

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Chesterfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112962

Headteacher: Mr Russ Barr

Lead inspector: Robin Coulthard

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th October 2004

Inspection number: 268758

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 students:	11 – 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1387
School address:	Chatsworth Road Chesterfield Derbyshire
Postcode:	S40 3NS
Telephone number:	01246 568115
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Denman
Date of last inspection:	January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brookfield Community School is bigger than the average secondary school. It is a popular and oversubscribed school. The attainment of students as they enter Year 7, as shown by their end of year tests in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, is above average. Their attainment in other subjects is average. Their social and economic backgrounds are above average overall. The proportion of students of other than White-British origin is small, and very few students have a home language that is not English. The student population is stable with very few joining or leaving part-way through the year. The percentage of students having special educational needs is below the national average, while the percentage with statements of special educational need is above average. Students' needs relate mostly to dyslexia, moderate learning and physical disability and autism.

The school achieved sports college status in 2003. It has Investors in People (2004), Sportsmark (2003) and Schools Achievement (2000) Awards.

Nearly 40 per cent of sixth form students enter the school from other schools at Year 12. The sixth form provides an academic curriculum and students follow AS and A-level courses. Over 70 per cent of the sixth form move on to higher education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities	
			Main school	Sixth form
11746	Robin Coulthard	Lead inspector		
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector		
22423	Jon Lovgreen	Team inspector	English	English Theatre studies
6138	Keith Page	Team inspector	Mathematics	Mathematics
3242	Michael Newman	Team inspector		Biology Chemistry
31238	Gordon Clubb	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
2501	Raye Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art	Art
32861	Gaynor Hartle	Team inspector	Design technology and	Design technology and
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Geography	Geography
14633	Jean Bannister	Team inspector	History	History
32208	Derek Aitken	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	German
7854	Richard Crozier	Team inspector	Music	Music
23307	Neil McDonough	Team inspector	Physical education	Physical education
31372	Bob Hardwick	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Special educational needs	Sociology
35098	Trevor Woods	Team inspector	Science	
34089	Robin Gaff	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brookfield is a very good school providing good value for money. As a result of good teaching, students achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry, and reach standards that are above average overall. Students achieve well in relation to their standards on entry. Students' personal qualities are developed very well and relationships are very positive. The school provides very well for students over the whole range of ability and need. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, and overall leadership is good. Management is good throughout the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Standards are above average and students achieve well
- The sixth form is very effective
- Teaching is good overall and very good in the sixth form, but few lessons were judged excellent
- Students' very good attitudes contribute significantly to the very positive and harmonious ethos
- Very good extra-curricular provision and particularly good in sport
- Insufficient provision for music, art and drama in Years 7 to 9, and for religious education in the main school

Improvement has been good since the last inspection. Standards of teaching and learning have risen, and a number of awards have been gained, including sports college status. Students' use of literacy and number has developed very well across the curriculum. Issues from the last report have been dealt with, but provision for the arts in Years 7 to 9, and for religious education does not yet meet national expectation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Students' achievement is good. They come to the school with average standards overall but are above average in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 9, standards are above average, and these standards are maintained at GCSE level. In Year 9 national tests in 2003, results were well above average in comparison with all schools in English, mathematics and science. Results in mathematics were highest. Current standards early in Year 9 are well above average in English, mathematics and science, above average in most other subjects, and below average in art and religious education. In 2003, GCSE results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and a number of other subjects were significantly above average. Unconfirmed results in 2004 were overall lower than in the previous year but this reflected the lower attainment of this year group in their end-of-year tests in Year 9 in 2002. Current standards in Year 11 are above average and students are achieving well. Current standards in the sixth form are above average and achievement is good.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Behaviour and attitudes

to learning are very good throughout the school, which has a positive effect on students' learning. Students behave very well around the site and take good care of their school environment. Students' personal development is very well promoted by the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good.

Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11. Very little unsatisfactory teaching takes place. The school provides well for students over the whole range of ability, but assessment of students' work, particularly that of higher-attaining students, does not always provide specific enough information about how they can improve. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good overall, and at least good in all of the focus subjects, except for art, where teaching is currently satisfactory.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because too little time is available for arts subjects and religious education. In Years 10 and 11, it is good despite too little time being allocated for non-examination religious education. The sixth form provides a very good, academic curriculum of AS and A-level subjects which suits the aspirations of the students. Provision complements well the vocational and other courses available elsewhere locally. Extra-curricular provision is very good. It supports learning very well and is enthusiastically taken up by the students. The school looks after its students very well and the quality of support and guidance is very good. Guidance for sixth form members is good. Very good links with parents support learning very well. Links with the community are excellent. Fund-raising efforts are outstandingly productive. Links with other schools are very good, particularly through the school's outreach work in sport and Beacon School initiatives.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. **Leadership and management are good overall** in the main school and the sixth form. Governors are effective, and play an important part in planning the school's future and showing a critical interest in what is proposed, but they have not ensured that all of the curricular deficiencies noted in the last report have been remedied. The sixth form is well organised and subjects are well managed, but it does not have sufficient status as a separate entity from the main school, partly as a result of insufficient accommodation.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is popular and oversubscribed. Parents' views are very positive. They think that the teaching and academic success, care of students, and extensive extra-curricular activities are strengths. They like the settling in arrangements in Year 7, and the way the school deals with behavioural issues, including the infrequent incidents of bullying. They commend the maturing effect of the school on their children, the approachability of the school and its good leadership and management. Students also think the school is well run. They acknowledge that they are expected to work hard and are well taught. They overwhelmingly think it is a good school to belong to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Develop teaching to provide more of the highest quality
- Improve provision for the arts in Years 7 to 9

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Improve provision for religious education in the main school

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective sixth form providing good value for money. A wide range of academic courses meets the needs and wishes of the students very well. Students are very well taught and examination results are well above the national average. They show very good attitudes to learning and achieve well. Leadership and management are good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Well above average examination results
- Excellent attitudes to work that ensure good achievement
- Very good academic courses enriched by very good extra-curricular provision and excellent links with the community
- A lack of accommodation to confirm the group identity of the sixth form

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	Good in English language . Very good in German where a very good curriculum and excellent relationships motivate students strongly
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good in biology and chemistry
Information and communication technology	There was no focus subject in this area
Humanities	Very good in geography with very good teaching and learning and an imaginative curriculum. Good in history . Very good in sociology because students are strongly motivated by very good teaching
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Very good in design and technology
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory and improving in art where some students' basic skills are underdeveloped. Good in music , and good in theatre studies despite limited accommodation
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Very good in physical education where sports college status has significantly increased the range of activities
Business	There was no focus subject in this area
Health and social care	There was no focus subject in this area
General education	There was no focus subject in this area

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

Provision is good. Students are well informed about what is available in the sixth form. Students are well supported by subject teachers and encouraged to have high expectations of themselves and to set ambitious personal targets. Good opportunities exist for students to express their views to senior management through the sixth form and school councils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are good. Organisational routines run smoothly. Very good teaching and positive relationships between teachers and students contribute strongly to the success of the sixth form and largely offset the lack of separate accommodation that restricts the separate identity of the sixth form. The excellent attitudes of the sixth form members ensure that the sixth form runs very successfully despite a lack of specific focus on sixth form developments in strategic planning.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy being at the school. They consider that they are treated well and that students get on well together. They respect their teachers' expertise and the lengths that teachers go to help them develop as independent learners. They think the school is well run. A considerable minority did not appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities that inspectors consider the school provides.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Examination results are well above average. Standards in the core subjects are above average in Year 9. Standards in arts subjects, however, are lower than they should be. GCSE results were well above average in 2003, and in line with those of similar schools. Students achieve well in Years 7 to 11 in relation to their standards when they join the school. The school ensures that achievement is good over the whole range of ability in accordance with its stated philosophy. National comparators are not yet available for 2004.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average at the end of Year 9 and current standards of attainment are above average
- The school substantially exceeded its targets in Year 9 national tests in 2004
- Students achieve well overall, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs
- In Years 7 to 9, in music, art, drama, religious education and ICT, achievement is unsatisfactory because insufficient time is allocated to these subjects
- Standards in Years 9 and 11 are above average for this stage in the year
- The trend of improvement over five years in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is below that reported nationally

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37 (34)	33 (33)
mathematics	40 (38)	35 (35)
science	38 (36)	34 (33)

There were 192 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Results in the end of Year 9 annual testing in 2003 were well above the national average as they had been the previous year. In 2002, in line with the school's expectations of that year group, results had dipped. In 2003, results rose in mathematics, science and especially in English. Results were strongest in mathematics and weakest in English. Similar proportions of students reached the higher levels in English and science, but 43 per cent reached Level 7 in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools (schools where students had gained similar results at the end of Year 6) results were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. The trend in improvement over five years is below the national trend, reflecting the varying nature of the different year groups. The school exceeded the targets it had set itself in English and science but narrowly missed its target in mathematics. In 2004, the school substantially exceeded its targets in all three subjects. As is the case nationally, girls have performed better than boys each year.
2. The standards seen in Year 9 were above average overall. In English and science, they were well above average. Elsewhere, they were above average, except in music, where they were average, and art, ICT and religious education, where they were below average. In these four subjects, time constraints prevent students from reaching their full potential and students' achievement is unsatisfactory. Overall, however, students achieve well, and very well in English and physical education. Students with special educational needs generally achieve as well as other students because of the very good support they receive and because teachers plan

carefully for their needs. Gifted and talented students achieve well because departments follow the school's policy in providing for them.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	68 (70)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	48 (46)	35 (35)

There were 235 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. National comparators are not yet available for GCSE results in 2004. In 2003, the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at A* to C was well above the national average, although slightly lower than in 2002. The percentages gaining five or more grades A* to G and one or more A* to G were also well above the national averages, in both cases, an improvement from above average the previous year. The school met its target for five or more passes at A* to G and came close to in the other two categories. As nationally, girls performed better than boys overall. Results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well above average, as they were also in geography. The average points score (grade A* scores eight points, grade A scores 7 points etc.) rose slightly in 2003. Students' results in their best eight subjects were well above the national average, although the overall trend of improvement over five years has been below that reported nationally. Results in all subjects in 2003 were above the national subject average, and in the case of ten subjects, significantly above.
4. The standards seen in Year 11 were above average. They were well above average in English and science, and above average in other subjects, except for art and ICT, where standards were average. Students' achievement is good overall, but is unsatisfactory in art and design, because students are not accustomed to developing their own ideas enough, and in non-examination religious education, where insufficient time is allocated to the subject. Evidence of current standards in non-examination religious education was not available. Students with special educational needs achieve well. They gain appropriate success in GCSE examinations. Some students successfully achieve other awards such as those listed under the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Gifted and talented students achieve well. In physical education mentors and coaches provide particularly well for the talented. The targeting of higher-attaining students is very good in mathematics and geography.

Sixth form

Results in the sixth form have been well above average for the past two years. Standards are above average for this stage in Year 13 and students are achieving well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results have remained well above average for the past two years
- Current standards are particularly high in biology, chemistry and sociology
- Students are achieving very well in German, design and technology, physical education and sociology

- Standards in art are below expectation and students are not yet achieving in line with their abilities

Commentary

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	96 (97)	92 (90)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	36 (39)	36 (36)
Average point score per student	307 (312)	253 (255)

There were 137 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The overall results in 2003 were above the national average and similar to the previous year. Results in most subjects were above average, and results were well above average in business studies, French, general studies, government and politics and ICT. Results fell to below average in chemistry and physics and were well below in drama and theatre studies, as they had been the previous year.
- Current standards are above average overall and well above in biology, chemistry and sociology. Standards are average in mathematics and below average in art and design. Students achieve well in relation to their starting points in the sixth form. In the inspection focus subjects, they are achieving very well in design and technology, German, physical education and sociology. Standards in art and design are below average and achievement in relation to students' potential is unsatisfactory because of previous weaknesses in the acquisition of basic skills.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' very good attitudes and behaviour and good attendance and punctuality support effective learning admirably. Students' personal qualities develop very well in response to very good provision for their personal, social, moral and cultural development. Strengths in students' approach to work and in their personal development have been maintained well since the last inspection.

Main strengths

- Students are very responsive to the variety of opportunities offered for academic success and personal achievement, which results in a culture where learning and doing well are prized
- Behaviour of a high standard enables students to learn effectively even during some mundane lessons or when the limitations of the accommodation restrict the range of the teaching and learning activities
- Relationships and the sense of community are very strong and have a powerful influence on what students do on behalf of others and on their achievement
- Social responsibility and other personal qualities develop impressively as a result of an ethos where care, friendliness and good humour are fostered strongly

Commentary

- New students are told very clearly that participation, co-operation and achievement count. They have ample opportunity to taste success in and out of the classroom through their own effort and imaginative provision of sporting and other activities. The stimulating range of trips and visits, including those to France and Germany, expands students' experiences and, in the case of gifted and talented students, helps to raise aspirations and put them at ease with their own abilities. Students strive to take full advantage of what is offered. Although, technically,

attendance is deemed similar to national averages, it is actually better, because authorised absences include those in the imaginative programme of off-site activities. The school promotes a culture where social responsibility, care for others, achievement and memorable experiences matter. As a result, students of all ages and backgrounds are very happy to work hard and do their best in and out of lessons. This was highlighted by the sports college launch day when hundreds of students made a huge collaborative effort to gain three world records for massed sporting challenges which qualified for the Guinness Book of Records.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.3
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	1.1

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

8. Most students behave impeccably most of the time. "I like the fact that good behaviour and good work are rewarded with respect," said one student. Occasionally, a few younger boys and individuals with particular difficulties are less well behaved. In most instances, even students who find self-discipline really hard respond very well to lively teaching and crystal clear expectations of the right thing to do. Exclusions are kept to a minimum because the boundaries are very clear, problems are managed well and sensitive support is given to those in difficulty. Bullying is very rare and dealt with swiftly and effectively when it occurs. As a result, the school has a happy and harmonious atmosphere where students are ready to learn and very receptive to good teaching. Sometimes students' goodwill and perseverance reduce the negative impact on achievement of some less inspiring teaching or disadvantageous working conditions. When teachers struggle to reach individuals to offer help in large classes accommodated in small rooms students are forgiving as, "Most teachers try to make their lessons enjoyable and teachers are determined that all students get their best grades."

Ethnic background of students

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1281	76	2
8	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
8	0	0
6	0	0
6	0	0
1	0	0
8	0	0
21	0	0

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

9. Relationships among students and staff are very strong, reflecting the school's very warm welcome for all. Students of different abilities and backgrounds generally do equally well because the friendly, positive, working atmosphere gives them confidence to ask questions and seek help when necessary. Students are very grateful to staff who take time to help them make sense of work they find hard. Many examples of everyday acts of kindness were seen during the inspection. Students with disabilities work very happily with their classmates and the levels of mutual respect are very high, resulting in an easy-going acceptance of one another's different qualities and talents. "What I like about this school is how every student matters. In this school EVERYONE is heard!"
10. The school has a very powerful sense of community and of responsibility to others. This is reflected in an impressive range of fund-raising activities for different charities, in which all types of student join together with extraordinary enthusiasm. Appeals such as those for Ashgate Hospice and 'Race for Life' have reinforced students' awareness of others' needs and pride in the school's sense of community and responsibility. The school's ethos emphasises values including consideration for others, co-operation and compassion, resulting in admirable development of qualities such as community spirit and personal responsibility. Students develop great respect for those different from themselves. They have a strong appreciation of personal circumstances but do not have a thorough understanding of cultural diversity, partly because of gaps in provision of religious education, art, music and drama for younger students. Their experience of awe-inspiring moments in lessons and assemblies is modest but their descriptions of 'my hero' show how they were moved by the astounding feats of cancer-sufferer Jane Tomlinson and the personal courage of friends.

Sixth form

Attitudes and behaviour are outstanding, reflecting students' resolute focus on high achievement. Their attendance and punctuality are very good because of the school's high expectations and students' own sense of personal responsibility.

Main strengths

- Students join the sixth form in the firm expectation of hard work, good results and personal success so their commitment to learning is first rate
- Students are extremely willing to become actively involved in school life
- Students provide excellent role models for younger students, through taking part in school events and helping out in classrooms

Commentary

11. Students join the sixth form from this and other schools because of its reputation for success and the likelihood that they will achieve good results. They know that this means hard work and although one or two admit that they did not realise just how hard they needed to work to gain high grades on advanced courses, they are deeply committed to making the necessary effort. Although some students feel that they, "...would like some of the teaching improved," others find that, "Many of the staff are inspirational and friendly, encouraging a high standard of work and interest in the subject." In a mathematics lesson, for example, students were spellbound by the intriguing account of the accuracy with which Aristophanes measured the circumference of the earth. In most cases, particularly in Year 13, students feel that, "I really enjoy my lessons and so I am motivated to try my hardest."
12. Sixth former students take an impressive lead in organising events such as the sixth form fashion show, the sales and marketing activities involved in Young Enterprise ventures, and, recently, the production of the Brookfield Bulletin, a very accomplished, highly professional and colourful publication. They work with younger students, helping in particular with reading and mathematics. They would happily do more. Students show impressive critical thinking and maturity. When presenting their very well-reasoned arguments for different arrangements for study time, and the need for a designated space for them to have ready contact with staff showed sharp critical thinking. Their very mature approach to work and to school life makes them outstanding role models for younger students.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good education. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. The overall curriculum is good, and very good at sixth form level. The school provides a very safe and caring environment where students are very well supported and guided. The school works very well with parents and with other schools and colleges. Links with the community are outstanding.

Teaching and learning

In the main school, students are taught well and learn effectively. Teaching is consistently good in different year groups. Assessment is satisfactory. Information is used well to set targets but less effectively to give precise advice on making improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good and students are well motivated
- Teachers have a very good subject knowledge and understanding of syllabus requirements
- Lesson planning takes very good account of the range of students' learning needs

- Questioning and strict deadlines are not used effectively enough in some lessons for challenging the highest-attaining students and maintaining a vigorous pace of learning
- Some inconsistencies exist in the effectiveness of marking and assessment to stimulate learning

Commentary

13. Students learn well because they are well motivated and well taught. Teaching is very good in physical education throughout Years 7 to 11. It is satisfactory in art and design, in which a new focus on consolidating basic skills is at an early stage of implementation. Various strengths are common to the teaching and learning. Working relationships between teachers and students are very positive. As a result students have very good attitudes and this benefits their learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are keen to communicate their own enthusiasm for what they teach. They have a very good knowledge of examination requirements and reflect this in their planning and teaching. Lessons provide a suitable challenge for the whole range of students in each class. To stimulate effective learning, teachers use a good range of teaching methods, and a suitable range of groupings, including whole-class, paired and individual work. Well-chosen starter activities establish a good pace of learning. Most lessons finish with a valuable review of what has been learned, as a guide to the planning of subsequent activities. Teachers give very good individual assistance to students in the course of lessons. Various national strategies are implemented purposefully. Literacy is developed well. All subjects develop the use of subject-specific language and good standards of written work are required across the curriculum. Students develop the use of number effectively in a range of subjects.
14. Though the overall quality of teaching seen was good, only a small amount was very good or excellent. The pace of lessons was generally good, but the use of questioning, and in particular the use of supplementary questions to challenge the highest-attaining students, is a comparative weakness. Some lessons lacked tight deadlines to generate and maintain a demanding pace of learning. Where deadlines were imposed, the pace of work was brisk and all pupils, and in particular the higher-attaining pupils, were strongly motivated. ICT is under-used as a means of research and presentation because computers are not accessible enough in all subjects.
15. The teaching of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes is good because of the very good support they receive and because teachers know students well and plan effectively to meet their needs. Some students are taught in small, setted groups in English and mathematics to improve literacy and numeracy and this results in good learning and achievement. Education care officers are very effective in lessons because their involvement is very well planned.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 139 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2%)	32 (23%)	62 (45%)	40 (29%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Assessment is satisfactory but inconsistencies of practice exist between subjects because procedures are currently undergoing development. Assessment is used well to monitor achievement and to target care and revision activities. Teachers' skills at monitoring how pupils are learning on a day-to-day basis are satisfactory. Departments use data well to set targets. Some departments, such as physical education, English and geography are using assessment very constructively, including establishing self-assessment as a regular practice. Overall, National Curriculum levels are not used widely enough to inform students of the exactly how well levels they are working and to provide specific guidance on how they may improve.

Sixth form

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is effective in providing students with specific advice on how to improve.

Main strengths

- Teaching showed similar strengths across all inspected subjects
- Students have excellent attitudes to their work and relationships with staff are very positive
- Teachers plan lessons very well to cater for the varying needs of their students
- Teachers' thorough knowledge of examination requirements enables them to provide clear guidance through assessment

Commentary

17. Teaching in the sixth form reflects the same strengths that are evident in the main school, but with a consistency of provision that is better. Teaching in the focus subjects was very good overall, and not less than good in any subject. Relationships between students and teachers are very good. The students have excellent attitudes to work. They value the subject expertise of their teachers and appreciate the teachers' concern for their welfare and progress, and their willingness to go the extra mile to help individual students. Little teaching was seen that was inspirational, but lessons were efficient, very well planned, and used a good range of stimulating resources. The learning needs of higher-attaining students are very well catered for. In response, students set themselves high standards and are clearly focused on their academic goals. Independent learning skills are well developed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	23 (43%)	23 (43%)	7 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

18. Assessment is thorough and constructive and provides students with specific advice for improvement. This is based on a thorough knowledge of examination requirements and individual students' needs. Work is carefully marked and this leads to rigorous target setting. The link between assessment and personal guidance is strong. This ensures that assessment is a very supportive process. The assessment of coursework is particularly thorough.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good overall, although it ranges from unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 to good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. The school provides equally for students over the whole range of ability, including those who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs. The recent acquisition of sports college status is leading to considerable widening of provision for physical education and sport and many students are already feeling the benefit. The curriculum is enriched very well. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides well overall for the full range of students, including the gifted and talented and students with special educational needs
- The allocation of time and discontinuity of provision affect standards in art, music and drama in Years 7 to 9
- Time for religious education in Years 7 to 9 is below that recommended. Provision for non-examination students in religious education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory
- Extra-curricular provision is very good, and in sport it is excellent

Commentary

19. In Years 7 to 9, all National Curriculum subjects are taught. Curriculum provision is very good in English and physical education and is good in the majority of subjects. Art and music are

taught in blocks of time in rotation, along with drama. Improvements in provision have been made since the last inspection and further developments are firmly planned. For the moment students receive less than the recommended time allocation over the three years. As a result, the required syllabus is not covered in sufficient depth. However, arts provision has been extended in Years 7 and 8 by the introduction of dance. The curriculum for ICT is unsatisfactory because lessons are fortnightly in Year 8. In Year 9, ICT is taught through other subjects, and all aspects are not covered systematically. National Strategies for English and mathematics have had a beneficial effect on curriculum planning. Planned developments across the curriculum in ICT have been less effective.

20. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good. Students study up to nine GCSE subjects. All students study for the double science award. Three languages, French, German and Spanish are available. All students follow a course in citizenship taught by specialist teachers. The choice of options is extended by the availability of subjects that include business studies and dance. Alternative options for some students include vocational courses and the ASDAN accreditation. For some students, the school has arrangements with other local providers so that students may follow NVQ courses or key skills courses. The small amount of work-related learning includes a recently-introduced course in engineering in Year 10 and welding for a few students in Year 11.
21. The school has regular assemblies, but is failing to provide the statutory daily act of collective worship.
22. Opportunities for gifted and talented students are offered through special curricular provision. For example, a cohort of talented Year 9 students takes the GCSE physical education examination early. Talented team players in physical education are put forward for county, regional and national competition. In mathematics gifted and talented students are entered for the National Mathematics Challenge. The gifted and talented policy is in place, and students have been identified and invited to join the National Academy for the Gifted and Talented.
23. Alternative provision effectively meets the needs of some lower-attaining students. The school takes the opportunity of some disapplication from subjects to assist these students in training for employment. Students with special educational needs are helped to improve their literacy and numeracy through intensive courses.
24. In order to increase the range of options available in the curriculum, GCSE health and social care was introduced in 2002 for Year 10 students. In this academic year, a GNVQ course was introduced in engineering for which there are eight boys currently registered. A small number of students attend courses offered in association with other local institutes including Chesterfield College, the NTL Training Agency and the Chamber of Commerce. The courses include NVQ child care, business administration and welding. Every effort is made to meet the demands of the students and parents but there is limited call for vocational courses. Current courses are at an early stage of development and insufficient evidence is available to make secure judgements on standards, quality of teaching and learning or management overall. Courses are available in health and social care and are well taught.
25. Extra-curricular provision is very good. Provision is excellent in sport and dance. Educational visits take place regularly in most subjects. These include field trips and visits to universities. Art, music, drama and English are enriched by visits to exhibitions, theatres and concerts and participation in competitions. Regular events, such as arts evenings, provide opportunities for performances and exhibitions. In modern languages, students benefit from exchange links with France, Germany and Spain. These include the possibility of work experience in France or Germany.

26. Provision for students' personal development is good. In Years 7 to 9, form tutors teach personal, social and health education. The school has good policies for sex and relationships and drugs education. These are being revised with the involvement of students. The sport and health committee has student representatives from each year, and this group is involved in supporting the Healthy Schools Programme. Arrangements for teaching personal development in Years 10 and 11 are good and the course is taught by a specialist team. Careers education is good. It takes place from Year 7. The course raises students' awareness of different occupations, prepares them for option choices and for work experience in Year 10. Information is stored on a database so that students can access it easily.
27. The match of teachers to the curriculum is very good, with good proportions of well established teachers and those newer to the profession. Teachers are well qualified for the subjects they teach, except in Year 9 ICT, which is taught by non-specialists. Students with special educational needs benefit greatly from the school's well-trained educational care officers who assist in lessons and support and guide students out of lessons. Technicians and maintenance staff work very efficiently. In the short term, no technician support is available in ICT, and this sometimes reduces teaching time and affects learning adversely.
28. The school makes best possible use of the accommodation it has. The school is very orderly and the site is well managed. The playing fields are large and the site is attractive. Accommodation overall, however, is unsatisfactory, and has undergone insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Some improvements have been made, such as the installation of a lift which permits disabled access to upper floors, and improved changing facilities for physical education. Overcrowding remains a significant problem that affects students' achievement. Staff work hard to minimise the impact of deficiencies on students' learning. Accommodation is a limiting factor in a number of areas, including dance drama, sport and ICT. Finance is available for a new sports hall, and building will commence as soon as planning permission is granted.
29. Resources are generally good, but an under-provision in ICT is a significant area of weakness across the curriculum that affects students' learning. Therefore resources are unsatisfactory overall.
30. The school is making good progress as a specialist sports college. The new status is having a strong impact on teaching and learning. Students of all abilities receive many more opportunities to take part in sport. The change in the timing of the school day has led to more students being involved in sport. Sport focuses on all abilities. Opportunities for participation are provided for all students, including those with disabilities, who are well supported by learning support assistants. Gifted and talented athletes are very well catered for through the sport mentoring scheme. The partnership development manager is forging significant sporting links with community. The school is making improving links between physical education, school sport and external clubs and societies. The development plan is closely linked to the LEA developments. Plans for the new sports hall are at an advanced stage.

Sixth form

The curriculum in the sixth form suits the needs and aspirations of students very well, and it attracts substantial numbers into Year 12 from other schools. The curriculum concentrates on providing a good range of AS and A-level courses. Provision for extra-curricular enrichment is very good, particularly in sport. Staffing is very good. Resources are good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of academic courses is provided, supplemented by very good extra-curricular opportunities
- Opportunities for personal development are good

- The limited accommodation restricts some teaching and learning activities

Commentary

31. The school provides a wide range of AS and A-level courses. The governors have maintained their long-standing rationale for the curriculum, which is to provide an academic curriculum. Students understand that vocational courses are provided in other local post-16 establishments. Brookfield provides academic courses that attract substantial numbers of students from other schools into Year 12. In addition to the traditional courses, a government and politics course is well established and the introduction of psychology is planned.
32. Academic courses are complemented by a good general studies course in Year 12. This course incorporates religious education and careers. Courses are available in application of number and communication. Re-sit courses are mounted in English and mathematics.
33. The same very good extra-curricular opportunities provided in the main school are available in the sixth form. Students are helped to become independent in their learning, and opportunities for personal development are good. Students have very good opportunities for leadership through coaching, umpiring and organising activities for younger students.
34. Staff are very well qualified for the courses they teach. Resources are generally good.
35. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school has no sixth form centre and no dedicated accommodation is available for Years 12 and 13. Some lessons are timetabled in rooms which restrict the range of teaching and learning activities. The governing body is committed to making improvements. A sixth form centre is planned. No separate space for sixth form students to socialise is available at present.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of all students is very good. Students are monitored and supported very well as they move through the school. The school provides very good opportunities to seek students' views about their work and personal development, ensuring that they are involved very well in school life and decision-making.

Main strengths

- Staff know students very well and provide very effective support and guidance for their safety and security
- The procedures for induction of new students are very good and students settle into Year 7 very quickly
- Good systems of monitoring progress ensure that students receive effective support and guidance, especially when choosing courses and careers
- There are very good opportunities for students to contribute to and influence change, through the various democratic councils established by the school

Commentary

36. Students work in a healthy and secure environment because they behave very responsibly and good procedures for health and safety are in place. Electrical equipment is checked each year, and a register kept. Arrangements for first aid are good. Arrangements for child protection are up to date and effective. Procedures are very well known by staff, who are reminded of these at the start of each year. Students are well supervised outside lessons.
37. Care systems are very well managed and structured. Staff working in the school know the students very well and students appreciate the individual support they receive. Students can turn to a variety of sources of guidance, such as tutors, heads of year, education care officers, support staff, the Connexions adviser and senior staff. Sixth form students take part in a programme to mentor and further support younger students. Teachers generally make good use of tutor group time for administration and ensuring students' welfare.
38. Students who join the school in Year 7 are often familiar already with the site and the staff. This is because of curriculum links made possible through sports college status and the bridging project. This project involves students and staff working with feeder school children in subjects that include mathematics, science, geography and ICT.
39. Arrangements for assessment and for tracking students' progress are well managed. These form an effective means of monitoring students' personal development and achievements. Useful careers advice with well-organised work experience in Year 10 helps students to make appropriate decisions.
40. Students have a variety of democratic opportunities through school and year councils, where discussions on matters of interest to students are discussed. School, year, and sports and health councils ensure that students have a voice in different aspects of the school's life. Students are involved very constructively in interviewing new staff. School council meetings, usually attended by the chair of governors, allow students to discuss issues significant to them and to propose improvements. The school takes their views very seriously and acts on them where appropriate in matters such as reducing the lengthy queues for lunch, improving the quality and choice of canteen food and making the arrangements for a presentation evening.

Sixth form

The school makes good provision for guiding students as they join, move through and leave the sixth form. Guidance on further study and career opportunities is generally good. Students' views are taken very seriously by the school.

Main strengths

- Good information is made available to students and good systems are in place to inform all prospective students of what is offered in the sixth form
- Students have good opportunities to lead and take responsibility
- The school provides well-informed, impartial advice on what to study in the sixth form and beyond

Commentary

41. Students receive good support and guidance in the sixth form. Well-informed advice on careers is available from the Connexions service. However, a few students claim that guidance is insufficient in Year 12 to ensure that the subject choices of all students match their career aspirations. Gifted and talented students receive particularly helpful advice: "I was advised very thoroughly before making my decision."
42. Links with other institutions, including other schools, universities and colleges, are very good. Students are encouraged to have high expectations and generally feel well supported, especially by subject teachers. They are involved in setting personal targets and there are good opportunities in most lessons for them to express their views.
43. Students have responsibilities, including school council membership, where they are encouraged to lead discussion. Sixth formers contribute ideas and suggestions forcefully to the school council and their own senior council, as well as voicing and seeking opinion through the Brookfield Bulletin. A few feel that, "Students are listened to but suggestions are rarely put into action," because of delays in having an identifiable space where they can meet and be found by staff and younger students: "We need a sixth form common room!" exclaimed some students. In practice, the school, including governors, not only listens but is working hard to improve the facilities.
44. A very small number of students have special educational needs. These students achieve as well as others because they receive support when they need it and teachers constantly consider their interests.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents and other schools and colleges are very good. The school's links with the community are outstanding. Improvement since the last inspection, especially in terms of the school's work with the community it serves, has been very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Partnership between parents and school is very good, resulting in shared commitment to helping students do well
- Communication with parents is very good, although written reports do not always make it clear exactly how well their children are doing and what to do to improve their grades
- The school's efforts to work with and for the benefit of the community are exceptional
- Very good links with other schools and colleges provide worthwhile experiences for students in and beyond the school

Commentary

45. Parents think highly of the school. They believe that its good reputation for academic success, sporting achievement, extensive extra-curricular activities and care for students is well deserved. They feel very well involved in school life and with their children's progress because the school shares its plans and students' successes with them very effectively. Office and teaching staff offer parents a warm welcome so they feel comfortable about contacting the school.

46. Parents are impressed with how well tutors and teachers know students' strengths and weaknesses, but a few feel that discussions on progress take place too late in the year for action on any concerns. Written reports give a useful overview of work done and the progress made by student and the most effective spell out exactly what steps students need to take to achieve their best. However, inconsistencies in use of grading systems (levels linked to the National Curriculum, GCSE grades and school-based assessment codes) often result in lack of clarity about standards achieved. The focus on just how well individuals are doing academically, their capabilities and starting points is not always as sharp as that on their development of personal qualities. Reports on progress in the sixth form are generally written more helpfully, usually setting out how students can improve their work and reach higher grades.
47. The school is passionate about working with and for its community and teaching its students to value their role as young citizens with a wide range of personal and social responsibilities. It celebrates and endorses their efforts to work with and for local people through fund-raising for cancer charities – in 2003 raising over £19,000 for various causes, many sporting activities and events such as the ambitious and scintillating production of Jesus Christ Superstar, which amazed its audiences.
48. The school drives its sports partnerships through decisive leadership and thoughtful initiatives designed to improve local provision and participation radically. In spite of constant setbacks, key staff continue to seek purposeful links with all significant local organisations to strive to reach their goals of high quality sporting provision and access. The school has a very clear focus on its wider role as a specialist school and is very active in ensuring that its community benefits. Local primary students have enjoyed the benefits of access to far more activities and coaching than previously, including golf and dance.
49. Partnerships with local schools have strengthened through the school's specialist sports college status, which allows much greater sharing of best practice, expertise and resources than otherwise. Additionally, students and younger children have valuable and rewarding opportunities to meet and work together through sport and other curriculum initiatives, as well in charity events or during community service in local schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher is a very good leader. His vision is to take the school forward and to build on its many strengths through its specialist sport college status. The clear plan for improvement is underpinned by a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion. Leadership of key staff is good overall and in several subjects leadership is very good. Governance is good. Governors are questioning and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but have only partially tackled the points for action from the previous report. They strongly support current developments. Day to day, the school runs very smoothly, despite the inadequacies of the accommodation. Overall the management of the school is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a very effective leader who has a very secure knowledge of the strengths of the school and where improvements are possible
- The school is very popular with students and parents and has an excellent reputation in the local community
- Very good teamwork has enabled the school to realise its aim of gaining specialist status
- Governors and staff demonstrate their very strong commitment to inclusion through their day-to-day work and contact with students

- Middle managers do not make enough use of assessment information to track students' progress and to improve the impact of teaching on learning
- Some issues from the last inspection have not been fully resolved

Commentary

50. The headteacher is a very effective and skilled leader. He leads an oversubscribed school that is very popular with parents and students and has a high reputation within the local community. The school has an established reputation for high standards and is respected and admired for its work to promote equality of opportunity. The head maintains a lively and conspicuous presence around the school, where he is accessible to students and vigorously promotes the school's values. The school provides well for the needs of the gifted and talented and for those with special educational needs. The very positive relationships that exist between adults and students are a powerful contributor to the school ethos. Under the head's leadership and the very good teamwork of staff, parents, students and governors, the school has built on its considerable strengths by gaining specialist sport college status. In this and in many other ways, the school demonstrates its determination to be an active partner within a local community.
51. The headteacher has, since his comparatively recent arrival, accurately diagnosed the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has resulted in the compilation of a wide-ranging school development plan. This is clearly focused on improving the quality, impact and consistency of teaching and learning, and ensuring that students over the whole range of ability and need are very well provided for. School documentation is of a very high standard. Suitable criteria for success are incorporated and challenging timescales. The school development plan and departmental development plans are appropriately coordinated in their priorities. A relevant programme of staff training is being undertaken. Plans to address outstanding issues, such as arts provision in Years 7 to 9, and to remedy some of the deficiencies in the accommodation are well advanced. Leadership in subjects is good overall and in some it is very good.
52. National initiatives have been well managed across the school as a whole. National Strategies have been incorporated into the school's current practice and have contributed towards the school's improved performance since the last inspection. Developments in ICT across the school, however, have been introduced comparatively late, and their impact reduced because of lower-than-average ratio of computers to students, and difficulty in accessing computers because of limitations in the accommodation. Substantial spending is now earmarked for improving this situation.
53. Improving teaching and learning is the continuing focus for raising standard. Planning for further developments has been strongly led by senior staff and outside consultants. In some subjects, good use is made of performance data to enable teachers to plan accurately for students' differing learning needs. However, some inconsistencies in the effectiveness with which work to improve the impact of teaching on students' work and their results. The monitoring of students' progress and the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching remain areas for further and more consistent development.
54. Performance management is used to identify staff training needs. Arrangements to help new staff settle in are very good. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent support from mentors and other colleagues. Non-teaching staff benefit from being very well supported through training and work shadowing, and through regular meetings and discussions to check on their progress and ascertain their future training needs.
55. Governors are very committed and conscientious and they serve the school well on their various committees and in their involvement in the student council. Through their considerable efforts and commitment to equality of opportunity the school has been adapted to allow

students and staff, who have physical disabilities, full access to the school buildings and curriculum.

56. In order for governors to become more effective, and to help new governors carry out their roles with greater confidence and authority, they have undertaken a very thorough analysis of where they are successful and where they could more effectively fulfil their duties as critical friend. As a result governors undertake a worthwhile programme of training. Governors have only partially met the action points that arose from the last report, notably the deficiencies in the curriculum in Years 7 to 9. They have been tenacious in their efforts to secure improvements in accommodation.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,752737	Balance from previous year	351639
Total expenditure	3,574199	Balance carried forward to the next	530177
Expenditure per student	2632		

57. Financial control and management of the budget are good. The most recent audit report reflected this high level of efficiency in financial controls. Recommendations made by the auditors have been enacted. The underspend at the end of the last financial year resulted from the school cautiously underestimating the number of students returning to the sixth form. The school has accrued a considerable surplus. However over £170,000 is designated to pay for large orders which are still outstanding and to extend projects already started. These include planned expenditure of £76,000, which includes a substantial amount for the further development of ICT. The school implements well the principles of best value. For instance, a new lighting system in the school's kitchen cut the electricity bill by half.

Sixth form

Governance is good. Leadership and management are effective.

Main strengths

- Sixth form routines run smoothly as a result of good management
- Governors strongly support the development of the sixth form
- The sixth form is cost effective

Commentary

58. The strengths in leadership and management in the sixth form are similar to those found in the main school. Good organisation and leadership ensure that the sixth form runs smoothly and successfully despite drawbacks in accommodation. The head of sixth form, sixth form tutors and the assistant head with responsibility for Years 12 and 13, have clearly defined roles and routines. They maintain an efficient level of organisation that caters well for the students' academic and pastoral needs. The efficiency and dedication of tutors, and their willingness to give extra time to help students, contribute very positively to the attainment of high standards and the very positive ethos that prevails.
59. No governor has specific oversight of the sixth form, and this is currently under review. However, governors are strongly supportive of the sixth form and have a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. They are involved in all strategic planning. They ensure that statutory requirements are met. Governors regularly review provision in the sixth form. They are keen to provide for the needs and aspirations of students, where appropriate integrating provision in the school with courses and resources available elsewhere.
60. New funding arrangements for 2004 make the sixth form cost effective and able to operate within the budget it generates.

Work-related learning

61. Overall the provision of work-related learning is satisfactory. In Year 10, all students participate in work-related activities, which include work experience and a one day workshop which covers aspects of the business world, labour market and the economy. In both Years 10 and 11 the students are given an understanding of the skills and attitudes that they will require when they leave school and take up employment. Currently, work-related learning is taught mainly through the personal development programme and a range of special activities and has not extended into departments reviewing and making opportunities to teach work-related learning through subjects. The school has developed a range of effective links with further education, the local chamber of commerce, local and national businesses and is well placed to take forward plans for extending the work-related learning programme.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistently well above the national average
- The very good teaching employs a good range of methods and is founded on very good subject knowledge
- Students throughout the school use Standard English confidently when speaking
- Very effective leadership and management have led to good improvements and raised standards
- Marking in examination years is very accurate
- Some marking gives students too little guidance on how to improve

Commentary

Examination results

62. Results in the 2003 national tests taken at the end of Year 9 were well above average. They were above results gained in schools with a similar intake. Girls performed better than boys. In 2004, results were above the target set, even though girls did less well than previously. The school has a policy of entering as many students as possible for GCSE in both English language and literature. In 2003, language and literature results were well above national average. Boys did better than girls. Students tended to do better in language than literature. Unconfirmed results for 2004 indicate that literature results improved whilst language results declined. In both subjects, the boy/girl gap widened in favour of girls, and rather fewer candidates gained A* and A grades.

Standards and achievement

63. Students in Year 9 are achieving very well in relation to their starting point in Year 7 which was only marginally above the national average. Higher-attaining students show a natural flair for language, with apt use of a wide vocabulary. Written work is well structured, with a use of language which is lively without becoming showy. Average-attaining students use and control a very good range of styles with appropriate introductions and well thought out conclusions. They tend to write descriptively when persuasion or evaluation is required. Lower-attaining students work hard and neatly and are comfortable studying demanding literary texts. In longer pieces, control of language is less assured and the focus on the task less precise. In Years 10 and 11, flair, insight and precise quotation are evident in the work of higher-attaining students, but some essay openings are rather mundane. Average-attaining students show fluency in language and an awareness of style. Introductions tend to be weaker than endings and sometimes the writing wanders from the title set. The work of lower-attaining students shows less organisation and accuracy but points are well made, and basic quotations used appropriately to justify them. Students in all years have very good

speaking and listening skills and many handle discussion very well. They confidently give extended answers in Standard English.

Teaching and learning

64. Teaching is very good, and more consistently so in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Teachers make very clear to students what the aim of a lesson is. Students are confident in asking about issues, ideas and skills because they appreciate the teachers' very good subject knowledge. Many lessons are made more interesting by the carefully chosen methods used: pair and group discussion, recordings, student presentations and the use of PowerPoint and interactive whiteboards. In many lessons, students learn from the searching questions teachers ask and the good answers produced by their classmates. In a minority of lessons, teachers expect students to listen to them give long, over-detailed explanations or ask a string of basic, factual questions. The pace slows and small groups of students, often of average ability, become restless and chatty. Some teachers fail to correct them or speed things up. Written work is regularly set and, especially in Years 9 and 11, marked with great accuracy. Marking is always helpful and lead to useful target setting. However, targets are not always sufficiently geared to the individual, and set as a focus for future work and marking. At present, some students are unsure about what the next step for them is if their work is to improve.

Leadership and management

65. The large, specialist team of teachers work very harmoniously and productively together, and regular reviews of work and results stimulate discussion about where changes need to be made. Standards and results have gone up; weak teaching has been eradicated. Classroom observation takes place but is neither regular nor demanding enough to have the impact which it should have on raising standards still further. Long-standing links with a university training department bring fresh ideas. Teacher use new technology confidently and appropriately. Good improvement since the last inspection has stemmed from the very good leadership and management of the department. Corridor and room displays are colourful, respected, and used constructively as a stimulus for work. Students benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including theatre visits and workshops, visiting writers, a debating club, and a reading club.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Students have good literacy skills, and school strategies for improving these are well thought out and effective. Students whose literacy skills are weaker receive beneficial and intensive coaching lessons. Folders show good planning by teachers to support the particular language needs of individuals alongside more general written exercises. Teachers in all subjects are aware of the techniques behind the National Literacy Strategy and many use them successfully in their teaching. A whole-school marking policy has been agreed and is successfully applied in most departments. Book checks have been carried out to see the extent to which subjects encourage and use literacy in their teaching. A successful focus on literacy has improved spelling, the understanding and accurate use of precise technical vocabulary, presentation, and the use frames to guide writing. Key words are well taught in religious education, design and technology, ICT, geography and art, but the spelling of subject-specific words is not systematically corrected in science and design and technology. Teachers make good use of students' speaking and listening skills, and are good models themselves of how to develop ideas through speech. As a result, students learn to use Standard English and technical vocabulary very well. The benefit of discussion as an aid to developing understanding is demonstrated well in science, physical education, modern languages and drama, but in mathematics and religious education, students have too few opportunities for this.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is good.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The work of the faculty is very well led and results are improving
- Good teaching combined with very good attitudes enables students to achieve well
- A thriving programme of foreign visits supports students' learning effectively
- Assessment does not provide enough information to assist lesson planning, especially in Years 7 to 9
- Students have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to develop their language skills

Commentary

Examination results

67. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average. They were similar in 2004. GCSE results in 2003 were above average and showed further improvement in 2004, largely because boys were more successful at the C/D grade boundary and made some headway in reducing the gap between their performance and that of girls.

Standards and achievement

68. The faculty has a revolving subject offer in years 7 to 9, which ensures parity of status for French, German and Spanish. A quarter of the year group begins a second language in year 8. Students make good progress in years 7 to 9, a little more so in French than in German or Spanish because they master a wider range of tenses. This enables students to write fluent summaries of the topics they have learnt. They receive useful feedback, which helps them improve further. Grammar is well integrated into the topics in all three languages to reinforce literacy skills and to ensure understanding. This helps students of all abilities to do well in listening and writing tasks. Standards in year 11 are above average. Students succeed because expectations are consistent across all languages and their work is managed in exemplary fashion. They are strongly supported in preparing for written coursework and oral examinations. Standards remain higher in French as schemes of work in German and Spanish are not adapted enough in the lower years to accelerate learning for all the students.

Teaching and learning

69. Some very good teaching takes place in all languages but this is not fully shared. But a lack of consistency means that learning is good overall. Teachers make very effective use of resources, relate very well to students and develop a strong rapport with them. Students make an enthusiastic contribution to their learning when activities are suitably varied and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace in the foreign language. In an excellent Year 9 German lesson, students consolidated their knowledge of camping equipment visually, orally and in writing against tight deadlines. Regular testing is used well to revise basic concepts and to link these with prior learning. Very good relationships with teachers, often enhanced by participating in trips abroad, underpin students' industriousness and build positive attitudes towards

languages. Oral work sometimes lacks depth which reduces the value of the ensuing paired-work and whole-class sessions. Some opportunities are missed to exploit students' natural responsiveness because oral starter activities are not sustained in depth. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 provides students with a general idea of their progress, in spite of inconsistencies in marking, but does not provide sufficient detail to assist teachers in lesson planning.

Leadership and management

70. The very good leadership is maintaining and improving a wide range of provision, combined with very extensive enrichment activities. GCSE standards have risen and the second foreign language is now more firmly established. Gifted and talented students are often targeted for more detailed questioning, but sometimes, work is not sufficiently adapted for their needs. The faculty's high aspirations for achievement are held back by some remaining areas for development in teaching and learning, assessment and ICT.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management ensure that teachers work effectively together to develop provision
- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9 and significantly improve the achievement and attainment of all students
- The very good support provided for lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs raises their confidence and levels of attainment
- Students' very good attitudes enhance their learning and achievement
- Assessment and feedback do not tell students clearly enough how to improve
- The student's ability to use and apply mathematics independently is not as well developed as other areas of mathematics

Commentary

Examination results

71. Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average compared with all schools and above those for similar schools. An overall upward trend has been maintained in Year 9 results since the last inspection. GCSE results in 2003 were significantly above the national average. Girls and boys were equally successful, and the very good support provided for students with special educational needs and below-average ability resulted in a very large proportion of them doing well at GCSE level.

Standards and achievement

72. Recent results in national examinations and standards in lessons show that good value is added to prior attainment for average and below-average students in Years 9 to 11. The small

number of GCSE A* and A grades, relative to the best attainment in Year 9, results from the very good progress made by higher-attaining students during Years 7 to 9 not being maintained in all respects in Years 10 and 11. Specifically, their ability to use and apply mathematics independently is not regularly targeted to ensure progress is similar to that made in other areas of mathematics.

Teaching and learning

73. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use their very good subject expertise to demonstrate and explain new learning effectively. As a result, students achieve well in number, algebra, statistics and geometry. ICT and practical apparatus are used well to raise standards. Students' progress and achievement are considerably improved by their very good response to the opportunities for speaking, listening, mental calculation and using mathematical vocabulary. As a result, students of all abilities are sufficiently confident to share their mathematics with the whole class. Students speak highly of the support and encouragement they receive and appreciate knowing how to overcome any misconceptions they have. However, regular assessment and feedback do not consistently and specifically tell them how to reach the next level of attainment.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management have led to the sustained improvement in standards and achievement. Reviews of data are used well to identify future development. Very good staff induction and professional development have resulted in strong teamwork and a common sense of purpose amongst the teachers. Students benefit from the resulting very good teaching and learning. Teachers' subject expertise is very good and enables them to respond well to the varied demands of the curriculum. The introduction of The Key Stage 3 Mathematics Strategy has increased the opportunities for students to work mentally and orally. Improvements in accommodation have enabled the use of ICT to be increased. Fewer classes are now taught outside the mathematics suite, which increases the efficiency of overall provision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Students use mathematics well across the curriculum. The development of mathematics as part of the teaching and learning in other subjects is achieved through highly valued training days and the work of a recently-appointed and very enthusiastic numeracy coordinator. Developments are guided by a satisfactory policy. The number of subjects where the use of mathematics has an impact on what is taught and learned has increased since the last inspection with some particularly exciting initiatives in physical education and geography. A very good booklet produced for parents clearly explains the calculation methods taught across the school. This has resulted in levels of numeracy and the use of number and algebra being well above national averages in Years 7 to 11.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' very good attitudes benefit their learning
- Leadership of the department is very effective and management is good
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge

- Some assessment practices are not fully developed and this limits achievement
- Accommodation is generally adequate but some laboratories do not lend themselves to the full range of teaching methods

Commentary

Examination results

76. Over five years to 2003, excepting in 2002, national test results at the end of Year 9 rose. Results were slightly lower in 2004 but these were in line with expectation and slightly above the school's targets. GCSE results during recent years have also been well above national averages. Unconfirmed results for 2004 are lower but in line with that group's 2002 results at Key Stage 3.

Standards and achievement

77. Throughout Years 7 to 11, current standards are well above average, and above those of similar schools. The department's very good analysis indicates, however, that the recent achievements of gifted and talented Year 11 students were below expectations. Teachers' high expectations and the very good specialist support teaching enables students with special educational needs to make good progress. Girls do better than boys by a similar amount to that reported nationally.

Teaching and learning

78. Teachers use their subject knowledge and teaching expertise effectively, more so in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. This was convincingly demonstrated in a Year 9 lesson on terminal velocity. The teacher made effective use of a starter activity related to the relevant key vocabulary, and then used a multimedia projector to show video clips of free-fall parachutists. Whilst watching the clips students were required to imagine the forces that would be being experienced; this resulted in very good learning. Teachers' expectations are generally high. They expect students to make gains in knowledge and understanding at a challenging pace. Work is well matched to students' capacities. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, students were required to take on the role of an examiner. They successfully assessed pieces of biology coursework according to specified criteria. Numeracy and literacy skills are well developed but students are given limited opportunities to improve their extended writing skills. Assessment procedures work well and help promote achievement. Students' work is marked regularly but guidance on what needs to be done to improve is rarely given. Some teachers are not using information from lessons to plan effectively for the subsequent needs of individual students. This is particularly the case for gifted and talented students.

Leadership and management

79. The teachers work very well together and are an effective team. Technicians provide excellent support. The head of department has a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve students' performance and achievement; all members of the science team share this vision. The focus on raising standards and continuing to develop teaching and learning is appropriate. Good progress has been made in incorporating the good practice of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy into the work of the department. Developing the use of ICT and the range of teaching styles has resulted in teaching approaches that are more closely matched to students' preferred learning styles. Other developments, including students' individualised annual science targets, are yet to be fully established.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Good

Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Years 7 have one lesson every two weeks and have problems recalling work from one lesson to the next; overall too little time is allocated to ICT
- Students in Year 9 receive no specialist teaching and this limits achievement
- Student/teacher relationships are good and enhance learning
- Assessment is not sufficiently used as a means of raising standards
- The use of computer-controlled whiteboards is helping to raise standards

Commentary

Examination results

80. The students join the school with average standards. GCSE results were average in 2003. Results were higher in 2004 but national comparators are not yet available.

Standards and achievement

81. Pupils enter the school with average standards and standards are in line with expectation at the end of Year 11. This represents satisfactory achievement overall. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Students in Year 7 have only one hour of ICT every two weeks. As a result, they have problems remembering what they have already learnt. This is reducing achievement as teachers have to spend time at the start of lessons revising work. Students in Year 9 receive their ICT provision through other subjects, with no specialist teaching. This limits progress as students fail to appreciate how the different aspects interconnect. For instance, students in Year 9 interrogate databases but do not use word processors to write up their results. In the GCSE groups, students achieve well and skilfully create, manipulate and research files. Others work effectively towards the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) or a key skills qualification.

Teaching and learning

82. Lessons are carefully planned and the specialist teachers have good subject knowledge. Examples of very good teaching occurred in Year 7, but learning opportunities, though good, are restricted through the short time allowance given to the subject and by the use of some non-specialist teachers. Lessons usually start promptly and, where ideas from the National Strategy are incorporated, students' interest is increased. Students are generally enthusiastic about the subject. The use of a computer-controlled whiteboard in lessons impacts very well on students' learning because basic skills are taught quickly and efficiently to the whole class. Because relationships between teachers and students are generally good, minor acts of indiscipline, for example when students use programs other than those specified by the teacher, are tackled without interruption to the lesson. The use of assessment to analyse students' strengths and weaknesses is under-developed as a means of informing students of their progress. Students do not always know, therefore, what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

83. The subject coordinator is clearly focused on improving the provision. Teaching strategies have been improved through the introduction of computer-controlled whiteboards and innovative courses have been introduced to raise achievement. Good developments include the introduction of the National ICT Strategy, the compilation of an extensive handbook which clearly defines departmental practice, and the introduction of the ECDL course. The allocation of time and the use of non-specialist teachers in Year 9 are restricting the department's capacity to raise standards at an appropriate rate.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory, although the ratio of computers to students is below that recommended nationally. A good example was seen in design and technology, where students used ICT to interpret their research results and to improve the presentation of their folders. In a Year 8 physical education lesson, a technician used the DVD facility on a laptop computer to show expert gymnastic demonstrations. Students studying English produce brochures which require them to import photographs and text. Difficulties of accommodation and the accessibility of computers restrict the use of ICT in some subjects, such as religious education.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is very good.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- The department contains a very good match of staff to the curriculum
- Students' very positive attitudes result in above-average standards by the end of Year 9
- The very good use of ICT enhances teaching and learning
- Very good leadership and management have led to very good developments in the subject
- Geography is a popular option in Years 10 and 11

Commentary

85. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average. The 2004 results showed a slight decline over the previous year. However, they remain significantly above the national average for 2003. Although boys performed less well than girls, their result was above the national average for boys.

Standards and achievement

86. The standards of work seen during the inspection for students in Year 9 and Year 11 were above average. Students in Year 7 receive a good grounding in basic geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. They give accurate grid references and instructions from a given point with sketch maps in route planning. They use scales confidently to calculate distances. By the end of Year 11, students have developed awareness of global issues, such as the gap between rich and poor nations and the efforts of governments to alleviate the effects of poverty. The students have very positive attitudes, and make good efforts with their work. Students with special educational needs and gifted and talented students make good progress as a result of the good support they receive.

Teaching and learning

87. Teachers inspire confidence and interest in the subject and maintain very good relationships with the students. The very good subject knowledge of the staff challenges the students to probe difficult concepts, such as the gross domestic product of countries when assessing economic development. Resources are very well used to encourage the students to develop

awareness of geography in current affairs. Newspaper reports on oil prices helped to illuminate aspects of energy use and the need for alternative sources of energy. All students are taught at a level appropriate to their abilities. This leads to proficient learning.

Leadership and management

88. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of the subject and a determination to raise standards. An impressive programme of professional development, including strong links with the University of Sheffield and examination boards, makes a very positive contribution to the work of the department. Excellent organisation and a high standard of documentation make for smooth operation on a day-to-day basis and in the long term. The introduction of cross-curricular fieldwork involving the English and mathematics department, for Year 8 students, has been very successful. Arrangements are in hand to provide more opportunities for fieldwork experience for students by the end of Year 9. Standards have risen since the last inspection. All teaching is now done by specialist staff with a suitable range of backgrounds and experience to cater for the needs of all students. Schemes of work have been updated to meet more effectively the interests and needs of the students, and to emphasise the relevance of their education in geography to the world of work. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been successfully integrated into teaching and learning. A bridging project operating in the department has been effective in ensuring a smooth transition from primary to secondary school. Geography has a high profile in the school which is reflected in the high recruitment at GCSE level.

History

Overall provision in history is good.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Year 9 and at GCSE are above average
- Students become confident historians, using resources purposefully and writing well
- Good leadership and management are leading to good developments in assessment
- Accommodation is insufficient; some is inconveniently sited, which wastes teachers' time because resources have to be transported between lessons

Commentary

Examination results

89. GCSE results in 2003 were above national average, and well above for grades A* to C. Girls' performance was well above average. Boys did slightly less well but were above average. Unconfirmed results for 2004 are higher overall.

Standards and achievement

90. Work seen was just above national average for Years 7 and 8 and well above for Years 9, 10 and 11. Good examples of source investigation included using Internet and census data in

electronic form. In Years 10 and 11, girls in particular produced very good coursework based on the locality and public health. All students are well prepared for examinations. Students progress well through Years 7 to 9. They speak and listen well to each other and in whole-class discussion. They receive good guidance for writing, use key historical term correctly and understand chronology and historical investigation techniques. All students, including the gifted and talented, achieve equally well in relation to their differing starting points. Those who study GCSE develop higher skills of research, empathy, and organisation and use of material.

Teaching and learning

91. History is taught mainly by specialist teachers well supported by very good resources. Good relationships between teachers and students have a positive effect on students' learning. Innovative practice includes very good lesson starts, good use of interactive whiteboards and a range of teaching that reflects well the different ways in which students learn and process information. The department has successfully incorporated important aspects of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in its methodology. Students are enthusiastic, and particularly so in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management

92. Very good leadership and management are resulting in the development of procedures for assessment carefully designed to produce constructive guidance for each individual student in Years 7 to 9. Those who study GCSE history benefit from a particularly wide range of resources, including aids to literacy, ICT and visits in the local community and beyond. Resources cater well for the range of ability and need within each class. The curriculum is particularly strong and its development has benefited from the head of department's involvement in a Prince's Trust Summer School. In Years 7 to 9, students study British society alongside Islamic civilization, Europe and America. This has a good impact on their social and cultural understanding. The range of topics for GCSE builds successfully on this wide range of prior experience. Year 9 results have improved because of the good system of moderated research and analysis undertaken on 20th century themes. Accommodation is insufficient and some is inconveniently sited. This wastes teachers' time when resources have to be transported between rooms.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11 Examination set
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
		No evidence for the non-examination set

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lack of time means that the local Agreed Syllabus cannot be fully taught in Years 7 to 9
- Lesson planning is very thorough and ensures that students gain a good knowledge of key words

- The lack of ICT restricts students' opportunities for research and limits the development of more varied teaching styles
- Formal assessment levels are not used to guide students' learning

Commentary

Examination results

93. Results in 2003 were slightly above average. Unconfirmed results for 2004 were in line with the previous year's average. In these small groups, girls tend to do better than boys, reflecting the national situation.

Standards and achievement

94. In Years 7 to 9, students' knowledge is in line with course expectations. Students' work on Judaism and Hinduism is carefully presented and illustrated and includes substantial information about these two faiths. Oral work is of a good standard. The students' capacity to respond personally and individually to the ultimate questions of faith and belief is insufficiently developed overall. Proficient discussion helps their understanding. However, they do not clarify their thinking and consolidate their understanding of religious and moral issues enough because they undertake too little written work in this area of study. Achievement in this aspect of the course is unsatisfactory. No lessons took place in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection.

Teaching and learning

95. Lessons are carefully planned. Aims for each topic and lesson are clearly communicated to enable students to learn effectively. The teacher ensures that students understand key words and ideas, for example when studying the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. However, too much time is spent on teacher-led activity and not enough on challenging students to be more active and independent in their learning. Work is conscientiously marked but students' progress is not evaluated against appropriate criteria because the use of levels of assessment specific to the subject has not yet been introduced. The lack of ICT restricts students' opportunities for research and the development of more varied teaching styles. The analysis of written work indicates that teaching and learning in the GCSE classes is good, for example in developing the skills of presenting argument and counter-argument in controversial topics, such as the vigorous debate stimulated by a challenging video on abortion.

Leadership and management

96. Religious education is efficiently organised on a day-to-day basis. Schemes of work are detailed and provide a good framework for learning. However, the sole teacher works in professional isolation which limits development of the subject. Issues of time, noted in the last inspection, have not been fully resolved and standards and achievement in Years 7 to 9 remain below national expectations. Accommodation provides a stimulating working environment but is situated in a demountable building separate from the main school building, and this does not enhance the status of the subject and precludes the use of ICT. For those students not studying religious education for GCSE, the allocation of time to the subject is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good

Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students experience a good foundation for GCSE in Years 7 to 9 and go on to gain results which are above average
- Relationships between teachers and students are good and encourage learning
- Teachers use their own skills and knowledge to good effect
- ICT is used productively and benefits students' achievement
- Some aspects of assessment are underdeveloped, including marking and students' evaluation of their own work

Commentary

Examination results

97. The subject consists of food, textiles, resistant materials, graphics, and systems and control, taught throughout Years 7 to 11. GCSE courses are offered in all five areas. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above those reported nationally and rose further in 2004. Results in GCSE examinations were above national average in 2003, but fell slightly in 2004.

Standards and achievement

98. By the end of Year 9, students work very competently in practical lessons. Year 11 students reach a good standard of work which meets the requirements of design projects using a range of materials. Students use ICT well to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. In GCSE coursework, students use ICT independently and with confidence to extend their work and improve presentation. In Years 7 to 9, and for some students at GCSE level, skills of evaluation are insufficiently developed as a means of improving their practical work.

Teaching and learning

99. The good relationships between teachers and students encourage students to respond eagerly. This establishes a productive learning environment. Features of good teaching are the well-structured and briskly-paced lessons, where high expectations are communicated to students. The learning of lower-attaining students in particular benefits from the individual support students receive. A wide selection of projects and use of ICT motivate the students and encourage independent working, but teachers' planning does not adequately challenge the gifted and talented and higher-attaining students. Computer-assisted design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) is used well to extend design work in resistant materials. Teachers help students to use technical language correctly. Marking and assessment in Years 10 and 11 are used well to monitor students' coursework, but information from assessment does not always inform students specifically of what they need to do to improve. Students in Years 7 to 9 sometimes receive targets for improvement at the end of modules, but their usefulness is limited because they are moving to a new area of study. Homework is used inconsistently across the department and does not always build effectively on class work.

Leadership and management

100. The department is efficiently managed. Teachers' expertise is used well and teamwork is a strength of the department. Teachers share a common intention to identify, share and build on good teaching across all areas of the subject. They respond well to the changing technologies and courses available to extend the opportunities for students. Students' achievement benefits from good accommodation and resources.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Innovations in the management of the subject are beginning to have a beneficial impact on students' learning
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because timetable organisation and a lack of time prevent students from achieving their potential
- The organisation of the curriculum in Year 9 is unsatisfactory
- Lessons make a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral and cultural development
- The department has recently undertaken a thorough review of strengths and weaknesses in provision

Commentary

Examination results

101. GCSE results were above average in 2003 but fell dramatically in 2004. Boys' results were well below expectation and small numbers are choosing to take art and design in Years 10 and 11.

Standards and achievement

102. Art and design, music and drama are taught in rotation in Year 9. This arrangement limits both continuity and achievement, and the allocation of time is unsatisfactory. It has a detrimental effect on the achievement of those who take art and design in Years 10 and 11 because they have consolidated basic skills insufficiently by the end of Year 9. Year 10 students are unprepared for the rigors of an examination course. They have a fairly limited repertoire of skills and a lot of catching up to do. By Year 11, many have good technical skills but they often resort to secondary source materials rather than developing their own ideas as a basis for their decision-making. The standards of written and oral work are frequently out of step with their achievements in other subjects. In all years, ICT is not used enough, except for research. Computers are rarely used creatively to manipulate images.

Teaching and learning

103. Teachers plan most lessons well and this leads to good learning. Prompted by the teachers, students gave good attention to independent decision-making. Teachers' expectations were high and work was well planned to challenge and stimulate students. Higher-attaining students are not invariably set work that enables them to demonstrate the higher levels of attainment of which they are capable. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This was used to very good effect in a Year 9 lesson, where students showed great sensitivity towards the work of Kathe Kollwitz, when reviewing her work and their own initial sketches. They modified their ideas as they worked. Class discussions provided good ideas for development. The theme of 'war and suffering' and the learning that followed from students' reflections on moral and ethical issues made a strong contribution to their spiritual development. It captured the curiosity of both boys and girls and led to very good achievement. Teachers have much information about students' past performance and likely attainment. Not enough use has been made of this, either by students to review their performance, or by teachers to ensure that activities are matched to individual learning needs. Students with special educational needs receive good support from learning assistants and take a full part in lessons.

Leadership and management

104. The head of department is new this term. The strengths and weaknesses in the subject have been accurately analysed and there is a very clear understanding of how to proceed. The appropriate priority is to ensure that by Years 9 and 11 students achieve their potential and that assessment is used to track their progress and adapt teachers' lessons plans so that the needs of all are effectively met, and they know in detail what to do to improve. This is an improving department and good progress has been made in a short time in some areas.

Music

Provision in music is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in individual lessons in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory over time because of an unsatisfactory time allocation
- Standards of composing and performing are above average in Years 10 and 11
- Teachers communicate their enthusiasm well in lessons
- Students enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities
- Accommodation and resources impose some limitations on what can be achieved

Commentary

Examination results

105. GCSE results in 2003 were average. Unconfirmed results for 2004 are slightly higher.

Standards and achievement

106. By the end of Year 9, students have a sound knowledge of musical terms and a satisfactory working knowledge of the elements of music prescribed in the National Curriculum. Standards of composing and performing are in line with expectation. Students' achievement is good in individual lessons, but unsatisfactory overall because the allocation of time is below that needed to teach the National Curriculum requirements fully. In Year 11, students achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. Standards in composing and performing are currently above average. Students' knowledge of musical eras and composers is in line with course expectation.

Teaching and learning

107. Teachers are experienced and they work with enthusiasm, pace, and humour to challenge the range of students in each class and to promote effective learning. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, students worked on preparing a whole-class performance of a salsa piece involving vocalists, a variety of keyboard parts and Latin American percussion. Learning was good because students successfully responded to the challenge of mastering individual parts while attempting to play and sing together as part of an ensemble. Teachers' expectations are high, and tasks are well-suited to the learning styles of the majority of students, who respond well and persevere with the tasks they are given. In GCSE lessons, students are encouraged to develop their individual strengths and interests. As a result, they learn very well, and benefit from the individual attention and carefully-targeted advice available in sets where numbers are comparatively small. Assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 are underdeveloped. Procedures for judging students' work and providing specific advice for improvement refer too little to National Curriculum levels, and schemes of work do not identify assessment opportunities. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided which form an important part of the department's work. It benefits both the school and the community at large. Rehearsals are enjoyable and productive occasions.

Leadership and management

108. Composition and the development of keyboard playing skills are appropriately prominent in planning and teaching. Students clearly enjoy their lessons and benefit from the opportunities to create music which the school provides. Lesson planning is generally good but does not always fully reflect the needs of the full range of students in mixed ability groups. Some ten per cent of students learn an instrument at school, which is average. Resources are satisfactory overall, but keyboards and percussion equipment are insufficient when classes are timetabled simultaneously. Accommodation is limited and few spaces are available for students to work independently in small groups. Some improvement has been made to the allocation of time to music, but this remains below that needed to cover adequately the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Drama

109. Drama was sampled. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average and notable for almost half the candidates gaining grades A* or A, and all students achieving a pass grade. Results were even higher in 2004. Standards of work of Year 9 students are below average, but well above in Year 11. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has improved since the last inspection but remains unsatisfactory. Time varies between groups and students do not steadily build skills because of the long gaps between blocks of drama lessons. As a result, some basic work has to be revised at the start of GCSE courses. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, with key areas frequently being used for examinations and other activities. The department is well led and organised. Schemes of work are carefully planned to offset uneven time allocations and discontinuity in Years 7 to 9. Large-scale productions enable many students to take part in the acting and staging aspects of drama. These activities promote very good social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards across the school are above average and students' very good attitudes to learning help their achievement
- Excellent extra-curricular provision provides a valuable addition to students' experience of physical education
- Very good leadership is providing a strong vision for sustained improvement
- Developments in indoor games and dance are constrained by the limited accommodation

Commentary

Examination results

110. GCSE results in 2003 were above average, with boys performing better than girls. Unconfirmed results were lower in 2004 because the cohort was not as able.

Standards and achievement

111. Standards in Year 9 are higher than last year. Standards are above average and achievement good over a wide range of activities. Students generally have good theoretical knowledge and constructively analyse and evaluate their performances. In dance, students worked together successfully in pairs to extend their understanding of choreography and rhythm and to develop successful dance routines. Students understand the principles of marking skills in basketball, use a javelin pass accurately and carry out the lay-up shot to good effect. Students understand technical names for bones and have a good grasp of major muscle groups and appropriate warm up exercises. In swimming, they achieve a good breathing style for front crawl and understand the technique for shallow water entry. They are aware of health and safety aspects of swimming.

112. Boys and girls are now attaining similar standards in Year 11 because of a more focused system of monitoring. Attainment in non-examination physical education lessons in Year 11 was broadly average, but overall standards are higher because students benefit from their involvement in enrichment activities. In the GCSE fast-track course, students know the technical names of muscles. They have a good technical approach to the long jump and understand the principles of leg kick and hang. They analyse their own and others' performances and suggest ways to improve. They work well in groups and independently. In football, students have good ball control and pass accurately. They analyse technique as a means of planning improvement in performance. Students understand how good tactics can enable a team to out-perform one containing more skilful players. In core physical education students have a good understanding of rules of games. In squash and badminton, boys and girls have good racquet control and move effectively by keeping on their toes during rallies. Students enjoy sport. They come to lessons on time, are prepared to work and always display very good attitudes to learning.

Teaching and learning

113. Teachers have very thorough knowledge of a good range of sports and they plan lessons very well. They communicate their enthusiasm readily to students and have high expectations of the students' responses. Warm-up activities are clearly related to the skills subsequently developed in the lesson. The pace of learning is brisk, and, in very good lessons, students assess their own performances and independently decide what they must do to improve. The teacher's carefully-targeted advice and encouragement built up the confidence of girls who were not experienced at racquetball and they quickly improved their effectiveness in different positions on court. Students' analysis and evaluation of performance are now very good features of their learning. The technician provides valuable ICT support in lessons, which helps with the recording of assessments. Assessment procedures are used very constructively to provide specific advice on how to improve. The teaching assistant effectively demonstrates skills to students with special educational needs and this helps them to improve.

Leadership and management

114. The vision for the sports college is shared by all members of the department. The staff are dedicated to driving up standards across the whole range of provision. Staff work very well as a team, and ensure the success of wide-ranging extra-curricular activities. Performance management is improving the quality of teaching. However, systematic monitoring to share the features of the best lessons is not fully developed. Documentation is thorough and schemes of work have detailed assessment criteria. Students' folders are marked regularly but comments are not always focused on ways to improve. The extra-curricular programme is an excellent feature of provision, and this enables all students to have two hours of physical education each week. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements in the quality of teaching, and new, temporary changing facilities have been established. Overall improvement has been good, even though the quality of the indoor games and dance areas limits further development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is good.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths

- The school's strong community ethos encourages student's understanding of citizenship
- The specialist teaching in Years 10 and 11 has a beneficial impact on students' learning
- Strong leadership and enthusiasm are leading to good developments in the subject

Commentary

Standards and achievement

115. The ethos of the school community is conducive to the development of informed, considerate and active citizens. Students are very active in charity work and raise very significant amounts of money annually for good causes. All students are involved in electing the school council. Peer mentoring and buddy schemes operate well. Skills of enquiry and communication are built up through the whole curriculum. In Year 7 to 9, the work scrutinised and observed was above national expectations. Many students enthusiastically take part in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.

Teaching and learning

116. The teaching seen was characterised by careful preparation and a variety of stimulating activities. In a Year 9 lesson on self-esteem, the teacher explained different aspects of the topic clearly, checking students' understanding with effective questions. As a result, they discussed the issues productively in groups and learned well. In a lesson on foot and mouth disease, they rigorously analysed the impact of the disease on various groups of people whose lives were affected and developed their empathy and understanding well. Students in Year 10 produced good information on pressure groups and their styles of operation. The teaching in Year 10 and 11 is done by specialist staff which has a beneficial impact on learning. Assessment at the end of Year 11 is well thought out, leading to a school-based award. Other incentives exist to encourage students to value citizenship. Students benefit from effective and well-organised work experience.

Leadership and management

117. Provision for citizenship is being developed with vision and energy, with a strong commitment from senior staff and a suitable time allocation. The curriculum has been very carefully constructed to include the required elements of personal, health and social education. In Year 7 to 9, all subjects contribute towards the teaching of the subject. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has appropriate plans to develop recording of students' progress through Years 7 to 9 to build a progressive record of their achievements.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

Level 3 GCE A level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	11	100	99	36	50	80	88
Biology	22	100	96	46	39	85	79
Business Studies	14	100	99	57	37	91	80
Chemistry	20	100	98	46	49	74	85
Drama	10	100	100	0	40	62	84
English / English Language	44	100	99	32	36	81	81
English literature	40	100	100	48	47	89	87
French	6	100	99	83	51	107	88
General studies	48	100	95	44	31	86	73
Geography	34	100	99	44	45	82	84
German	9	100	98	44	48	91	85
Government and politics	13	100	97	69	43	99	82
History	18	100	99	27	45	80	85
Information Technology	26	96	96	39	25	84	70
Mathematics	31	93	97	52	56	87	89
Music	5	100	99	40	39	84	81
Physics	13	100	97	31	45	71	82
Sociology	48	100	98	42	44	87	84
Sports / PE studies	14	100	98	43	31	80	75

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

118. English language and German were focus subjects. Lessons were sampled in English literature and French. Two lessons were sampled in English literature, one each in Years 12 and 13. Year 13 students were making a detailed study of the text of 'The Remains of the Day'. In the other class, students were developing their understanding of the Shakespearean language and characterisation in 'Much Ado about Nothing'. In both lessons, teaching and learning were very good, enabling students to articulate complex ideas in a well-argued and perceptive ways. Results in 2003 were above average. Boys' results were well above. Standards in the sampled classes were above expectation and students achieved very well from their various starting points. A Year 12 French lesson was well planned. The teacher used the target language very effectively. Standards were average. Teaching, learning and achievement were good. Results in 2003 were well above average.

English language

Provision in English language is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching results in all students gaining good insight into language and its usage
- Lessons are well structured and challenge students rigorously
- Whole-class discussions too often lack pace and depth
- Students produce good quality coursework and essays
- Teachers do not always relate key ideas and terminology to students' experience

Commentary

Examination results

119. English courses are very popular with sixth form students. The literature course attracts a greater proportion of the higher-attaining, whilst the language course is often attractive to students who want a one-year final-choice subject. Almost a third of all post-16 students take the language course. Results at A-level in 2003 were average, a decline from the previous year when girls had done notably well. 2004 results showed some improvement because average-attaining students did better.

Standards and achievement

120. Present standards are above the national average. Higher-attaining students show a very good command of language theory and technical terms, and analyse language insightfully. Essays are very well structured, wide-ranging and confident, but sometimes points are left unexplored or generalisations unsupported. Average-attaining students write in lengthy and meticulous style, with a tendency to include too much detail and explanation. Nonetheless, terminology and techniques are used and analysed successfully. Lower-attaining students write sensible, accessible English. Whilst their work shows limited ability to link ideas to develop argument there is always a sound grasp of the essentials of the task set. Most students move from simply recognising, labelling and defining terms to writing extended and carefully-worded critiques, suitably matching style to genre.

Teaching and learning

121. Good teaching contributes strongly to students' achievement. Both the course and individual lessons are well structured so that students see and understand how work in progress fits into wider learning requirements. Students learn to assess and evaluate effectively because of the good methods employed by teachers, such as pair and group discussion, following which agreed ideas are presented to the class group. Demanding topics show the level of work which teachers expect from students. Learning is best when the skills needed to be learnt are made explicit, and the planning indicates tasks, times, and strategies for success. Such an approach saw Year 12 students make very good progress in understanding and using the conventions of the horror genre. Whole-class discussions are not always very effective

because teachers ask too few follow-up questions and tolerate answers which are barely audible to other students. Tasks and topics are well chosen to create interest but exploration of key terms is rarely enlivened by drawing on what students feel and think. The frequency and accuracy with which written work is marked contributes strongly to learning. Students appreciate and respond well to guidance given in marking, although it is occasionally not specific enough. ICT is used as an effective teaching aid.

Leadership and management

122. Leadership and management are good. Administration is well organised, and a clear and agreed vision exists for developing the course further and raising standards. Considerable work goes on to review the relative success of the course components and to amend what is taught and how.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

123. Students' language skills are above average and they develop well in the sixth form. Some students follow a course in communication as part of a key skills programme. Subject specialist language is very well taught and used. Teachers introduce it carefully and expect students to use it precisely in their own work. Work on grammatical structures and vocabulary enhances the quality of students' extended writing in modern languages. In a debating club meeting, students showed an awareness of conventions. They were skilled in presenting ideas formally, and responded to other speakers with discernment. A general weakness is the lack of a consistent approach to spelling and grammar. This results in the very good emphasis on technical vocabulary and understanding key concepts detracting from the need for fluent, accurate written English.

German

Provision in German is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Insufficient evidence

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has established a strong base for the subject in the sixth form
- Excellent relationships inspire in students an enthusiasm for German and a strong desire to work hard for success
- Very good extra-curricular opportunities support students' learning
- Good teaching enables students to acquire skills systematically
- The use of assessment and ICT is underdeveloped

Commentary

Examination results

124. A-level results in 2003 were above average. In 2004, results were even higher, as more students gained grade A. No student has gained below a C grade in the last two years. The performance of boys and girls is similar. Retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 are very

good. Seventeen students are currently on AS and A-level courses, which reflects the popularity of the subject, especially as two other successful foreign language courses are on offer.

Standards and achievement

125. Listening and writing skills are the strongest aspects of students' work at this stage of the year and the focus in most lessons is on the development of comprehension and grammar skills. These are generally well integrated so that students can follow instructions and exposition in German with little difficulty. The development of oral skills is becoming a stronger focus following the recent arrival of the language assistant. Students successfully undertake an independent programme, which is well monitored, to consolidate and extend their listening skills. From their growing knowledge of word derivations and cognate forms, they successfully infer the meaning of new vocabulary. A thorough grounding in grammar, combined with this strong development of thinking skills, enables students to surmount challenges at all stages in their course. Standards in the larger Year 12 group are also above average. Gifted and talented students are very well provided for and develop their skills very well.

Teaching and learning

126. Where teachers constantly use German in lessons, this facilitates a very good pace of learning. Students' work is exceptionally well organised. Teachers' expectations of their work-rate are high, students are very clear about the demands made on them, and willingly strive to meet them. They work very hard in lessons, concentrating fully and taking responsibility for their own learning through instant note-taking and regular questioning. On occasion, lesson planning is not fully modified to meet the needs of the middle-attaining students and, while marking is regular, it varies in quality. Students lack opportunities to self- and peer-assess against examination criteria and fully to develop ICT skills. Underpinning students' achievement are their enthusiasm and the excellent relationships they enjoy with teachers. These are founded on encouragement, mutual respect and the close ties built up over time through participation in an extensive extra-curricular programme. Year 12 students cannot wait to take part in their two week work experience in Darmstadt, a programme that provides excellent opportunities for students' linguistic and personal development.

Leadership and management

127. The department is led with a strong sense of purpose and vision. While daily management is very good, best practice in teaching and learning and assessment is not yet fully shared.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have resulted in an increase in the number of students on sixth form courses
- A well-designed curriculum and teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that students learn effectively
- The infrequent setting of individual targets results in some students not knowing what they need to do to improve
- The progress middle-attaining students make in Year 12 is not maintained in Year 13

Commentary

Examination results

128. A-level results in 2003 were average and similar to the results of previous years. The numbers of students who take further mathematics A-level or retake GCSE are too small to compare against national averages and the school's previous performance. There is no difference in the performance of girls and boys.

Standards and achievement

129. Standards in lessons show that all students achieve well overall, but better in Year 12 than in Year 13. Achievement in Year 13 is satisfactory. In Year 12, the proportion of students reaching the higher grades is well above the national average, and in Year 13 the high ability and gifted and talented students reach suitably high standards in mathematics and further mathematics. However, in Year 13, the attainment of a significant number of average-attaining students shows only a small improvement on the standards reached in Year 12. The good progress they make in algebra, made possible by a well designed curriculum, is not fully maintained in Year 13.

Teaching and learning

130. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to introduce new learning effectively to all students. By breaking down complex mathematical ideas into small steps, students build upon previous knowledge to form their own patterns of mathematical behaviour and see the relevance of their work to the history of mathematics and everyday life. The use of graphic calculators to develop and extend understanding often improves the progress and achievement of the average-attaining Year 12 student. However, the infrequent setting of targets to improve individual performance results in some students not knowing in detail what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

131. The induction sessions held in Year 11 and the reputation of the department for meeting the higher education needs of students are good. As a result, numbers on the courses increase each year and fewer students leave during the school year. The department's thorough analysis of attainment is used to make effective adjustments to the curriculum and the expertise and experience of teachers is matched well to its demands. Improvement since the 1999 inspection has been particularly good in Year 12.

Mathematics across the curriculum

132. Mathematics across the curriculum is used and develops well. The mathematics department makes a further contribution to the post-16 curriculum by offering numeracy key skills Level 3 in Year 12. The development of mathematics as part of the teaching and learning in other subjects has had a positive impact on achievement in science, design technology, sociology and geography. The analysis of hydrographs in geography and spectrographs in science, and the interpretation of graphs and measurement in sociology and geography all demand high level numeracy skills.

SCIENCE

133. Biology and Chemistry were the focus subjects. A Year 13 physics lesson was sampled. Students, who had attained well-above-average results in Year 12 used good practical skills to solve problems related to the extension and periodicity of a spring. Good teaching led to good achievement and above-average standards, especially on the mathematical side of physics. Students' attitudes to work were very good.

Biology

Provision in biology is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Insufficient evidence

Main strengths

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding and they place an appropriately strong emphasis on coursework and assessment
- Students have very good attitudes to the subject and these contribute to their achievement
- The course is enriched by good fieldwork and links with higher education

Commentary

Examination results

134. In 2003 A-level results were above average. Girls did better than boys. A slightly lower percentage gained A and B grades in 2004, but national comparisons are not yet available.

Standards and achievement

135. Lessons observed and work samples indicate high standards. Students enter the course with above-average GCSE results and standards improve from Year 12 to Year 13. Good achievement was seen in coursework, including extended essays. The use of numeracy is good. Higher-attaining students showed very good understanding of ecological statistics. They understood the theoretical foundations of species diversity indices, for example.

Teaching and learning

136. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, particularly in ecology. Students confidently researched unfamiliar subjects, such as physiology and biochemistry. Relationships with the students are very good, as is the degree of individual care provided when students need help. Attitudes to work were very good, particularly when students were given the opportunity to participate in role-play or in biochemical model-making. Students were questioned well and teachers listened to and valued their responses, for example on the ultra structure of Bowman's capsule. The teaching was of a consistently good standard across the department. The use of assessment, including self-assessment, is a strength, particularly in coursework, and when students tackle examination questions. Some lessons are excessively teacher-led, with too few opportunities for the students to be responsible for their own learning. The use of audiovisual aids and ICT is not fully developed.

Leadership and management

137. The department is engaged in developing its schemes of work and extending the sharing of both good practice and teaching resources. Good plans exist to develop the monitoring of teaching and learning. These plans are well designed both to support new teachers and refresh the methodology of the experienced staff. Fieldwork plays a strong role and enriches the course on a routine basis, in coursework and in planned overseas development work in the Caribbean. The department has beneficial links with Sheffield University. Staffing is very good and resources overall good. Some accommodation, though adequate, does not present an attractive educational environment.

Chemistry

Provision in Chemistry is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Higher-attaining students achieve particularly well
- Staff have varied strengths and work together very well as a team
- Teachers show concern for students' progress and welfare, and relationships are very good

- ICT is used very constructively to advance students' learning

Commentary

Examination results

138. In 2003, A-level results were below average. In 2004, results were significantly higher but national comparisons are not yet available. Results in most years have been well above average.

Standards and achievement

139. Students enter the course with above average GCSE results overall, albeit with a tail of less highly-attaining students. Standards in coursework are also well above average, in a range of experiments, which the department has documented very well. Students displayed very good mathematical skills in the usual calculations of empirical formulae and in the rarer skill of describing molecular symmetries to predict position and relative size of peaks in NMR spectroscopy.

Teaching and learning

140. The teachers work well as a team, with complementary skills and experience, including in industry. They display very good subject knowledge and use a wide range of teaching strategies. The very good achievement of the higher-attaining students stems from the rapport which they have with teachers and the high level of challenge that the teachers exert. In a number of lessons seen, independent learning stimulated students' creativity. This was evident in students' presentations on types of chemical bond and on the quality of students' questioning and response to questions, for example on the use of esters in everyday life. ICT forms a strong component of teaching. Assessment is constructive. Teachers show a high level of concern and support for individual students. These teaching strengths extend across the whole department.

Leadership and management

141. The very good leadership includes careful deployment of staff and strong support for new teachers. Monitoring of standards is very good, including the identification of areas of weakness, resulting in carefully-targeted and specific revision tasks to help students improve. School websites are used efficiently to share material amongst teachers and to communicate with students over their revision. Staffing is very good. Accommodation is only satisfactory with many lessons taught in non-science rooms, but teachers' ingenuity moderates the effects, and resources are good. ICT is a strength of the department, as is the induction of new staff. These developments mark a significant advance since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. ICT was not a focus subject, but a Year 13 lesson was sampled. In 2003, the A-level results were well above average. In the lesson seen, standards were broadly average and teaching and learning were good. Students working on their major projects demonstrated relevant skills well, for example searching a data-base and incorporating selected information into their work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

143. This is satisfactory. Not all subjects have fully implemented the use of ICT to promote learning. This is partly because of problems over the accessibility of computers and the below-average ratio of computers to students. Some examples of good practice were observed. Good use was seen in geography, when students accessed the Defra website as part of their study of rural environments. They regularly present work to the whole group using PowerPoint. There was also good use of ICT in music when students used sequencing and notation packages to develop their composing skills. Firm plans are in place to increase ICT provision in the near future.

HUMANITIES

144. Geography, history and sociology were focus subjects. One Year 12 lesson was sampled in government and politics, where students were completing a unit on politics in the United Kingdom since 1945. They analysed ideological changes in relation to the roles and policies of New Labour. The students achieved very well, and standards were well above those expected at this stage of the course. Teaching was very effective and demanding. Expectations were very high and students displayed intellectual rigour when using their knowledge and understanding to compare the arguments presented.

Geography

Provision in geography is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- Very good teaching and learning result from a very good match of staff to the curriculum
- ICT is very well used to enhance students' learning
- Day-to-day management is very efficient and leadership has a clear vision for developing the subject further
- Students approach their work with very positive attitudes and find the work they do intrinsically interesting

Commentary

Examination results

145. A-level results were above average in 2003. The percentage of students achieving grades A and B grades was above the national average. All students entered for the examination achieved a pass, which was also above the national average. Results have shown an upward trend since the last inspection.

Standards and achievement

146. The students apply themselves conscientiously in their study of the management of environmental change. Fieldwork investigations on the Holderness coastline indicate the skilful use of data to plan ways of reducing the impact of coastal erosion. Good use is made of the Internet, for example to access material on the work of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in connection with land use conflicts.

Teaching and learning

147. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They inspire confidence and interest in the subject and make the work relevant to real life situations. They provide many opportunities for the students to engage in individual learning, sharing of ideas in pairs and reporting findings to the class. Thinking skills are developed well, as for example in a class where the students were challenged to devise the questions for which a set of answers might apply, concerning a range of flood conditions. This task produced lively and imaginative ideas. Very good use is made of

ICT, as demonstrated in the use of multimedia presentation for the interpretation of storm hydrographs. Resources are very well used to encourage the students to develop awareness of geography in current affairs. Very good relationships between students and staff, and students' very positive attitudes to learning make lessons enjoyable.

Leadership and management

148. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of the subject and a determination to raise standards. An impressive programme of professional development including strong links with the University of Sheffield and the subject examination boards, makes a very positive contribution to the work of the department. The excellent organisation and documentation make for efficient day-to-day management. Efficient teamwork is a notable feature of the department. Very good support is given to the students through after-school and weekend revision sessions. One senior member of staff provides e-mail links for the students to submit their work at any time and receive feedback on progress and to iron out any difficulties. This has proved a valuable addition to the support available. The introduction of voluntary assistance of sixth form students in the teaching of lower classes is an innovation which increases the confidence and skills of the students. The accommodation for the teaching of sixth form students is limited but their enthusiasm and determination counteract its shortcomings. Examination results have improved. All teaching is now done by specialist staff with a range of background and experience to cater for the needs of all students. The subject is now managed as a separate entity rather than an adjunct of humanities. Clear lines of responsibility take into account the interest and varying strengths of the staff. Schemes of work have been updated to meet the interests and needs of the students and to emphasise the relevance of geography to the world of work.

History

Provision in history is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This popular and successful course often results in students achieving well relative to their GCSE results
- Students enjoy studying history, partly because it provides a challenge; many choose to study it at university
- Induction to the course is currently only satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

149. A-level results in 2003 were average and students achieved satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Unconfirmed results for 2004 show an improvement.

Standards and achievement

150. Students in Year 13 have absorbed the technical language required to discuss both the European Reformation and the variety of opinions about religion circulating in the seventeenth century. They ask stimulating questions and organise their own learning well. The few who are less proficient at independent learning underachieve.

Teaching and learning

151. Staff are very experienced and experts in their chosen option topics, and provide very good resources for learning. Students are given a good variety of experiences in lessons, including groupwork, source investigation and essay preparation. Most develop good note taking skills, but some students have not developed the skills needed to providing the more extended answers required at A-level. Teachers do not, however, know the strengths and weaknesses of individual students early enough in Year 12 to provide targeted practice and support to develop the full range of techniques for AS Level. Tracking of skills development from Year 12 is weak, especially as half of the Year 12 students are previously unknown to their teachers, having joined the school at 16.

Leadership and management

152. The department is very well organised on a day-to-day basis. The curriculum is not balanced to contrast Europe and Britain in the same period. This presents problem for AS students but, there is gain in Year 13 when relevant information on the sixteenth century European Reformation provides a background for understanding religious opinion in seventeenth century England. The development of teaching is not consistent across the course. Few opportunities are provided for students to learn off site or attend outside lectures on the topics they study.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	No evidence

Main strengths

- Students achieve very well in examinations because teaching is very good
- Students' attitudes are very good and they learn very proficiently
- The subject is very well led and students receive very good support and guidance
- Teaching extends students' thinking very well through challenging questioning and discussion

Commentary

Examination results

153. A-level results were well above average in 2003. Results were lower in 2004, but in both years a good proportion of students gained A and B grades. All students passed. The retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13 is high.

Standards and achievement

154. Year 13 students apply a good understanding of different perspectives to a wide range of topics. This leads to well-informed discussions. Students are competent at organising essays and understand the value of planning and research. They answer questions very well and research widely to support their answers. Students understand how to interpret statistics, analyse graphs, collect data and confirm hypotheses. Students have a good understanding of how society functions and see this as a useful contribution to future careers.

Teaching and learning

155. Much is achieved in lessons because of the rapid pace of teaching and learning. An excellent understanding of the subject enables teachers to use a variety of teaching methods that rigorously challenge students. In a Year 13 lesson, students' understanding of Marxist thinking was extended when the teacher brought alive the social, moral and religious implications of revolution and class. The teacher showed very good subject knowledge when exploring quotes from Marxist thinkers on the pressures of wealth and influence on workers in society. Teaching extends students' thinking very well through very challenging questioning and discussion. This results in very good interchange of ideas which is enhanced by students' very positive attitudes to the subject. Good feedback from marking keeps all students aware of possible grades and specifies areas for improvement to raise their achievement.

Leadership and management

156. Regular attendance on examination courses helps to keep the department and students up to date and fully acquainted with course requirements. Good systems of monitoring students' progress enable teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This guides teaching and enables teachers to advise students very well on the options in coursework. Standards and results are carefully analysed and the course is constantly reviewed to ensure that it matches students' needs. No subject room is available to display work and enhance the image of the subject. The books that are available form a satisfactory base for research but too few are available for the large number of students on the course, especially when they are competing together to collect material for assignments.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- Teachers have good subject expertise and display an enthusiasm for the subject which benefits students' learning
- Students have very positive attitudes and show very good commitment to their work
- Resources, including ICT, are used well to enhance learning

Commentary

Examination results

157. No students took A-level in 2003. Results in 2004 were high, compared with 2003 averages, and all students gained a pass grade.

Standards and achievement

158. By the end of Year 13, students gain a good range of skills and techniques to produce high quality coursework with variety of materials. They use ICT very well, often to support the development of their projects. Students build very well on the standards they reached in their GCSE courses. They develop more extensive investigative skills. Valuable contacts with industry and business stimulate and underpin their development of a comprehensive range of design ideas.

Teaching and learning

159. Teachers plan lessons well so that students focus closely on the tasks undertaken and learn at a good pace. Teachers are very knowledgeable and use their skills very effectively to benefit students' learning. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to work individually and collaboratively. In one lesson, the students built effectively on each other's ideas to develop a 'virtual shopping trolley'. The enthusiasm of the teacher led to a very high level of achievement and efficient team work. The good relationships between teachers and students greatly benefit the learning. Teachers set high expectations to which the students respond. Teachers give practical advice on the work in hand and assess work constructively. Students have very good independent learning skills and approach their project work with creative confidence, undertaking a wide range of research in designing their products. Higher-attaining students develop very good analytical and evaluation skills which enhance the quality of their work. The relatively small numbers of students taking the courses means that their individual needs are recognised and met very well.

Leadership and management

160. The department offers product design courses in graphics and resistant materials. It is very efficiently run and teamwork amongst the staff is strong. Very good links with higher education contribute positively to the development of the subject. Accommodation and resources are good. The subject has progressed very well in all respects since the last inspection, and particularly in its use of ICT.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

Provision in art and design is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has begun to improve
- In 2004 examinations a significant number of students did not achieve the standards they were predicted
- The department has carried out an accurate analysis of its strengths and weaknesses and shows good determination to improve further

- Students have very good attitudes, and are enthusiastic
- Additional classes are helping students make good progress

Commentary

Examination results

161. Results in 2003 were broadly average. The number of girls achieving the A and B grades was well below the national average. A-level results fell in 2004 and AS results fell dramatically. Numbers taking the subject have been small in recent years.

Standards and achievement

162. Students have very positive attitudes, are enthusiastic and keen to do well. However, achievement over time has been unsatisfactory. Progress has not been built upon, year on year. Currently, Year 13 students, although making progress in lessons, are not yet achieving their potential, despite their own and teachers' best efforts. In Year 12, standards on entry are above the average but the leap from GCSE to AS is a struggle for some whose independent learning skills are weak and whose work in previous years has not prepared them well for the sixth form. In most lessons, students made good progress and achieve well from their individual starting points. Current work is challenging and the changes to the curriculum reflect a rigorous and demanding approach to study.

Teaching and learning

163. Teaching has begun purposefully to remedy the previous serious underachievement. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. For example, in a Year 13 printmaking session, the teacher explained and demonstrated relief, intaglio and surface printing techniques. Through careful questioning, she gradually succeeded in getting students to think and apply what they knew in more creative and imaginative ways. Students suggested alternative solutions, combining and layering one fine art printing technique over another, experimenting with computer-generated images and photocopiers. In another lesson, expectations were insufficiently detailed, and so students arrived to the lesson unprepared and unable to present the results of their research in sufficient depth. This limited their ability to make connections between their own work and the work of selected artists. In lessons where questioning was academically challenging and students were prompted to be more analytical and selective about their decision-making, the learning was effective. The school makes much information available to teachers about students' past performance and likely attainment. However, insufficient use is made of it at the outset to plan work that reflects the above-average GCSE results that students have previously gained.

Leadership and management

164. Strengths and weaknesses in the subject have been accurately analysed by the newly-appointed subject leader. The priority is to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure Year 13 students can make-up as much ground as possible in the time available. Additional life drawing classes, held at a local college, are helping to improve standards of drawing and build stronger portfolios in preparation for interviews and applications onto foundation courses. To date, the progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. However this is an improving department. The early signs are that weaknesses are being tackled in a rigorous and purposeful way.

Music

Provision in music is good.

Standards	Above average
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Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and practical skills which they use well to benefit students' learning
- Students are enthusiastic and work responsibly
- ICT is used effectively to develop composing
- Teachers provide very good individual assessment and advice

Commentary

Examination results

165. All of the small number of students passed in 2003. Results were in line with the school's expectations for the students. Numbers were too small for meaningful national comparisons to be made. In 2004, results were slightly lower, but in line with the school's expectations.

Standards and achievement

166. Present standards are in line with course expectations. Students achieve well when developing their practical strengths and display good technical knowledge. They have a good understanding of the use of suspensions for adding tension to compositions. They achieved well when basing composing on extracts from Jesus Christ Superstar, imaginatively arranging and orchestrating a phrase to produce varied effects. In this way, their understanding and knowledge of the composer's craft was enhanced through their own attempts to use the same techniques. Collaborative skills were effective in this group work. Students have good technical knowledge and make proficient use of ICT to enhance their achievement. A scrutiny of written work indicated that this is thoroughly done and carefully presented.

Teaching and learning

167. Teaching is confident and teachers use their good technical skills and knowledge to further students' learning. Tasks are carefully chosen to interest students and to make the most of their musical strengths. Assessment is very good, and teachers have a clear understanding of students' learning needs. Marking is thorough, regular and provides constructive feedback for students on how they can improve. The small numbers enable advice to be carefully targeted to encourage and inform individual students. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm well. Lessons are well prepared. Worksheets and other resources are appropriate and support learning well.

Leadership and management

168. Music is enthusiastically organised to capitalise on students' enthusiasm and to further their technical development. The curriculum is imaginative, focusing largely on popular genres that suitably reflect the tastes and interests of the students. Music provides good opportunities for developing students' understanding and use of ICT. Organisation on a day-to-day basis is efficient. Students' learning, achievement and personal development benefit greatly from the good level of extra-curricular provision and from opportunities for enrichment provided by trips to concerts and visits by professional musicians.

Theatre studies

Provision in theatre studies is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, founded on very good subject knowledge, is leading to good improvement
- Students have very good attitudes and work maturely and responsibly
- The accommodation available for important practical work is unsatisfactory
- The course is well organised and its performance reviewed
- Some marking does not give enough detailed guidance about how to improve

Commentary

Examination results

169. The course is chosen by students with very varying levels of drama awareness and experience. Some have not taken drama at GCSE. Alevel results in 2003 were well below national average. 2004 results showed a slight improvement.

Standards and achievement

170. Diligent attitudes are apparent both in written work and rehearsal. Present standards are above course expectations. Higher-attaining students use given notes to stimulate and extend ideas about theatre, but are inclined to make some over-simplified judgements in essays. The many competent average-attaining students show a good understanding of texts and theory, but tend to express their ideas clumsily. The few lower-attaining students work hard and produce lengthy and detailed essays, but tend to stray towards literary criticism rather than analysis of theatre and acting. In practical work, ideas are negotiated well, and with much mutual trust and respect. However, the course requires formal performance as an examination component and access to the stage is limited. As a result, students have not always achieved their potential in practical work. With this caveat, achievement is now good.

Teaching and learning

171. The good achievement stems from good teaching. Students learn effectively about theatre in terms of theory, style, staging and interpretation because the teaching very interesting and very well informed. They achieve best when their own ideas and experiences are probed by questioning and discussion. Thus Year 13 students commented on the need for a character's stage position to be 'symbolically central because of his role as mediator' (their words). Learning is less impressive

when lessons have over-lengthy sessions of teacher-directed ideas without students being able to question them in detail or delve into their own experience of theatre. A strong feature of teaching is the very good use of precise technical terms which are well explained and so understood and used by students. Written assignments are related well to examination requirements and accurately marked. Students benefit from the guidance they are given in marking which indicates what has been achieved, but there is too little specific advice about where and how improvements should be made.

Leadership and management

172. A sense of purpose and vigour pervades the course, and the majority of lessons. This stems from good and well-informed leadership and well organised management. Students' progress and the results they gain are analysed and steps taken to remedy shortcomings. A feature of recent years has been the large proportion of students dropping the subject after one year. Inspection evidence suggests that this is more to do with other subjects taking priority for A-level study rather than with student dissatisfaction. Good enrichment opportunities exist for students to take part in staging and performing in large school productions and smaller sixth form presentations.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at A-level are above average and achievement is very good.
- The quality of teaching and students' positive attitudes to learning help their achievement
- Very good leadership is providing the vision and platform for sustained improvement
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning strategies are not consistently used to secure continual improvement

Commentary

Examination results

173. A-level results in 2003 were above average. Results were lower in 2004, but national comparisons are not yet available.

Standards and achievement

174. Students have very good prior learning of anatomy and physiology and apply new information to very good effect in analysing the actions of moveable joints. They are confident in explaining and demonstrating the anatomical movements of abduction, adduction, rotation and flexion. In psychology, they have a very good understanding of the trait theory of personality. They make very good use of prior learning from AS study in consolidating their understanding about innate and learned leadership qualities and how a coach uses different styles depending on the characteristics of the people being coached. In the Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) lessons students have learned to appreciate the need for a leader to have clarity of voice and how to praise and be critical. They understand how analyse of performance and use this information to improve technique.

Teaching and learning

175. Teachers' detailed subject knowledge and enthusiasm are important factors in improving standards. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent. Teaching is planned so that students have good opportunities to explore their own ideas but with guidance from the teacher. Students are confident in taking responsibility for their learning. They know that teachers will expect them to think through problems and engage in research but know that the teacher is there with the knowledge to help them. Marking of students' folders is regular but not all pieces of work have comments sufficiently focused on ways to improve.

Leadership and management

176. The very good leadership means that the department is focused on raising standards at all levels. The vision for the development of the school as a sports college is shared by all teachers. The department regularly reviews its practice by considering ways to improve. However, the use of evaluation to share good practice with teaching and learning styles is not fully developed. The CSLA course, which is open to all sixth form students, adds to their repertoire of learning experiences. The school provides physical education for all sixth form students and has good links with national sporting bodies to help students to progress at individual sports.

BUSINESS

177. There was no focus subject in this area. A-level results in economics and business in 2003 were well above average. Unconfirmed results for 2004 are good. One Year 13 lesson was sampled. Teaching and learning were very good and students achieved very well. The teachers' expertise and very secure subject knowledge, together with a good range of activities, kept students engrossed and on task throughout the session.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

178. In a key skills course in Year 12, students have the opportunity to develop their communication skills. In the sampled lesson, teaching was good overall, but learning and achievement were satisfactory, reflecting the initial reluctance of students to participate in the lesson. The text the teacher selected was challenging and prompted effective high levels of thinking skills and discussion. A similar course is available in the application of number.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
Overall standards achieved		3
Students' achievement	2	3
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	2	3
Attitudes	1	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	3
How well students learn	2	3
The quality of assessment	3	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	5	5
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	3	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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

