaken in the careers department, there are few references to multicultural education in subject documentation and as a result there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity and richness of other cultures. However, pupils learning French and German benefit from exchange visits and work placements where they experience other cultures first hand and reinforce the work done in the classroom.
14. Pupils and students are very well mannered and confident in their dealings with others. Relationships between pupils, students and adults are good. For example, pupils work well together in lessons such as physical education where they organise themselves into groups for team sports. Year 7 pupils made a point of telling inspectors how well older pupils and students were helping them to settle in, particularly the head boy, head girl and deputies. Although there is a high level of racial harmony in school, many pupils said that they would like to know more about other cultures and ethnic groups in Britain.

Post 16

15. Sixth formers have very good attitudes towards school and their studies. Their attendance is very good and their punctuality is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for in many lessons despite the lack of religious education and a daily Act of Collective Worship. Their preparation for living in a multi-cultural society is good with some very good work being done by the careers department. Sixth formers are offered opportunities to undertake responsibility and they act as very good role models for younger pupils. Pupils and students are very well mannered and confident in their dealings with others. They mature very well as young people in the sixth form. For example, during a community lunch, inspectors were impressed at how well sixth formers hosted the event and mixed with everyone.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education offered by the school is good. Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11, largely because of the very good teaching offered.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in Years 10 and 11 and it is good in Years 7, 8 and 9. In the sixth form it is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in all years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is a strength, especially in Years 10 and 11, though the quality in the sixth form needs to be raised.
- Teaching is very good and has a very effective impact on learning in English, science, ICT, geography and drama in Years 10 and 11 and in English in the sixth form.
- The use of assessment data in the sixth form, especially for target setting and advising and monitoring students, needs improving.
- In the sixth form, where teaching is not better than satisfactory, students are not challenged enough and are given too few opportunities to work independently
- The use of ICT across the curriculum as an aid to learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

16. Much of the teaching and learning seen that was very good, or better, was in Years 10 and 11.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 156 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	40 (26%)	62 (40%)	46 (28%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

17. Many strengths of teaching can be identified, but learning particularly benefited in Years 10 and 11 because lessons were well planned, they were challenging, the pace was pitched correctly and the pupils were given appropriate opportunities to enhance their learning by working independently or collaboratively. In the good and better lessons a range of strategies were used to engage and extend the pupils. This fostered learning and enabled the pupils to achieve well. Many staff showed good levels of initiative and enterprise as the resources available, especially ICT, were sometimes limited and some of the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Teachers sometimes had to improvise their strategies to overcome such obstacles. Specialist ICT teaching seen on the inspection itself was good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11, but the indications are that this is a recent improvement.
18. The promotion of equality of opportunity is very good. This was amply demonstrated in the provisions made for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils make good progress in English because they are motivated by the strong emphasis on speaking and listening tasks and their answers often reveal a secure oral vocabulary. They participate well in reading activities. In mathematics well-matched resources enhance pupils' progress. Lively and active teaching in science helped Year 9 pupils make good progress in understanding how to calculate speed. Teachers have good expectations and as a result Year 9 pupils made very good progress in a lesson on surrealism. Teachers are also well informed about the nature of the pupils' learning difficulties. The school is improving its independent education plans. The revised model is concise and focused although some of the guidance on how to reach targets should be more explicit. Teaching assistants provide effective support. They help the pupils to work hard and enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
19. Learning often benefited because classroom management procedures were at least good and staff set high standards for behaviour and conduct. As most classrooms were orderly places in which to work, learning prospered and pupils achieved well. On the very few occasions when teaching and learning were below the expected standard it was because planning was insufficient, the lessons lacked pace and challenge and the pupils were not given suitable

opportunities to be productive. These factors combined to lead to unsatisfactory progress during the lesson and unsatisfactory learning.

20. Some inconsistencies in management are apparent. The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning as a vehicle to secure higher standards is not undertaken. The approach is piecemeal and varies from department to department. Some of the evaluation of teaching and learning is done informally. A formal, co-ordinated, whole school approach is required.
21. The quality of assessment and reporting is satisfactory. The school policy contains much detailed guidance on reporting and in most departments assessment criteria have been built into schemes of work and students understand the criteria against which their work is assessed. Marking is good; it is regular, consistent and generally understood by pupils. There are, however, significant variations both between and within departments, which can be confusing for pupils when they are taught the same subject by different teachers who do not share assessment procedures and criteria. In many of the best lessons observed, teachers constantly check for understanding with well-targeted questions pitched to match their understanding of pupils' capabilities.
22. Though much data is gathered, it is not always used effectively to set targets, monitor performance, or as a tool to advise pupils and students on their next steps in education. It is not used consistently or efficiently as a mechanism for setting each pupil and student targets in every subject they study. Nor are individuals always aware of how well they are performing in relation to their targets and what they need to do to improve. This is a particular problem in the sixth form.

Post 16

23. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, though there is some consistently good practice, and in English, teaching and learning are very good. In too many lessons, students were taught in a rather traditional way with staff imparting knowledge rather than thinking how best the students might learn. Such lessons tended to lack pace and challenge. The students became passive as opposed to active learners and they were offered too few opportunities to work independently by undertaking their own research, for example. Consequently the quality of learning suffered and the cumulative effect over time is that achievement is depressed to a satisfactory level.
24. For teaching quality to improve there needs to be a systematic programme of lesson monitoring. Anything that is presently done is through ad hoc arrangements. The quality of learning would be enhanced by improved use of assessment data. Current arrangements are unsatisfactory because students are given too little information to meet their needs, especially in terms of what they need to do to improve. Target grades are issued, though it would be beneficial to issue such information earlier, but the monitoring of progress against such targets lacks rigour and most students are not well informed about what they need to do to improve. Moreover, in 2003 some students were recruited to inappropriate courses. Too many failed to achieve even a minimum pass grade in their AS level examinations. A more rigorous use of assessment data as a tool to monitor, evaluate and improve standards is needed.

The curriculum

The school provides good curricular opportunities for the pupils and students. Innovative curricular leadership at senior management level is resulting in a significant increase in the range of courses and pathways for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Enrichment is very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, though accommodation itself has weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The extension of courses in Years 10 and 11 is highly innovative; the curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stages in their education or employment.
- The quality and range of the enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities are very good.
- Statutory requirements are not met in music in Years 7 to 9 or in the provision of religious education in the sixth form.
- The quality of accommodation in some subjects is unsatisfactory and constrains learning.
- The limited range of different types of courses in the sixth form does not meet the needs of an intake with an increasing range of abilities and aptitudes.

Commentary

25. The school has significantly transformed curricular opportunities in Years 10 and 11, responding most positively to the new opportunities inherent of the Increased Flexibility Programme. Since the arrival of a new deputy headteacher there has been a major expansion in the number of accredited vocational courses. These recruit pupils from all levels of prior attainment. The provision is underpinned by strong adherence to equality of opportunity. There are very strong partnerships with other institutions – schools, colleges and training organisations – with the provision occurring off the school site, taught by personnel from other institutions. About 30 per cent of Year 10 pupils participate in these courses and all were observed on courses in engineering, hairdressing and beauty, countryside and environmental management and construction. There is also a basic skills course for lower attainers. Expectations were high and the pupils well motivated. Pupils and parents received clear guidance to inform their decision-making, leading to pupils being placed on courses that match their abilities and aptitudes. At the same time there is a good range of courses for those who prefer to follow more conventional school examination routes.
26. Enrichment opportunities are very good. Participation in activities in sport and the arts is strong. “Sport for all” is a priority with a wide range of activities for competitive and recreational sport. Pupils and students are successful in team and individual events at all levels including national tournaments. Parents help to run some activities such as athletics. Very good partnerships with local sporting clubs increase participation. There is a wide range of musical groups including orchestra, junior and senior choirs and a theory club. Pupils frequently participate in music festivals either as individuals or members of ensembles. The number of pupils receiving instrumental tuition is high. Participation is equally high in drama. There are a host of theatre visits including trips to London and universities and drama schools to see former pupils in performance. In school there are monthly “studio performances”. Beyond the arts there are other clubs such as Duke of Edinburgh and Christian Union. The school and the community also work very effectively in a two way process to provide a very good extended curriculum which includes ‘Connexions’ drop in centres, adult education, and students working alongside adults as in “twilight time” art classes.
27. The curriculum offered prepares pupils and students very well for the next stage of their lives. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has been suitably modified so that it caters very well for pupils wishing to pursue academic options. Some very good and recent innovations to the curriculum mean that pupils in Years 10 and 11 are now offered a range of appropriate vocational and work related options. Such enhancements to the curriculum offer pupils more choices about what to study and what pathways to follow at the end of Year 16. Very good curricular innovation offers better opportunities for pupils at the end of Year 11 to enter the world of work, or to stay in education, whether at school or college.
28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils receive individual and small group teaching that helps them improve their basic skills. Recent innovations in the curriculum in Years 10 to 11 have resulted in a broader range of options that meet the needs of all pupils.

29. Though much recent work has been done to improve the quality of the learning environment, the accommodation and learning resources available are both satisfactory overall; in some respects, they are unsatisfactory. The provision of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, something that the new headteacher has already identified and is endeavouring to improve. The often cramped and sometimes unsuitable teaching accommodation available in science, business studies, drama, design and technology, economics, ICT, modern foreign languages and music adversely constrains the delivery of the curriculum in these subjects and is hindering the drive to improve standards further in all years, including the sixth form.
30. Two issues of non-compliance with statutory requirements were noted. In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum for music has not been updated to match current National Curriculum requirements. This limits the range of work undertaken. In the sixth form the school is not ensuring that provision for religious education meets statutory requirements. Some opportunities for developing the students' spiritual and moral understanding are lost.

Post 16

31. In the sixth form there is a good range of conventional AS and A2 courses that meet most students' aspirations. There are also advanced vocational courses in business, health and social care, with emerging provision in leisure and recreation. The extent of provision of this nature does not yet match that in Years 10 and 11. As the sixth form grows in size, subtle differences in its composition are emerging and these are presenting the school with new challenges. The school has, hitherto, offered a fairly traditional sixth form based on students studying for A levels. Some innovation has occurred, but this has concentrated on extending the range of A level subjects, as well as the introduction of some advanced vocational courses and AS level options. There are indications in the 2003 examination results that the school needs to rethink some of its recruitment strategies, as in 2002 a minority of students had been recruited on to inappropriate courses. The curriculum offers a good level of equality of opportunity and the quality of advice offered via the careers department is very good. However, despite recent improvements to some of the school's accommodation, some sixth form lessons are still taught in unsuitable classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety well. It provides good advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Pupils and students have many good chances to be involved with the school and its development. These factors result in pupils and students feeling confident, secure and valued in their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although statutory requirements regarding child protection and dealing with accidents are met, it would be wise to provide extended training for more staff.
- Good and trusting relationships exist between pupils and staff.
- There are very good and effective induction arrangements for new pupils.
- The work of the careers department is excellent.

Commentary

32. The school provides a safe and healthy learning environment. The health and safety officer is very active in school and works closely and effectively with the local authority and school staff in addressing any issues. The designated officer for child protection is well trained and experienced in dealing with issues. In view of the number of pupils and students at the school, it would be prudent to train a few more first aid officers. The inspection team identified a small number of health and safety problems, for example in the design and technology department. The school is taking action to resolve these.

The school has an excellent careers department. Detailed programmes of work start in Year 7 and operate in all years through to Year 11. They are thoughtful and pragmatic and offer pupils a wealth of experiences, with strong ties to PSHE and citizenship. In Years 7, 8 and 9, the programme concentrates on boosting self-awareness and confidence; in Years 10 and 11 it centres on preparing pupils for the next step in their lives. Quality partnerships have been established with a variety of agencies and local businesses and education providers. A key benefit has been the development of the work related curriculum, offering pupils the opportunity to experience first class work placements as part of their timetables. Pupils enjoy placements as varied as environmental work on the North York Moors, construction, engineering and hairdressing. The programme in Years 12 and 13 also gives suitable thought to preparing pupils for adult life in a multi-cultural society, as well as tackling issues about equal opportunities. An integral part of the planning is to raise aspirations, both for female pupils and for pupils, who reside in isolated rural areas.

33. Good relationships at all levels reflect the school's caring ethos well. Individual problems are handled with sensitivity and care and this is especially the case with younger pupils. The procedures for the care of pupils with special educational needs are good. The school's good partnerships with a range of outside agencies help the care arrangements to function well. In most cases, pupils and students have easy access to well-informed support, advice and guidance. The one weakness is that a minority of students who entered the sixth form in 2002 were given misleading advice about which courses to study. This advice was given by subject departments, rather than by the school's careers department. The school acknowledge this issue and moves have been taken to strengthen further the role of the careers department. The 'Connexions' package of support is now widely recognized as a centre of excellence. The inspection team was impressed by the wide-ranging work of the Community Education Group. Pupils and students also have access to good mentoring support from peers and staff. Where necessary, pupils and students are referred to specialist support agencies including a behavioural support team and educational social worker. These factors demonstrate the school's inclusive approach well.
34. The school council enables pupils to feel valued as young people and the school has already taken up many of their suggestions and concerns. For example, lockers are now being provided for Year 7 and other year groups will also be provided for soon. Pupils and students continue to show concern about lunch arrangements and school uniform. It is pleasing to see that pupils and students insisted that they decide which charities and good causes are supported through fundraising activities such as 'non uniform days'.
35. The school's good arrangements for induction are effective in settling pupils into Year 7. These pupils and their parents had received good information about the school at open evenings and there were also opportunities to attend pre-school events in the summer term.

Post 16

36. The overall quality of care, guidance and support offered is satisfactory, but with some strong features. The careers department does some very good work, including arranging a two-week work experience placement for each student. Much care is taken with this venture to ensure that placements are appropriate for individual needs and the support offered is very good. More attention needs to be given to monitoring the performance of each individual student. Assessment data is not used with sufficient rigour to advise and support many students and to guide them towards their optimum combination of subjects. In addition, the progress of each student needs to be more closely monitored and the level of guidance offered improved. In order for students to learn better, assessment data needs to be used more effectively to set students target grades in the subjects they study. Though this is done, it is not done early enough in Year 12.
37. Most students like school and are pleased with their decision to enter the sixth form. The induction arrangements for students entering the sixth form from other schools are very good. A very good partnership has been established with a nearby school where pupils leave at the

end of Year 11. Many of these pupils transfer to Lady Lumley's, and staff work hard to ensure the transfer is as seamless as possible. Very good work undertaken by the school's careers department ensures that Year 13 students are offered appropriate information about progression to higher education. The school's provision for its sixth formers has considerably improved recently because of the construction of new facilities and most students are happy and contented.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good and effective links with parents. Partnership working with local colleges and schools is very good and there are very good partnerships with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good partnership with parents contributes well to pupils' learning at school and at home.
- There are excellent, extremely supportive parents, teachers and 'friends' groups.
- The quality of pupil and student reports issued to parents is unsatisfactory.
- Many very good partnerships exist with colleges, other schools and the local community.

Commentary

38. The school's good relationship with parents was amply demonstrated by the many positive views expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. For example, the vast majority of parents are pleased about the school's expectations of their children and their children's progress. The majority of parents find the school approachable and responsive. Scrutiny of pupil records shows there are good arrangements for contacts with parents of pupils with special educational needs.
39. The school has a welcoming reception area and very helpful secretarial and administrative staff. Much useful written information is available for parents. However, pupils' and students' annual reports are unsatisfactory. This is because most reports are too short and lack evaluative information about how well the pupil or student is performing. Future learning targets are rarely stated, or if they are, they are poorly expressed. This finding confirms parental opinions.
40. The school actively seeks parents' views on important issues and values and acts on them. Consultation about the code of conduct for pupils and students and school uniform is a good example of this.
41. Parents and the community give tremendous support to the school through 'The Performing Arts Support Group' and 'The Friends of Lady Lumley's School'. For example, many social and fundraising events have contributed to the school's new millennium building and provide many additional learning resources and much equipment. These improved facilities are used well by the community and the school's partnerships with various sectors of the local community are a strength.
42. The school genuinely encourages parents to become more involved in the school and in their children's learning. A particularly good mechanism is the availability of many adult education courses including for basic computer skills, GCSEs and vocational training. The courses are available at the school and several community venues, and they enable parents to develop their own knowledge and skills. This helps to improve the quality of their involvement in their children's learning.
43. At a community lunch during the inspection, representatives of local primary schools and Ryedale Secondary School confirmed that Lady Lumley's is highly regarded. Relationships between the various schools are very good, as are the mechanisms to transfer pupils, including to the sixth form. Parents are very pleased with these arrangements.

44. Very good collaborative partnerships exist with local further education colleges. During the inspection, evidence was seen of youngsters benefiting from partnership arrangements. For example, very good teaching was offered by college staff to Year 10 students on vocational courses, including support given by the National Trust Volunteers Co-ordinator as part of a Year 10 study of habitat management at Leversham. This was an impressive example of community partnerships supporting learning.

Post 16

45. There are various links with the local community including students working in a 'drop in' centre for the local community, where some are being trained as mentors, and this enhances their social development. There are some good business links that help to enhance the sixth form work experience programme. Business links also make a good contribution to the work of the business studies department.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The governance of the school is very good and the leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff is good and the effectiveness of management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has a very clear view of its role and a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The newly appointed headteacher has a very good understanding of the issues facing the school and has a clear vision for the school's future.
- Inconsistencies in the use of assessment data and the systematic monitoring of teaching and learning have led to varying rates of improvements in standards across departments; this is particularly so in the sixth form.
- The school manages its resources well and provides good value for money.

Commentary

46. The governance of the school is very good. The governors are committed, very loyal to the interests of the school, give freely of their time and have developed very good relationships with staff at all levels. They have a very clear view of their role in the school, especially challenging it to ensure that there is a clear vision for future development, as well as supporting the school in the planning of new innovations. Governors offer very good support to curricular initiatives such as the recent development of the vocational education programme. This results in them having a very perceptive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of the school and an awareness of how pupils are doing compared to similar schools and the progress they are making. However, the lack of compliance with statutory requirements in music in Years 7, 8 and 9 and religious education in the sixth form, means that the governors are not fulfilling all of their statutory duties. The governors recognise these shortcomings, which have partly arisen from staffing problems, and they are moving towards resolving them.
47. The headteacher had been in post for two weeks when the inspection started. Consequently, no judgement on his leadership can be made. However, in this short time he has shown a very good understanding of the issues facing the school and his self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses closely matches those of the inspection team. Immediately, he took on the leadership of ICT in the school and started to clarify the responsibilities of the leadership team, as well as establishing a coherent planning structure for future developments. He has developed a clear vision for the school that is based on it undertaking carefully planned innovations that have improving teaching and learning and high quality continuous professional development at its heart.

48. The leadership of other key staff is good. The two deputy headteachers are both recent appointments to the school and provide good support to the new headteacher. During the recent interim period, when the school had no appointed headteacher, one of the deputies demonstrated very good leadership skills whilst acting as headteacher. Members of the leadership team work well together and demonstrate a good grasp of the issues facing the school. Curricular leadership at middle management level is good in most subjects, very good in geography and satisfactory in economics, design and technology, sociology and health and social care. Standards are improving in geography because the head of department provides a clear direction through development planning, monitors teaching very effectively and encourages innovation. The management of ICT across the curriculum is, however, unsatisfactory.
49. The arrangements for the management of special educational needs are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection the school was operating without a full time SENCO pending a new appointment. Two experienced teachers share the responsibilities and are ensuring that the provision remains effective and specialised, as was clearly apparent during a meeting with representatives of the school's external agencies. The governors fulfil their role well in relation to special educational needs. There are clear strengths in the organisation of subject staff. Inspectors noted how well informed subject teachers are about the pupils at such an early stage of the school year and how efficiently the timetables of teaching assistants had been organised. The recent innovation of assistants keeping systematic records of the progress of the pupils' learning is a good development. To develop provision further, the procedures for monitoring and evaluating some aspects of the provision - such as teaching and learning, placements in sets and on courses, involvement in all aspects of school life - need to be more systematic.
50. The effectiveness of management is good. As part of its self-evaluation procedures, the school has a good performance review system at departmental level. This is currently being extended in order identify departmental training needs and provides a useful basis for further development. Whilst there is a considerable amount of assessment data available to heads of department, it is used inconsistently. This has led to varying rates of improvement in standards across departments. There is a good induction programme for new staff and many of the school's existing staff take part because it gives them the opportunity to share new developments. The school's financial and resource management are good with spending decisions being closely related to the identified priorities for improvements and the benefits for pupils. The principles of best value are central to its decision-making and review processes and applied well when making changes in the allocation of resources.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,610,992	Balance from previous year	406,315
Total expenditure	3,496,802	Balance carried forward to the next	181,546
Expenditure per pupil	3849		

The figures for balances carried forward are artificially high because they include funds available for major capital expenditure, mainly new buildings, that had been allocated but not spent by March 2003. The projected balance to be carried forward at the end of the present financial year is approximately £32,000.

Post 16

51. The leadership and management of this aspect of the school's work are satisfactory. Sixth formers enjoy many successes and most students appreciate the experience and move on to appropriate higher education courses or employment. The careers provision in particular has

many strengths. The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this provision and have a clear vision for improvement, which is similar to that identified by the inspection team. A caring and supportive ethos has been established, but as the sixth form has grown in size, the leadership has not developed sufficiently to forecast and plan for some of the issues that might arise. Three principal areas can be cited. Firstly, the quality of learning is not monitored sufficiently. Secondly, though much examination and other data is available, it is not used with sufficient rigour in setting students targets and evaluating their progress against such targets at regular intervals. Thirdly, the curriculum has not kept pace with the growth in numbers and some students are being recruited to inappropriate courses, in part because data is not analysed sufficiently and because appropriate courses are not always available. The management of the provision requires some fine-tuning to ensure more rigour and better guidance. These are points that the governing body have also identified in their own review of the sixth form and there is a realisation that unless some action is taken, the pace of improvement will slow and achievement will suffer.

COMMUNITY PROVISION

The provision for community education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good identification of the needs of different groups: pupils, parents, and residents of the community.
- The provision of 'drop in' centres on and off site in which the young people have confidence and value.
- Good and careful planning and use of local trust funds to provide new resources for the school and community.
- The range of opportunities for pupils to experience different cultural traditions needs to be widened.
- The leisure centre needs to be integrated with the school to maximise its potential for the community.

Commentary

52. The school and the community work very effectively to provide a very good extended curriculum. There is much commitment and motivation to provide the best service possible to improve the quality of life for parents, pupils and local residents. All aspects are well managed and capitalise very well on the expertise and resources in the community such as the local medical centre, counselling services, 'Connexions' and the police. The school knows the locality very well and uses a variety of methods to canvas both parents and students to identify specific needs and then organises courses, or support groups, to meet these needs.
53. Many people make use of the facilities on the school site and the addition of a new wing to the school has enhanced opportunities and now houses The 'Connexions' centre of excellence. The governors are involved in planning and developing further facilities such as creating a conference centre for local hotels. They work closely with The Lady Lumley Trust Fund to provide valuable new facilities in response to local needs. Where issues of sensitivity are involved, they are handled well and sixth form students are developing a 'drop in' centre on the school site and are being trained as mentors.
54. The school has been innovative in establishing very good partnerships with other schools, colleges and training providers. This has resulted in pupils in Years 10 and 11 being able to take a wider range of courses that are better suited to their interests and also gives them better preparation for life after school.
55. There are lost opportunities to develop the community's multi-cultural awareness by inviting a wider range of visitors. The leisure centre at present runs a number of clubs and courses, but

is not fully integrated with other aspects of the community provision to ensure the most effective usage of the very good facilities available.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 are well above average.
- Students' achievement is very good.
- There is no systematic approach to the monitoring of the quality of teaching.

Commentary

56. The proportion of pupils obtaining a grade in the A* to C range in the 2002 GCSE English language examinations was well above average for boys and girls and was particularly high at the A* grade. The results represent very good achievement when account is taken of the pupils' attainment at the beginning of the course. This is so for boys and girls and for those pupils with special educational needs. The results are also an improvement on what was attained at the time of the previous inspection when standards were above average. Pupils of all capabilities performed equally well in the English literature examinations, demonstrating commendable achievement. The 2003 results in both subjects were an improvement on what was attained in 2002.
57. Attainment in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9 was well above the national average and well above average compared to the results of similar schools. Pupils' levels of achievement were very good. Results have been consistently above, or well above, average over recent years and, in the last three years, attainment has been better than the above average standards obtained at the last inspection. The 2002 results were similar to those obtained in mathematics but better than in science. Girls performed better than the boys compared to their national counterparts but this has not been the case over recent years. Pupils performed as their teachers expected in terms of attainment at Level 5, but did not meet their teachers' expectations at the higher levels. There was a drop in performance at these levels compared to 2001. Performance in the 2003 tests, however, showed an improvement at these levels and the results overall were better than 2002.
58. During the inspection the standard of written work seen at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 was well above average and compares favourably with the pupils' above average attainment on entry to the school. By the end of Year 9 pupils are writing at length and their work is well organised and accurate. By the end of Year 11 pupils are able to write analytically and develop and sustain their own views. They can write in a range of styles for various purposes. Work of a particularly high standard was seen in descriptive and persuasive writing and in the reviews of books read. Most pupils have a good command of language structure, but there are those in all years who struggle to use phrases and clauses to create complex sentences. There are some pupils of lesser competence who make basic mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Pupils make good use of computers for drafting and presenting their writing in a variety of forms. Standards of reading are well above average and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress in developing this skill. Speaking and listening standards are equally high although there are a minority of pupils in all years who are not at ease in formal discussions. Pupils have a good command of Standard English and the contexts in which it should be used.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve very well because in most lessons teaching is either good or very good. In the very small number of lessons where there was room for improvement and in the one unsatisfactory lesson, the work lacked pace and challenge and the pupils were not being stretched. The strengths in the teaching far outweigh these weaknesses, however. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. They make clear at the start of all lessons what they expect in terms of learning gains and behaviour and pupils respond positively to these high expectations. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson on poetry from other cultures where the teacher's high expectations resulted in students of low competency appreciating the values and beliefs of others and so developing their social and cultural awareness. Pupils are given opportunities for reflection on spiritual and moral matters when they have to confront sensitive issues in their reading of contemporary texts. A range of teaching strategies is deployed to motivate and engage pupils and accounts for the positive attitudes seen in lessons. A particular strength in the teaching is the use of rigorous questioning. This results in significant learning gains for pupils of all capabilities. All teachers are aware of the need to strengthen pupils' already good literacy skills and because opportunities are provided for pupils to communicate and listen in a variety of contexts the provision is good.
60. The leadership of the subject is very good. The Head of Department provides a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the work undertaken in the subject and she has the ability to motivate and influence her staff and pupils. Management is good in that pupils' standards of attainment have been maintained through a period of recent staffing difficulties and results have improved since the previous inspection. Appropriate systems are in place for monitoring pupils' progress, but little attention is given to monitoring the quality of teaching and ensuring that all lessons are as challenging and stimulating as the best. This is now a priority for the department to address. There is the capacity to improve upon the already high standards because of the commitment of the staff and the focus on improving the quality teaching.
61. A good level of improvement has been recorded since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Pupils throughout the school have good English language and literacy skills. They are able to adapt their writing to the needs of the curriculum. This was seen in history in the writing undertaken by Years 10 and 11 pupils of higher competency who were able to write at length analysing source material. Extended writing is well organised and accurate. Pupils show knowledge and understanding of a range of texts, many containing specialist terminology, because of their well-developed reading skills. They also read aloud confidently, fluently and with expression. Oral skills are also developed well. Pupils explain themselves clearly at length, they can develop and amplify the points they make and they are able to engage effectively in group discussions. They learn well because they are able to listen for extended periods of time and because they show respect for the contributions of others. In physical education time is given for pupils to think and then explain what they know and understand and this consolidates their learning. The provision for literacy is very good in modern foreign languages, particularly in developing pupils' command of sentence grammar and their ability to speak fluently and expressively.
63. The school has accorded the improvement of pupils' literacy skills a high priority and has formed working groups to look at speaking and listening skills and active reading strategies. The literacy co-ordinator has promoted the sharing of good practice across departments and has clear priorities for future developments. The Language and Literacy policy has been agreed and the need now is to put in place an effective monitoring strategy to ensure the policy is implemented consistently and effectively.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11 and this is helped by pupils' positive and mature attitudes.
- The dual language programme and extra-curricular provision are supporting pupils' cultural development and leading to high standards.
- Assessment information is consistent and helpful but not yet used enough to track individuals and groups of pupils, such as boys, to raise standards.
- Some boys are underachieving and steps need to be taken to change this.

Commentary

64. National Tests show that at GCSE, standards are well above average. Girls perform significantly better than boys, with many of them gaining the highest grades. The 2003 results indicate that standards have continued to be high. These results indicate that pupils are achieving well in modern foreign languages. Most pupils in Year 9 are reaching standards that are above average. This too is indicative of good achievement. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection.
65. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average and most pupils' achievement is good, though some boys could do better. In Year 10 pupils following the dual language (fast track) programme make rapid progress in French, which is prioritised so that they can take the GCSE exam a year early. Then in Year 11, they concentrate on German. Pupils following a single language course also achieve well and many attain well above average standards. Pupils' comprehension is generally good in both French and German in all years. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are confident when speaking and pronunciation is excellent. By Year 9 most pupils can write a descriptive paragraph, for instance about their home or family, and by Year 11 most pupils are writing confidently and correctly. The modern languages curriculum is very helpful in developing pupils' understanding of grammar and their literacy skills.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Such good quality teaching and learning is a major factor contributing to the high standards. Teachers almost always use French or German in the classroom so that pupils benefit from maximum exposure to the languages. Lessons are very well-structured; they always begin with the teacher explaining clearly the main objectives of the lesson. They revise what they have done in the previous lesson and, at the end of the lesson, the teacher recaps the work covered during the lesson so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers prepare interesting tasks, which keep pupils involved and ensure learning proceeds at a good pace. Teachers frequently give helpful advice and tips on how to score better marks. Teaching is always encouraging and pupils respond well and have a mature approach to learning, especially in Years 10 and 11. The best lessons are interactive, fun and keep pupils 'on their toes'! In one lesson the teacher had excellent teaching strategies to promote and develop the target language, and a challenging pace, which kept pupils fully involved, interested and keen to learn. A vibrant atmosphere for language learning was created and the lesson was participative with fun activities, including a competition to check knowledge of numbers using the whiteboard. All teachers are very competent and have mastered techniques for teaching languages effectively. Pupils have extra opportunities to develop French and German after school, during breaks and sometimes at the weekends. Visits, exchanges and work placements in France or Germany have a very positive effect on pupils' motivation and fluency. Homework is used well to improve standards and staff are assiduous in checking that homework tasks are completed.

67. The leadership and management of modern languages are good. They are both clear and ambitious. There are satisfactory systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning and very good guidance and support are provided for staff. The accommodation for modern languages is in 'temporary' outside classrooms and is less than satisfactory. Acoustics are poor and the temperature is too variable. This impacts negatively on teaching and learning, particularly when the extreme cold, or heat, makes teachers and pupils uncomfortable. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average throughout Years 7 to 11.
- The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well.
- There is an inconsistent approach to the marking of pupils' work.

Commentary

68. Standards of attainment are well above average at the end of Year 9. In 2002 the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in the national tests was well above the national average. The proportion gaining higher levels was also well above the national average. In 2003 national test results improved further with the percentage of pupils gaining higher levels improving in particular. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. They enter the school with above average levels of attainment. upon which they build. Although in a number of years boys' and girls' performances have been different, these differences do not form a consistent pattern.
69. Standards of attainment are well above average at the end of Year 11. In the GCSE examination the percentage of pupils gaining grades in the range A* to C in 2002 was well above the national average. The proportion gaining grades in the range A* to G was also well above the national average. In 2003 these percentages rose further. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well during Years 10 and 11. Again, the differences in the performance of boys and girls that occur in some years do not form a consistent pattern.
70. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average. This represents good achievement given the pupils' attainment on entry. By the end of Year 9 most pupils have a secure understanding of a wide range of aspects across the requirements. For example, pupils become increasingly confident when handling problems involving types of numbers. Most pupils are able to identify number sequences and patterns. They are able to use and apply mathematics to a range of practical contexts including the use of graphs. Most understand new concepts and are quickly able to apply them. For example, pupils in a lower attaining Year 11 class had a secure understanding and were able to calculate the surface areas of a range of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils in a higher attaining Year 11 group were confident when handling algebraic expressions and equations. Pupils handled relatively complex aspects with confidence and were able to solve a range of quadratic equations by hand and also by using appropriate computer software.
71. Teaching and learning throughout Years 7 to 11 are good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the work undertaken is appropriately challenging. Lessons are well planned. They contain an appropriate range of teaching and learning approaches with pupils working as a group and on an individual basis. Good links are normally made with the previous work that has been undertaken. Questioning of pupils during the group work is used well as a check on the level of understanding and also to consolidate pupils' learning. During a number of lessons

individual pupils are used well when having to explain their solutions to the rest of the class at the whiteboard. Pupils' responses are normally good and sometimes very good. Many are able to explain clearly the steps that have been taken in order to reach the solution to the problem set. When appropriate, most teachers provide examples in context rather than purely as academic exercises. However, opportunities for doing this are not always taken. In almost all classes the management of pupils is effective and standards of discipline maintained are of a high order. However, in a few classes the pace with which the work progresses is adversely affected by the need for the teacher to maintain the full attention of all pupils.

72. Leadership and management are good, with staff working well as a team. Procedures relating to the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department are in place. These include lesson observations by the head of department and reviews of the work of the department, including the analysis of test and examination results. Appropriate schemes of work are in place though aspects of these are currently being revised. Academic progress is well monitored with assigned current and target levels or grades for individual pupils throughout each of the years. Levels and grades are based on the regular tests that are set for the pupils to undertake. However, day-to-day assessment is less well developed. The school policy for the marking of work is not adhered to and overall there is an inconsistent approach to the marking of pupils' work, which stifles opportunities for improvement.
73. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Well above average standards have been maintained. Recent test and examination results have steadily improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Pupils' level of mathematical skills across subjects is above average. The further development and use of pupils' confidence and skills when handling problems involving number in particular form an increasing part of the mathematics curriculum. Mathematics lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9, frequently involve activities designed to improve further mental arithmetic skills. Competitions and games are sometimes used and are frequently enjoyed by the pupils. Good use of mathematics, including numeracy, is also made in science, ICT, business studies, and physical education. There is good use of formulae, graphs and charts in a number of these subjects. Numeracy work carried out with pupils with special educational needs is also effective. In almost all other subjects, skills exhibited and use made are satisfactory. Only in music is there no evidence of use and this is unsatisfactory. More recently the overall management and co-ordination of the work has been affected by the member of staff responsible leaving the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic, knowledgeable teachers who motivate and challenge pupils well.
- Very good technical support and teamwork ensures good practical work despite the shortage of laboratory space.
- Poor access to computers hinders achievement.
- Teaching quality is more variable in the lower school than in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

75. Standards in the GCSEs in 2002 were well above average and standards in Year 9 national tests were above average. The improvement witnessed in 2002 was continued in 2003. Indeed standards in tests and exams, after a short period of decline in 2001, appear to have been restored to the well above average levels of 1997.

76. Standards on entry to the school are just above average. Current standards are well above average by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. By the end of Year 9 pupils use techniques and terminology and apparatus very well. However, the exercise books sampled show that higher attaining pupils do not plan investigations as well as they should. Pupils with special educational needs do well and enjoy the variety of activities. Boys as well as girls learn well from good quality books but too little use is made of computers in all year groups. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a very good understanding of abstract ideas such as radioactivity, polymers and inheritance. They also learn good techniques from practical demonstrations and experiments well set up by teachers and technicians. High marks are gained in coursework for obtaining and analysing evidence. However, the marks obtained for writing and for evaluating both the evidence collected and procedures they used were less good. In most aspects of science the pupils use skills from mathematics and English well. Achievement overall is good through all year groups, with standards rising accordingly.
77. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. In Years 7, 8 and 9 it is good overall, but there are some inconsistencies. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11. There are many very good features. In one very good lesson, pupils in Year 7, having collected data, compared the quantity of heat energy liberated by burning fuels and then went on to discuss thoughtfully what they had learned and why fossil fuels will run out. In the process many skills developed very well. Many lessons were characterized by lively questioning and good pace; safe, exciting and interesting demonstrations were common features. In some lessons there was a tendency for the teachers to talk for too long, so that opportunities for individual decision making were reduced. In consequence the lesson ended with too brief a review of progress, or too few pupils being required to show what they had learned in the lesson. Year 11 pupils responded very well to a very good demonstration about different types of radioactivity. Occasionally opportunities were missed to develop pupils' own investigative skills through activities being too teacher-led. Very good explanations were given to enable pupils to master difficult concepts such as heredity. However, in all lessons pupils responded well. For example one boy was very proud of the nylon tube he had very carefully synthesized from two liquids.
78. The leadership of the department is now very good. There is good team spirit and co-operation and new teachers are integrated very well. The agreed priorities for development are very good. Recent changes are being well managed to good effect. The teachers are very confident in working within their own specialist area of science. They also plan in pairs so that between them they have all the expertise they need. Standards, consequently, are rising.
79. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. High standards have been maintained and the quality of the accommodation has been improved. Textbooks are well used. Data logging equipment cannot be used because currently the installations are incomplete. This inadequate access to computers is hindering the drive to improve standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Greatly improved schemes of work, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9, are helping to improve achievement and build a consistency of approach across the department.
- Recent results in external examinations and teacher assessed SATs have been poor and represent a dip in performance, which the school is working to remedy.
- There is a backlog of unsatisfactory or non-existent coursework in Years 9 and 10.
- In many curriculum areas there is inadequate use of ICT to enhance learning.

Commentary

80. Evidence both from observation and statistics shows there had been a substantial decline in standards since the previous inspection. The school has taken this issue very seriously and appropriate measures are in place to remedy the situation. However, many of these measures are new and this makes judgements on the quality of current provision difficult. Of the work available for scrutiny, there was little evidence either of achievement or much constructive feedback. Some Year 9 folders contained only a few printed out sheets from Year 7. One Year 8 folder contained a record of marks and assignments with no entries beyond February 2003. During the inspection, coursework seen from Year 11 pupils was satisfactory, but the work of pupils in Years 9 and 10 was less so. Even at an early stage in the year, however, there had been some good work produced by Year 7 pupils.
81. Pupils enter the school with varying levels of ICT skill. They are now being well taught but the record of recent achievement is unsatisfactory. In 2003 only 30 per cent of the school's candidates in GCSE ICT achieved Grade C or above. Fourteen per cent of entries were unclassified. Year 9 results in the teacher assessed tests showed only 12 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 or above, compared to 77 per cent in English, 82 per cent in science and 84 per cent in mathematics.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection, with very nearly 70 per cent of lessons rated good or better. Teaching staff have strong subject knowledge, supported by commercial and industrial experience, and good planning, with effective use of resources and time. All teachers shared learning objectives with the class and the pupils responded well; they obviously take great delight both in their emerging ICT skills and in the challenges presented by imaginatively designed lessons. The use of the network to hold schemes of work and detailed lesson plans is particularly effective.
83. At present there is no head of department; thus no judgement on the quality of leadership and management can be made. An urgent short term development plan, the rewriting of the schemes of work for Years 7, 8 and 9 and the emergence of a coherent departmental policy in marking, assessment, reporting and communication goes some way to repairing the gaps in recent provision. The short term assumption of departmental leadership by the headteacher is helpful both in establishing sound management within the department and as a signal to staff and parents of the seriousness with which the school views the need to make rapid progress in re-establishing the quality of ICT provision. It is unusual to have a whole department which is so completely new and staff should be congratulated on the speed with which a degree of order has been brought to planning and teaching, and on the quality of working relationships between new staff and pupils who are already well established in the school.
84. ICT emerged well from the last inspection but standards deteriorated somewhat in the interim. Parental anxiety about this decline was strongly expressed both at the parents meeting and as additional comments in a great many of the questionnaires that were returned to the school. The last inspection reported that ICT standards at the end of Year 9 were above those expected nationally. By 2003 this was no longer true and there are major deficits to be remedied. The school has responded with the re-allocation of management duties, the revision of schemes of work and a focus on retrieving the situation through a very good development plan with its concentration on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. The quality of present provision is unsatisfactory. Several departments such as modern languages have both software and expertise that could contribute to pupil achievement, were they able to use it. Access to bookable ICT suites is difficult, and staff claim that there is not yet adequate provision of hardware, or reliable networking across the school, particularly into the hatted accommodation. ICT is not yet as well used in teaching, learning or pupil tracking as it

has the potential to be, but there are well trained staff, an embryonic school intranet and the levels of good will and good intentions, which suggest that this is an issue that is being tackled. Folders and course files suggest good personal levels of ICT use in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics, while other subjects regularly use the Internet for research. Nevertheless there remains a dearth of provision and use of ICT in much of the school.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of work in literacy and ICT and the focus on key learning skills is excellent.
- Department leadership and teamwork contributes significantly to the quality of work from all the teachers in the department.
- Target setting needs to be improved in all years.
- A stronger focus on planning work to meet differing individual needs is required, particularly for less able pupils.
- Fieldwork opportunities for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 need developing.

Commentary

86. Standards in teacher assessed tests at the end of Year 9 are above average. At GCSE, standards remain above average and achievement is good. The unvalidated for 2003 shows that GCSE results were similar to those gained in 2002, though girls gained more higher grades than boys. Standards of work seen in the inspection are above average in all years. Pupils conscientiously complete set tasks during lessons and bring in their homework completed to a good or very good level. They are less confident working in pairs or small groups. Achievement is again good and no differences in standards can be detected based on gender. All pupils are suitably encouraged and supported by their teachers, however, those pupils with special educational needs would benefit from more tasks directly related to their abilities. Furthermore, all pupils' work would be improved by the development of challenging personal targets linked to data analysis of assessment grades.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, though it is very good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge, excellent planning for the new GCSE syllabus and crisp, purposeful delivery. It is in Years 7, 8 and 9 that the department is making a major contribution to the overall education of pupils via the new scheme of work, which focuses on literacy and ICT in lessons and is designed to develop analytical thought alongside the traditional knowledge and skills of geography. New, innovative teaching ideas are being developed, including Ordnance Survey grid squares marked out on the classroom floor.
88. A wide range of resources is used to enhance learning. For example, pupils watch television footage of earthquake damage in Japan and read eye-witness accounts. They are also able to access the school Internet facilities to find out further information prior to producing their own news reports. A Year 11 group is using ICT facilities to record the results of a field trip to the coast and is producing excellent results. These coursework tests are criterion referenced against GCSE grades or National Curriculum levels and results are charted to record progress, but exercise books are not always consistently marked. Moreover, many pupils do not know how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve.
89. Leadership and management are good, though the head of department is battling against a reduction in administrative time. Though much improvement has been made to the scheme of work for Years 7, 8 and 9, it still lacks full provision of a core element of geographical studies,

local fieldwork, for which many opportunities exist close to the school. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in tests and examinations are above average; standards of work are also above average, representing good achievement for all pupils.
- Teachers explain topics well, demonstrate challenging questioning and have good classroom management strategies, ensuring a productive learning environment.
- The newly appointed head of department has a clear vision for the future, including increasing the number of pupils studying the subject in Years 10 and 11.
- The marking of work is generally helpful but at times lacks specific guidance on how pupils could improve.
- Whilst there has been some progress in the application of ICT, there is room for further development.

Commentary

90. Results in tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average in 2002 but declined slightly in 2003. Results in GCSE examinations were also well above average in 2002 and then showed a slight fall in 2003. These results are similar to those reported in the last inspection.
91. At the end of Year 9, standards in the work observed were above average. Pupils of all attainment levels have a good knowledge and understanding of why British industry was successful during the Industrial Revolution and can select information from a range of sources to make deductions and communicate findings. At the end of Year 11, standards of work observed were also above average. Pupils of all attainment levels demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of America during the depression of the 1920s and can consider prosperity from the viewpoints of different groups of people using contemporary documents. Therefore, achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. They make good advances in acquiring historical knowledge, understanding and skills and are developing the ability to use source material to support arguments well.
92. Achievement is good because the quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge that is used effectively to explain topics well whilst challenging questioning enables them to check pupils' understanding and fully involve them in class discussions. A range of teaching methods is used though in some lessons the pace of teaching is slower because too much time is spent on one activity. Good classroom management strategies, together with the appropriate use of praise and encouragement, ensure a calm and productive learning environment that is characterised by good relationships. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good; they quickly settle to listen to teachers' explanations and work well together on a collaborative basis. The marking of pupils' work is generally helpful but at times lacks specific guidance on how pupils could improve their grades.
93. No judgements can be made about the leadership and management of the department because the head of history had been in post for only two weeks at the time of the inspection. However, she has developed a good analysis of the department's strengths and areas for improvement together with a clear vision for the future that includes increasing the number of pupils studying the subject in Years 10 and 11. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. There has been some development in the application of ICT in the subject but this is an area for further improvement.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 9 standards are well above average. In Year 10 standards are above average, but in Year 11, standards are average.
- The achievement of all pupils in Years 7 to 9 is very good but in Years 10 and 11 achievement is satisfactory.
- In a well managed department, experienced teachers prepare lessons that are interesting and challenging in which the quality of learning is good.
- There is shortage of work, especially in Years 10 and 11, which enables pupils to appreciate fully the colour and vitality of the all the religious traditions that are found in society.
- More use needs to be made of ICT.

Commentary

94. There are as yet no public examination results. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are well above average, especially in Year 9. Pupils have a very good understanding of the main teachings, festivals and practices of Christianity. They also have a good understanding of the principles of the main religions that are found in our society. Year 10 pupils commenced the short course GCSE at the end of Year 9 and already have a sound grasp of the main elements of work that form the foundation of this course. In discussions they show a good understanding of the issue being dealt with and demonstrate a sensitive awareness of the variety of beliefs and values of others. Pupils of all abilities are achieving well and gaining grades that reflect their level of ability. Written work is well prepared, homework completed on time and they are orally proficient. In Year 11 a shortage of time means that pupils have not covered the syllabus in such depth. This is reflected in their work, which lacks depth and understanding. Given the time constraints, pupils of all ability achieve satisfactorily but still have much to do before the examinations. Standards are average.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Well-qualified and experienced teachers prepare lessons well using a suitable range of teaching methods to interest and motivate pupils. As a result pupils are well behaved, work well in lessons and make a positive contribution when given opportunities to contribute. Relevant homework is set and well marked. Assessment strategies have been developing for some time but there is still the need to introduce a thorough system that not only accurately measures achievement but also gives students targets to aim for. Some units of work do not contain sufficient teaching materials to enable pupils to appreciate fully the colour and vitality of all religions, especially in Years 10 and 11, where the choice of syllabus restricts the coverage of religions other than Christianity. ICT is not used effectively as appropriate resources are not easily accessed.
96. Given the constraints under which the department is operating, leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection the introduction of the short course GCSE has improved the provision.

TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New courses and schemes of work have been developed that better meet the needs of all pupils.
- Standards of work in food technology are above average.
- Information about pupils' previous performance needs to be used more effectively to track their achievement.
- To raise standards further, the use of ICT by staff and pupils needs to increase.
- The environment in some areas of the department is disorganised and uninspiring.

Commentary

97. Standards are average. GCSE results in 2002 for design technology subjects collectively are marginally above the national average but show some variation between the material areas. Pupils overall performed less well in this subject than in their other subjects. Results overall are lower in 2003, particularly in resistant materials and electronic products, and this is explained by staffing difficulties. Results in food technology have been above average for a number of years because of very good teaching. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2003 shows the number of pupils achieving Level 5 and above to be average. Given their levels of prior attainment, most pupils make satisfactory achievement, though it is better than this in food technology.
98. Standards on entry to the subject in Year 7 are average. In the work seen, standards are average throughout the school. This represents satisfactory achievement. Staff absence, staff shortages, supply and non-specialist teaching adversely affected standards in the last academic year. The appointment of a new head of department a year ago and some new specialist teachers and technicians this term are improving standards. By the end of Year 9 pupils use a design process to design and make quality products in a range of materials. They acquire a good knowledge of health and safety requirements and can handle tools and materials confidently. Written work is well presented. Pupils display good literacy skills. Numeracy skills are sufficient for the needs of the subject. Only limited evidence was observed of pupils using ICT in their work. Drawing skills, particularly those needed to communicate initial design ideas, are not well developed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and achieve as well as other pupils.
99. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build on the skills, knowledge and understanding of the design process learnt in their previous three years. Standards are average when performance across all the material areas is considered but show variation between them. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Making skills are good and result in well made products. Most pupils write good specifications and refer back to them in final evaluations. Some pupils, particularly in resistant materials, struggle to complete coursework. In textiles pupils find difficulty in generating original ideas in response to design problems and work displays similarity. Pupils generally are not yet using ICT as a tool to help them when designing and making. Standards are high in food technology in both written and practical work.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good and very good teaching from experienced teachers. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed during the inspection. The best learning takes place when lessons are well planned and expectations are made clear at the outset. The majority of lessons moved at a brisk pace and included a high degree of pupil involvement and a variety of activities. Teachers are good motivators. They manage pupils well and this results in them staying focused on the lesson objectives, making gains in knowledge and understanding and behaving well. Teachers give good demonstrations that enable pupils to acquire practical skills. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves by asking challenging questions. Lessons are made interesting and enjoyable so that pupils strive to learn. In order to improve teaching and learning teachers need to make more use of assessment data. Underachievement needs to be identified by monitoring pupils' progress.

Lessons need to be planned to meet better the needs of the range of abilities within groups. Teachers need further training on the use of ICT, and particularly computer aided design/ computer aided manufacture (CAD/CAM), so that it can be delivered more effectively.

101. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The recently appointed head of department has correctly identified targets for improvement. Curricular changes have been implemented which give a vocational dimension. Further consideration needs to be given to option choices for GCSE because of national changes. New schemes of work have been introduced in Years 7 to 9, which provide better coverage of the National Curriculum. The accommodation has aspects including some health and safety issues that make it unsatisfactory and adversely effect standards. Areas of the department do not provide an environment that is stimulating or reflect modern technology. Storage is very limited and pupils' work is sometimes lost or damaged. Resources are deficient in the area of small equipment and this affects standards when pupils have to share. Computers are not easily accessed and this too is constraining standards.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Hard working and committed staff.
- Improved standards at GCSE.
- Insufficient opportunities for spiritual and moral development in planned activities.

Commentary

102. Standards attained in 2002 GCSE examinations were in line with the national average with two thirds of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grades. This represented a significant rise in standards from being well below national averages at the time of the previous inspection and in recent years. The higher standard was maintained in 2003. Pupils achieved well in relation to their prior learning.
103. Standards on entry in Year 7 are below average. By the end of Year 9 standards are average, representing good achievement. Pupils' drawing skills improve very well at this stage, particularly in their ability to draw accurately from observation and develop a neat illustrative style with coloured pencil crayon. Girls attain higher standards. Pupils with special needs achieve well in developing understanding and skills. By the end of Year 11 the standards in work seen are average. Scrutiny of pupils' work across the GCSE course reveals good achievement, compared to their start in Year 10, in the breadth of media and processes used in picture making and the inventiveness of their use. Work seen in lessons suggests a rising trend in standards year on year. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls at this stage. Literacy skills are good across the whole age range with neatly presented and well-explained writing to support pupils' work and researches. Most writing, however, focuses on what has been done, rather than explaining why it was done. Skills in numeracy and ICT are satisfactory and are applied as required in projects. The currently inadequate resources in the department limit the development of ICT as a creative tool.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers are knowledgeable and committed to raising standards. In Years 7 to 9 the methodical teaching of observational drawing skills creates a sound base for future work and develops pupils' capacity for sustained concentration. Pupils in the lower attaining groups, including those with special educational needs, respond very well to teaching that presents a good level of challenge at a brisk pace. Support teachers make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning in these groups. In Years 10 and 11 there

is a good emphasis on individual tuition leading to a broader application of the skills learned in earlier years. There is insufficient use of spiritual and moral themes to challenge pupils' expressive capability. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11 where pupils are fully aware of the examination criteria. In Years 7 to 9 marking is good with an appropriate emphasis on effort and personal achievement. There is no folio of levelled work to standardise National Curriculum judgements by staff and pupils' self-assessments.

105. Leadership and management of art and design are good. The head of department has successfully raised standards and the popularity of the subject over recent years. Insufficient opportunities for subject-specific training for staff are limiting the influx of new ideas and the further development of the department. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection in meeting all the issues raised and in raising GCSE results to the national average.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are above average and these pupils achieve well in relation to their musical ability on entry to the school.
- The teachers' musicianship motivates and encourages all pupils to give of their best.
- The quality and range of extra-curricular activities are very good.
- There is an urgent need to revise schemes of work to ensure that statutory requirements are met in Years 7 to 9.
- The variety and range of teaching is restricted by accommodation for music.
- The very limited range of computer equipment prevents pupils from developing their composition techniques.

Commentary

106. GCSE examination results in 2002 were above average, though numbers entered were small. The results gained indicate that the pupils concerned achieved well given their prior levels of attainment. For present pupils, standards in Year 11 are above average. Results have improved since the last inspection. Pupils have good performing skills, use musical language competently and are able to analyse the structure of pieces. They can recognise chord changes and apply chromatic notes to their compositions. Group co-operation is very good and they are able to make musical decisions. This means that previously learnt skills and knowledge are applied to new pieces. Present GCSE pupils achieve well.
107. Standards of work in Year 9 are average. Though many pupils show standards in some aspects of music that are above average, overall standards are constrained because there is incomplete coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 11 reach above average standards and both boys and girls achieve well. The more competent pupils can interpret musical language and play chord patterns accurately. They use language appropriately and can discuss differences between various musical styles. A number of worksheets are used to reinforce learning, however, many are incomplete and do not challenge the more competent pupils sufficiently. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress especially when ably supported by teaching assistants. There is a severe lack of computer equipment so that all pupils, but especially those in Years 10 and 11, are unable to save, refine and develop their compositions.
108. For several months the department has been experiencing staffing difficulties and as a result during the inspection teachers were teaching many pupils for only the second time. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory for those in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and bring good personal knowledge to their lessons and this motivates pupils to give of their best. Lesson

planning for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is a weakness, both within lessons and in order to comply with statutory requirements. Some lessons lack specific challenge for different groups of pupils. This results on occasions with either pupils becoming disheartened by difficult tasks, or not being stretched sufficiently. Where the challenge and tasks set are appropriate pupils' learning is good. Accommodation restrictions mean that some lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms where the variety of musical activities that can be undertaken is limited. Pupils do not have the stimulus of musical information or easy access to equipment.

109. Owing to the long-term absence of key staff, no judgements can be made about the quality of leadership and management. Day-to-day issues are being dealt with effectively and pupils continue to enjoy and benefit from the various high quality musical ensembles. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. However, there is an urgent need to update department documentation.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are attaining well above average standards in national examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by the range and quality of the extra-curricular provision.
- The high standards attained are because of the quality of the leadership and management of the subject.
- The poor accommodation prevents standards from being even higher and limits the options available to students in Years 7 to 11 to study all aspects of theatre work.

Commentary

110. The proportion of pupils gaining a grade in the A* to C range in the 2002 GCSE examinations was well above average, as it has been over recent years. Though far more girls elect to study the subject than boys, they all attain at high levels. Achievement has been very good because students enter the school with no experience of the subject. By the end of Year 9 they are attaining average standards, which are raised to well above average by the end of Year 11.
111. The standard of work seen during the inspection reflects the attainment in the examinations. Pupils are confident and articulate, they work well collaboratively and they meet deadlines. They understand and use a range of communication strategies, including non-verbal means. They are able to work in role and create performances which explore sensitive issues in a mature way. The subject is making a significant contribution to their personal development and their understanding of a range of moral and social issues. It also builds confidence and develops literacy skills. Pupils' understanding and enjoyment of the subject are increased by the extensive range of the curricular provision outside of taught time and the opportunities to visit theatres and work with professionals.
112. Pupils perform very well in the subject because of the quality of the teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers are experienced specialists who know their students well and plan effectively to meet their needs. They have formed very good relationships with them and can adapt the work to take account of pupils' different learning styles. This was seen in Year 9 where the research homework gave scope for pupils to explore various means to gain the information they needed. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject motivates the young people and there are many pupils who pursue the subject in higher education and who then develop careers in the theatre. The work of the teachers and the senior pupils is enhanced by the curriculum support assistant. Her expertise and commitment complements that of her teaching colleagues.

113. The quality of leadership and management of the subject are very good. All three colleagues contribute to the success of the subject through their commitment and enthusiasm and there is a sense of purpose and direction to their work. They work closely to share good practice and have developed very effective systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress. Their work is being hampered, however, by the very poor accommodation, which is restricting the range of technical options open to the younger pupils because of a lack of suitable space and storage difficulties.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The improved quality of teaching that leads to pupils reaching above average standards by Year 11.
- The very good extra-curricular programme and standards reached in competitive sport.
- Assessment of the pupils' standards on entry to the school is not good enough, so their progress cannot be monitored effectively
- Opportunities for the use of ICT and numeracy are not exploited.

Commentary

114. There are no records of pupils' standards on entry to the school. By the time they reach Year 9 standards are average. A minority of pupils reach above average standards and show advanced skills in games such as rugby, hockey and netball. They understand how to use tactics and strategies in order to outwit their opponent. They are able to evaluate their own performance and that of others accurately but are not confident to use technical vocabulary in structured sentences when speaking. This represents good achievement.
115. Standards reached by pupils in Year 11 are above average. The boys have advanced skills in basketball and the majority of pupils have an exceptional understanding of tactics across a range of games. The pupils who have just begun the new GCSE course are working at an above average standard. They make good use of their general knowledge in related topics and reason through answers intelligently. Their notes are well written and are a good resource for revision. All pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, achieve well. They respond well to the high level of challenge and practise hard in order to improve their skills. Those with special educational needs are often talented sports players. Their success in the subject adds to their self-esteem. The achievement of all pupils is good.
116. The popular extra-curricular programme provides pupils with a wide range of activities to further their interests. The 'sport for all' approach encourages pupils of all abilities to participate and join clubs in the community. Individuals and teams enjoy success at school, district, county and national levels in sports such as athletics, basketball, football, gymnastics and hockey.
117. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is good in all years. All teachers have high expectations of the quality and pace of the pupils' work, standards of behaviour and good sporting attitudes. They have good knowledge of the activities they teach and use demonstration effectively to highlight good performance. The pace of learning is always brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. Teachers plan well and ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are met. Thus pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented achieve well because they are challenged by appropriate tasks. The teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy skills. However, planning for the development of numeracy and ICT skills is not as effective. Those pupils who are unable to take a practical part in lessons are not always given tasks to involve them closely in what is being taught or included in question and answer sessions.

118. Good new leadership of the department is already having a positive impact on improving consistency in teaching. Formal monitoring has yet to be established. Very clear vision and direction is provided. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. A GCSE course has been introduced and there is a more varied curriculum. Standards have been maintained and new assessment procedures are in place to ensure consistent judgements on standards.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

No subjects were inspected in depth, though one Year 11 lesson in business studies was observed. This featured good teaching and standards were above average. The pupils responded well to the challenges presented.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management and provision involving a number of staff.
- Very good range of links and activities built around citizenship in Years 10 and 11.
- The excellent work of the careers department.
- Appointment of a full time co-ordinator is needed.
- There has not been enough training for teachers delivering citizenship in Years 7 to 9.
- Citizenship is not adequately covered in the schemes of work for subjects in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

119. Standards in citizenship are average in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In a Year 9 English lesson pupils considered the power of persuasive writing, its potential to misinform and their responsibility to question the validity of information. Similarly in art and design pupils begin to consider the ethics behind some advertising campaigns and respond with their own versions. Pupils in Year 10 considered the human cost of drink driving and issues of personal responsibility through drama work. From the work seen, pupils in all years achieve well on their citizenship courses.

120. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to make secure judgments about the quality of teaching and learning because of the timing of citizenship lessons within the school's two-week timetable. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Manageable systems for assessment are being evaluated with Year 9 groups, while Years 10 and 11 follow the GCSE criteria for the subject.

121. Curricular provision for citizenship is very good. In the earlier years it is delivered through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. The timetable for Years 7 to 10 has been synchronised to allow year groups to make optimum use of special events and visiting speakers. The delivery of citizenship through subjects is currently inconsistent with plans having been delayed through staffing changes. In Years 10 and 11 there is very good provision through the GCSE short course followed by almost all pupils. There are good links with outside agencies including the XL programme for community involvement and the 'Drive Alive' scheme encouraging young people to become responsible drivers. The careers department make an excellent contribution to citizenship across the age range. A resource of lesson plans has been compiled and is being revised by heads of year to unify provision for each year group. There is an excellent careers programme that runs through all year groups.

122. Leadership and management of citizenship are very good. The acting co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about citizenship and its important role in the curriculum. She is working hard to raise the profile of citizenship and to make the subject relevant and interesting to pupils. A thorough and appropriate development plan is in place for 2002-4. A full time co-ordinator is to be appointed and training is planned for teachers of citizenship in Years 7 to 9. There are good systems in place for monitoring the development of the subject involving heads of years and departments. Very useful partnerships have been established with other schools to share information and coursework ideas.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 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, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	6	66.7	81.6	33.3	33.2	30	33.2
English Literature	8	100	94.4	37.5	37.9	41.3	38.9
Design and Technology	9	88.9	89.2	11.1	32	28.9	35.7
General Studies	50	88	78.6	34	25.7	36.4	30
Geography	6	100	88.3	50	36.4	43.3	36.3
Information Technology	16	81.3	78.2	12.5	20.6	22.8	28.5
Mathematics	5	100	74.2	0	34.3	30	31.3
Other Sciences	9	88.9	83.4	11.1	32.3	31.1	33.4
Physics	6	100	82	16.7	36.2	38.3	34.3
Sociology	8	75	83.7	0	33.6	23.8	33.8
Sports/PE Studies	13	100	88.2	23.1	27.7	34.6	33.8

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	20	90	91.6	10	36.3	57	74.1
Business Studies	15	100	96.2	20	32.8	74.7	76.5
Drama	12	100	98.1	33.3	41.5	73.3	82.9
Economics	7	100	96.2	14.3	45.8	65.7	83.1
English Literature	15	100	98.5	60	43.7	96	84.3
French	6	83.3	96.2	33.3	46.1	66.7	83
Design and Technology	12	83.3	95.3	8.3	35.5	50	76.5
General Studies	16	100	90.1	31.3	29.1	82.5	69.3
Geography	28	100	97.1	35.7	40.5	79.3	80.9
History	7	100	97.1	28.6	41.0	77.1	81.2
Mathematics	21	100	93.3	47.6	52.2	87.6	84.7
Other Sciences	12	91.7	94.7	8.3	40.1	53.3	78.7
Physics	18	94.4	92.8	22.2	42.8	65.6	78.6
Sociology	10	90	95.4	30	39.6	78	79.1
Business VCE	11	100	87.1	36.4	16.5	87.3	60.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature and French were the focus subjects. A new AS course in English language and literature has been introduced. The course is popular. In the lesson seen teaching and learning were satisfactory. Students worked with enthusiasm on creating their own written pieces on given topics. They made satisfactory progress on evaluating their pieces in terms of audience, purpose, context and form, although their security in the use of technical terms is still at an early stage.

English

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good. The teachers' very high expectations and strong subject knowledge help all students to learn very well.
- The students are highly motivated and work very hard.
- The systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning needs developing.

Commentary

123. Results in the 2002 A level examinations were well above average as they were at the previous inspection. In 2001 results were outstanding, placing the school in the highest five per cent of all schools nationally. Only in 2000, when results were broadly average, have they not reached at least a well above average standard. Provisional results for AS and A level examinations in 2003 show the department is sustaining these above average standards. English literature is very popular and most students successfully complete the course. These results indicate very good achievement for the students concerned.
124. Standards in the current Year 13 are well above average. More than half gained passes at grades A or B in the 2003 AS examinations. Although standards are generally above average when students start the course, a small number start with below average standards. Consequently, the well above average standards observed represent very good achievement by students of all abilities. There is no significant difference between the achievement of male and female students. The most significant gains are made in the quality of the students' analytical writing and in their deepening critical understanding so clearly evident in both their writing and discussion. Lower attainers have a secure understanding of the themes and issues in the texts but do not reveal a close analysis of the impact of an author's use of language on meaning. They also lack the impressive, consistently evaluative writing style and accuracy of higher attainers.
125. Lesson observations and analysis of work showed teaching to be very good. High expectations underpin the lessons. Objectives are very clear and the teachers consistently and effectively challenge the students to think for themselves. Students rose to this challenge when they analysed anonymous novel openings to identify the authors' "hooking strategies", revealing strong retention of prior knowledge and reading (directed and voluntary). Many students contribute with confidence, even when forming hypotheses – and when later interviewed, confirmed they find the learning climate in their lessons conducive to taking risks. A few students are more reticent but respond very well when questioned directly. Year 12 students discovered that challenge features right from the start of the course. The teacher insisted on the students' use of correct terminology, checking the learning of terms met during the first week of the course. Some students found annotating a text of "The Handmaids' Tale" with their own probing questions – daunting, but it is precisely this early level of challenge that enables the students to make such very good progress. Preparation for examinations is excellent with the students benefiting from carefully structured revision schedules and model essays. The use of computers, visits – such as to battle sites in France - and video enhances understanding and enthusiasm. Students also confirm that the detailed oral and written feedback they receive on their work is highly effective.
126. The quality of subject leadership is very good, as is the quality of teamwork. There is a clear and shared vision of the department's inclusive and aspirational ethos at this level. Management is good but there are not enough opportunities for teachers to observe each other, not only to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, but to broaden their own skills. Teachers use good procedures to monitor the students' progress but grade targets should be set earlier in Year 12. The teachers make very good use of assessment criteria and aim very high, but some lower attainers would benefit from having a clearer view of more attainable grade criteria. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because standards have been sustained despite significant staffing and curricular changes.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Standards of communication are above average overall but there is a need for more consistency across subjects. For example, in history and sports studies students wrote with clarity and purpose but in physics there was not enough opportunity for extended writing or discussion. The best practice observed made high expectations of the students. Spoken answers were extensive and there were many opportunities to give presentations and for discussions. In these lessons students received clear guidance on how to structure their extended writing effectively. Extending these examples of good practice should be a major aim for the school.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The students have mature attitudes to learning and are interested in the subject.
- The students have very good oral skills, particularly in reading and pronunciation.
- There are very good opportunities provided by teachers to explore language through texts, taped materials and discussion.
- Students do not have the basic knowledge and understanding of political and cultural issues to equip them for discussion and written work in French.
- Poor accommodation hinders the quality of learning.

Commentary

127. AS and A level results in 2002 were below average, though standards improved in 2003 and there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Although students initially found the AS course very demanding, standards are average and their achievement is satisfactory and this year, they feel more confident. Boys are achieving at a similar rate to girls and all of the students are acquiring a more extensive vocabulary and gaining fluency in spoken and written language.
128. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Students are still grappling with the curriculum, which requires underpinning knowledge and understanding of issues such as the political ideologies of democracy, autocracy, anarchy and genetically modified foods. Students put serious effort into researching these topics and preparing for debate and written tasks. They are well supported in this by the teacher, who provides good opportunities and resources for learning.
129. Students are beginning to study "L'Etranger" by Camus and with good explanations from their teacher can identify the tone and style of writing. When asked to role-play in a debate about racism, they were able to adequately and sometimes articulately express views from different positions. Students have developed good independent study skills and understand that the A level programme requires them to use these skills effectively. Teachers give helpful advice and tips. Marking is very supportive and detailed. Staff encourage and support students by establishing a sympathetic learning environment. The pace is challenging and this needs to be maintained. Visits, exchanges and particularly work placements in France have made a very positive impact on achievement in spoken language and confidence. Students are enjoying the work and recognise that their general knowledge needs to improve so that they can meet the challenges of the course.
130. Leadership and management are good overall and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The accommodation is poor and does not provide a suitable learning environment. Access to ICT and other resources is hindered because of the deficiencies in the accommodation and this limits the progress students make.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics, biology and physics were the focus subjects, though one lesson was sampled in chemistry. The lesson was satisfactory, as was achievement. The students responded well because the teacher was enthusiastic and capable. The pace was satisfactory. Instructions and procedures were safely followed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some students produce high standards of work, but a high proportion of students failed to obtain an A level grade in 2003.
- A level results were above average in 2002.
- Results for AS level have declined over the last three years.
- Assessment procedures are under-developed.

Commentary

131. In the 2002 A level examinations standards of attainment in mathematics were above average, but the unvalidated results for 2003 suggest that this standard has not been sustained. The achievement of the examination year group in 2002 was good. In 2003, though two students gained A grades, a further three candidates, out of the total of eight, failed to gain a pass grade. In each of the last three years results overall for students sitting AS level for the first time have declined. In each of these years, though several students achieved A grades, an increasing number of students failed to achieve a pass grade at their first sitting. In 2003, for example, five students gained A grades, but a further 12 students, out of the total of 23 candidates, failed to gain a pass grade at their first sitting. Each year a few students are entered for the further mathematics examinations. Results are average overall, though in some years they have been better. Overall the achievement of the majority of students in the sixth form is satisfactory.
132. Standards of work seen during the inspection were average. Current Year 12 AS level students are working at a higher level than the more recent AS level results would suggest. However, there continues to be a very wide variation in the standards of work seen for Year 13 A level students. The standards of work seen for these students varies from well below to well above average. In one Year 13 class, for example, students were deriving the sum and product formulae as part of their work in trigonometry. There was a wide range in terms of standards of attainment. Several students struggled with the basic concepts and, as a result, the pace with which the work progressed was slow. Students in recent years have occasionally been admitted to the AS and A level programmes when their previous background in mathematics has been weak. The department has recognised this with the result that standards are beginning to rise for Year 12. More stringent entry requirements have yet to impact on the standards for Year 13.
133. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan the lessons well and have a secure knowledge of the subject areas. Some particularly high quality teaching and learning was seen for A level further mathematics students. In this class students took significant responsibility for their own learning. They were individually expected to derive general formulae relating to projectile motion. After deriving these each student, in turn, had to explain the derivation at the whiteboard for the rest of the students in the group. Good discussions resulted from aspects of the derivations both between students and with the teacher. On the other hand, in a number of other lessons, students were passive, insufficiently involved and, at times, reticent to respond to the questions that are asked of them. In a number of lessons the varying needs of students with a very wide range of attainment levels are not always dealt with effectively.
134. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the work are in place. The staff involved work closely with one another. The department has recognised that assessment procedures require strengthening. There is also a need to adopt a more consistent approach to the marking of students' work. Standards of work at the time of the last inspection were judged to be well above average. They are now broadly average overall, ranging from well below to well above average. There is a need to ensure that students recruited to the courses have a reasonable chance of being successful.

Mathematics across the curriculum

135. Use of mathematics and the level of skills shown by students are satisfactory across almost all subjects. In science some students have limited mathematical skills and find aspects of the work in physics difficult if they are not following an A level course in mathematics. Good use of mathematics is made in physical education. Students are able to tabulate results and draw graphs for various aspects including fitness over time. Some use of equations is also made and students use technical language confidently. In music there is no evidence of such use and this is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently formed teaching team has good subject knowledge.
- Technical support is good.
- Access to computers is limited and this limits the quality of work that can be undertaken.
- Tutorial arrangements are not organised well enough.

Commentary

136. Standards of attainment in the 2002 A level examinations were below average, and were not high enough given the students' prior attainment. Too few students gained A and B grades. Though varied, examination results at A level have failed to match national trends. Girls have gained higher grades than boys. However, the 2003 results show an improvement. The AS level results in 2002 were also average.
137. In the work seen standards are above average. Year 13 students are able to use prior knowledge to predict reaction pathways in green plants both in the presence and absence of light. From well-organized dissections they are very confident about their knowledge of the heart. Those with more confidence, more often girls than boys, phrased their own questions well orally. However, the work sampled suggests that students have too few opportunities to speak from scripts they have prepared or to check their own work as they progress. Nevertheless achievement in Year 13 is good and it is satisfactory in Year 12. Achievement of present students has improved because of better quality teaching. However, access to computers is not satisfactory and this is constraining the gains in knowledge and understanding that students are able to make. Work sampled suggests that the teacher is almost their only source of support. Year 12 students confidently use data handling skills in field studies. They apply concepts from organic chemistry and from biology, but do not read widely enough. Students, irrespective of their GCSE grades, lack confidence in presenting a case orally or in writing. The system for tutorial support does not ensure that individual guidance is given systematically.
138. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In a good Year 13, groupwork was used effectively. The students were required to use what they had just learned. The teacher was able to intervene effectively with each of the four groups in turn. All students, with varying characteristics and backgrounds, were well engaged in their work. In another lesson good questioning and a good requirement for students to use concepts and skills from physics and mathematics resulted in growing confidence. However, for some, the work was relatively easy; all students proceeded at the same rate. Nevertheless students tend to memorize theory, rather than to use, apply, reconsider and understand. Sharp assessment and a firm requirement to act are lacking in some marked work. Marking tends to be concentrated at the end of the topic rather than being frequent and regular. Consequently, specific guidance is not

given at a time when it is most needed. This further emphasises the need for better tutorial support.

139. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A new subject head has been appointed. Good systems are being put into place: for example, grouping students according to the standard of their work. Numbers are increasing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Physics

Provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Technical support is good.
- The guidance given sometimes lacks precision because the tutorial arrangements are too relaxed.
- Some students do not have sufficient confidence in their own ability to do calculations, and marking does not help them enough.

Commentary

140. GCSE A level results in 2002 were below average. Boys have consistently performed less well than girls, though few girls opt for the subjects. Results for 2003 are similar to those gained in 2002, though the number of students involved is small. The results gained in 2002 suggest that the students' achievement was unsatisfactorily in relation to their prior levels of attainment.
141. Standards in work seen during the inspection were average. Numbers have increased and the standards on entry are less varied than previously. About half of the Year 12 students have at least above average levels of prior attainment. They have a good awareness of the applications of physics in the real world in terms of electronic communications and data processing. They use mathematics skills well to manipulate both numbers and units and to transpose formulae about wavelengths and velocities, for example. They are less good at substantiating a viewpoint, though they are aware of social and moral issues associated with technological advance. Year 13 students thoughtfully discuss physics concepts whilst manipulating apparatus. However, in the work seen their quantitative investigations were just satisfactory in many instances. Achievement through the two years of the course is satisfactory overall. In Year 13 those who do not take mathematics, or those with a relatively low GCSE grade, find the subject difficult and this hinders their achievement.
142. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In a Year 13 lesson, the teacher was willing to work steadily and systematically through calculations. The students were able to follow and to use the formulae explained. Furthermore, links between successive lessons were well made; equipment was quickly set up to allow ideas raised in the first lesson to be tested in the second. Good technical support and the teacher's sensitivity to students' needs engaged all. However, specialist teacher availability is limited. Electronic learning support is not well organised. Some students have underdeveloped study skills. The Year 13 work shows that the guidance given in response to specific quantitative questions was sometimes vague. Teachers do not always model the correct way of working something out when they mark work. The system to ensure that individuals arrive for tutorials with marked or self-assessed work for marking is not fully effective. Teachers are, however, very approachable. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The decline in standards apparent since the last inspection has been halted, but the level of improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. This is mainly because of staffing issues that have now been rectified.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT was the focus subject. No other subjects were seen or sampled.

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work observed during the inspection showed effective learning based on well planned teaching and strong student commitment.
- Sixth form students enjoy good access to computer provision and in most subjects make effective use of their ICT skills in research, presentation and analysis.
- Results in the A level Computing course have been average, but the recent decline in both AS level and A level ICT gives cause for concern.
- The only computing programme currently offered to students entering the sixth form is AS level ICT. Computer Science only exists in Year 13 and there are no Level 3 vocational programmes.

Commentary

143. In 2003, only 45 per cent of candidates in AS level ICT achieved a grade E or better. There were no A level entries in either ICT or computing. Current Year 13 students in A level ICT have started from a rather mixed pattern of achievement at AS level, with a number of students needing to resit some or all modules.
144. In Year 13, the students on the computing A level course, all of whom are male, have built on a strong base of achievement at AS level as well as bringing high level mathematical and computing skills to the coursework. They show a good understanding of programming languages and are very quick in the challenging exercise of moving between different number bases, confidently working out complex equations, with occasional prompts from the teacher, in presentations to other members of the group. Standards are above average and their achievement is good.
145. Students are co-operative, and support each other's learning. Although they were seen on what was only the second lesson of the year, the Year 12 AS level group showed a well developed understanding of ICT applications and were able to talk knowledgeably about the varying problems that might be solved by different uses of spreadsheets or relational databases. Teaching was supported by well-planned lesson materials and good management of time.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as is leadership and management. All the work seen from Years 12 and 13 was generally satisfactory, but some Year 13 students had rather a deficit of coursework to complete and a number were working to retrieve unclassified grades in the previous year's AS levels. In both Years 12 and 13, students were helped by useful handouts and well prepared lessons, a mixture of activities creating the chance for them to be actively engaged. Students in both Years 12 and 13 are given extensive help in understanding the criteria against which their work would be assessed, how to improve the quality of their work and helpful suggestions for setting their own intermediate deadlines during the year.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

147. Sixth form students report satisfaction with their access to terminals and other ICT resources, though their skills are not exploited with consistency in all subjects. The previous inspection noted that there were "daily opportunities for students to gain access to computers and evidence of the extended use of IT in most students' files and project folders". This judgement remains broadly true, but access is sometimes limited in biology, French and business studies.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and sociology were the focus subjects. No other subjects were seen or sampled.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good with very effective planning and clear exposition.
- Assessment is very helpful to the students; they are given clear targets for improvement.
- There is a shortage of suitable textbooks and reference books to extend the most able students.

Commentary.

148. A level results in 2002 were above average. All students gained at least a pass grade and an above average proportion of candidates gained either A or B grades. Similarly strong results were gained in 2003. Though, on average, the students have good levels of prior attainment based on their GCSE results, they achieve well in their A level studies with many leaving with higher than predicted grades. The standards being reached by present students are well above average. This is again indicative of good achievement.
149. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teaching is characterised by teachers' excellent subject knowledge, thorough planning and clear, concise explanations. Lessons feature a dialogue between the teacher and student in which learning is enhanced by the joint exploration of ideas. Whether the topic is that of the rise of global multi-national corporations and their impact on the countries in which they operate, or the arguments for belief that South America was once joined to Africa, teachers show the capacity to make learning interesting and enjoyable through their explanatory skills and thoughtful questioning. These lessons also include opportunities to develop independent study skills and to master exam technique, thereby maximising the quality of learning taking place. Fieldwork expeditions to study river hydrology and urban planning are also well designed to enable students to reach high standards. There is also a very thorough process of tracking individual students after GCSE so that both teacher and student know how much progress is being made and what needs to be done to reach a target level for each individual.
150. The department is very ably and efficiently led, with staff working well as a team. They discuss issues of mutual interest and are alert to sharing ways of improving their skills. Together and consciously they have developed a teaching style that melds knowledge, skills and examination technique, with very good results for their students who enjoy their post 16 studies in the department. The large numbers of students studying geography at present have resulted in a shortfall of resources. Basic texts are being shared and discarded editions have been brought back into circulation. This problem is exacerbated because the library does not have sufficient textbooks to enable all the students to read additional texts.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work are above average and students achieve well, making good advances in historical knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers support students well through their good subject knowledge and are adopting a wider variety of teaching methods.
- Students show very good attitudes to the subject with very good relationships being a feature of sixth form history lessons.
- More use needs to be made of ICT as a tool for improving learning.
- More opportunities for independent learning should be presented.

Commentary.

151. Results in the A level examinations in 2002, based on a small sample of seven candidates, were average with all candidates gaining at least pass grades. Based on prior attainment, this outcome represented good achievement. In 2003, all three students entered obtained passes.
152. For present students, standards in work seen are above average. Most students have a good knowledge and understanding of issues such as the impact of Stolypin's agricultural reforms in Russia and are able to formulate complex views that are supported by appropriate evidence, including academic works. Students' achievement is good; they make good progress in developing appropriate historical knowledge, understanding and skills.
153. Students achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to support students well, particularly through explaining topics in detail and providing advice about how to answer examination questions. Their questioning skills allow them to find out how well students understand issues and to provoke further debate. The department is increasingly introducing a wider variety of teaching methods. This was observed in a Year 12 lesson where students each gave a carefully prepared presentation on a different aspect of Stuart life. Whilst there are currently some opportunities for students to undertake independent learning in lessons, this is an area for further development. As a result of good teaching, students make increases in the range of their knowledge and depth of understanding whilst extensive use of source material ensures the good development of historical skills. Students show very good attitudes to the subject. They are prepared to reflect on historical issues and events and work very well together, showing high levels of co-operation. Very good relationships and respect for others' views are an important feature of sixth form history lessons.
154. The head of history had been in post for two weeks at the time of the inspection and it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on her leadership and management of sixth form courses. However, she has developed a good analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement in order to inform future planning. There is a good basis for future development because the number of students taking history in the sixth form is higher than in previous years. The department provides good support for students through textbooks and other resource materials. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The curriculum has been enhanced through the application of ICT, though this is an area for further development.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The improving examination results. The majority of students achieve standards that are above those predicted by their GCSE results.
- The good teaching, which provides good opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in a wide range of practical situations.
- Motivated and enthusiastic students who enjoy the subject and produce work of an above average standard.
- The school's provision for the leadership and management of the subject is a relative weakness.

Commentary

155. In 2002 the A level examination results were above average, with many students gaining grades that were above those predicted by their GCSE examination results. Achievement is, therefore, good. The 2002 AS level results were also in line with national expectations but there was an absence of higher grades. The achievement of these students was satisfactory. Since then the number of students taking the subject has significantly increased and the 2003 results show a considerable improvement with the majority of students achieving grades above those predicted by their GCSE results. This, too, suggests good achievement.
156. It is too early in the course to make a judgement about achievement in Year 12. The current work seen in Year 13 indicates that standards are above average and students are achieving well and on target for grades that will be above those predicted by their GCSE results. They demonstrate a very good understanding of complex language and theories. They are preparing for individual research assignments and have a very good understanding of research methods.
157. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and use a wide range of teaching and learning styles to inform and challenge students. In a minority of lessons there is a lack of pace and challenge with a more traditional style of lecturing being used. Generally students are motivated and enthusiastic. They are able to work independently using the Internet and other sources well. Students' work is regularly assessed and they are given good feedback to help them move forward. A wide range of relevant visits helps to make the subject interesting and enjoyable.
158. The school's provision for the leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The increasing popularity of the subject with consequent demands on staffing and resources has not been carefully planned for and, as a result, much of the infrastructure required to run a successful department is not in place. For example, there is no head of department and no clear structure to leadership and management.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

159. No subjects were inspected in depth, but one A level product design lesson was sampled. Teaching and learning in this lesson were very good. Standards are average overall because students have selected coursework projects for themselves that do not provide sufficient challenge to achieve higher.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

160. No subjects were inspected in depth, however, single lessons were sampled in theatre studies, music and art and design. In theatre studies, the lesson observed featured teaching, learning and achievement that were all satisfactory. The standards of practical work were above average. In music, where numbers are small, standards are above average. The quality of

teaching and learning is satisfactory. In art and design, standards attained are average. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education was the focus subject. Some extra-curricular work was also seen, and the games programme that is available to all of the sixth form was also sampled. Practical standards are above average in these activities.. Many students represent the county. A minority represent the country and are involved in development squads in activities such as cricket, netball, athletics and rugby.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- AS results in sports studies are consistently above the national average.
- The level of challenge to the students who have previously taken GCSE physical education is not high enough.
- There needs to be more detailed target setting at regular intervals.

Commentary

161. Results in AS level examinations in 2002 were above the national average and the majority of students gained better grades than in their other subjects. This trend continued in 2003. This represents very good achievement.
162. Standards reached by students in Year 12 are above average. They have a good grasp of the modules covered so far. Those students who have not had the opportunity to follow a GCSE course in physical education use their general knowledge and technical language well to reason logically through theoretical aspects and achieve well. Students who have joined from other schools having done a GCSE in this subject achieve satisfactorily. The level of challenge is not sufficiently high in aspects that they have already studied. Note taking is of a good quality and previous work shows a good level of ICT skills, with students using graphs and tables to illustrate improvement of skills. Students also apply number effectively.
163. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are good. In practical lessons the teachers effectively challenge the students practically and physically. They use their subject expertise to plan well, giving the students a range of tasks to develop skills such as independent research, oral presentations and note taking. The teachers have high expectations of quality and rate of work and this has resulted in a high achievement rate in previous years. Students who have taken the AS course in the past, and those currently on the course, are very appreciative of the support that is given by the teachers and enjoy the high level of challenge. Opportunities are not always taken to cross link modules of work to emphasise finer points such as how motivational factors can influence performance. Target setting is used well but should be done with more frequency, especially with the introduction of the A level course next year.
164. New leadership of the department has had little influence as yet on the sixth form programme. The AS course is very well organised. Results and data are used effectively to highlight strengths and areas for development. There is a good range of activities on offer to all the students in the sixth form and many take advantage of the opportunity to help in younger pupils' lessons and clubs. There are currently no vocational courses on offer, which could help to develop better links with primary schools. The range of opportunities for the students has increased since the previous inspection.

BUSINESS

Business studies and economics were the focus subjects.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The commitment of the head of department and the way lessons are illuminated by the use of very good, appropriate local examples.
- Students should be challenged more and more independent working should be encouraged.
- Resources and accommodation are both unsatisfactory.

Commentary

165. The department offers courses in AS and A level business studies and AVCE business. At A level standards have been consistently well above average in the period 1998 to 2001, but were average in 2002. The unvalidated results in 2003 were similar to those gained in 2002. Given the students' levels of prior attainment, the 2002 A level results indicate good achievement. The AVCE business results in 2002 were ranked in the top five per cent nationally. The achievement of these students was excellent. For present students on AS and A level courses, standards appear to be broadly average but, at the time of the inspection, the students had attended few lessons and were still trying to 'find their feet'. Again, given their below average levels of prior attainment, average standards would indicate good achievement. There are no discernible differences in attainment or achievement based on gender, though most students following business courses are male.
166. The quality of teaching and learning are good and students' learning is enhanced by the enthusiastic delivery of the main business studies teacher, allied to his detailed knowledge of the local economy. The numerous examples cited allow the students to relate theory to local examples, which are known to them. This reinforces learning and some Year 13 students were able to cite their own examples of local business when identifying examples of mass and batch production. The quality of teaching and learning would be enhanced, however, if the students were given more opportunities to work independently. They also need to be offered more opportunities for writing in detail. Discussion orientated lessons resulted in students making short notes; there were too few chances for them to write in more detail where they might better develop their analytical and evaluative skills. Learning is also constrained by the inadequate accommodation and the lack of access to suitable ICT equipment. The latter limits access to media such as the Internet and constrains research work.
167. The department is led and managed well and the subject is thoroughly enjoyed by the students. The courses are well structured and the requirements of the AVCE course are well understood, as is indicated by the 2002 results. No judgement on improvement since the last inspection can be made, as the subject was not reported.

Economics

Provision in economics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results improved in 2003.
- Poor accommodation and resources adversely affect teaching and learning.
- Students should be challenged more and offered more opportunities for independent working.

Commentary

168. Student numbers have varied considerably in recent years and in some years no examinations have been sat. In 2002, standards in the A level examination were below average for a group of students who, on average, had rather modest GCSE results. Their achievements in the subject were, therefore, satisfactory. Unvalidated results for A level in 2003 show an improvement and there were some very encouraging AS results. These outcomes suggest that achievement had probably improved to being good. For present students, attainment is below average. Most students are hesitant and even Year 13 students are struggling to recall and apply theories covered in Year 12. Few students write fluently and analytical skills are not well developed. Most students are hesitant in their oral work and the answers offered tend to be at a factual level rather than showing insight and the ability to analyse and evaluate. Present Year 12 and Year 13 students have below average levels of prior attainment; thus, overall achievement is satisfactory.
169. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All students are developing a basic understanding of economic theory, but there are too few opportunities for the students to work independently, to develop their analytical skills by writing in depth and in different styles. Consequently, for many, understanding does not extend beyond factual recall and this depresses attainment to the lower end of the pass range. More pace and challenge are required in lessons. There are external factors serving to constrain the quality of teaching and learning. Economics does not have its own base and lessons are taught in a variety of locations, including a science laboratory. Such an itinerant-like existence makes it difficult to plan and deliver innovative lessons and the students are constrained in their efforts to undertake research, as ICT access is difficult. Consequently, opportunities for independent learning and dynamic group work are restricted. Even relatively simple strategies such as showing a video clip to illustrate a piece of theory become more difficult to plan and execute. Urgent improvements to the poor quality accommodation are needed.
170. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Given the prevailing circumstances, the course is adequately planned and delivered. No comments about improvement can be made, as the previous inspection did not cover the subject.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The focus was on the AVCE course in health and social care.

Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results indicate that most students achieve well, gaining grades that are above those predicted, based on GCSE results.
- The relationship between the school and local caring communities is good, which means that students have good opportunities for relating theory to practice.
- Students are motivated and enjoy the course.

- The school has not fully carefully prepared for the increasing numbers taking the subject and has no clear leadership and management structure in place.

Commentary

171. Numbers taking the course in 2002 were small and no national comparison are available. 2003 results show a significant improvement on the results gained in 2002.
172. The majority of students achieved well in both 2002 and 2003. A careful analysis of the results shows that often students with considerable problems made very good progress and achieved results that were above those predicted by their GCSE results. For a small minority confusion in administration and support created problems which resulted in underachievement. In Year 12 the course has only just commenced and it is too early to comment on standards of work. However, students are showing a keen interest in the work that they are doing and appreciate the need to ensure that there is a strong foundation of core values underpinning their work. Students in Year 13 are attaining average standards but are unsure of the direction they are taking and have yet to receive the necessary structure, support and guidance that they need to ensure that they achieve well.
173. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and prepare lessons well using a satisfactory range of teaching methods. Coursework is well structured, and external visits are linked well with theory. Students are encouraged to work independently using such resources as the Internet. A minority of lessons lack pace and challenge with no clear structure. Students in Year 13 who require more careful monitoring and guidance are not given the support they need.
174. The school has not carefully prepared for the increasing popularity of this subject and as a result there is a lack of clear purpose and direction. Though there is a subject leader, her role has not been clearly defined and, as a result, there is a lack of structure and information. Such things as monitoring and careful planning for staff development are not yet fully in place. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	3
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	3
Overall standards achieved		3
Pupils' achievement	4	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	2	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	4	3
How well pupils learn	4	3
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		0
The leadership of other key staff	4	3
The effectiveness of management	4	3

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

