

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH KESTEVEN SCHOOL

North Hykeham, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120708

Headteacher: Mr K Elms

Lead inspector: Dr A R Beaver

Dates of inspection: 15th - 18th March 2004

Inspection number: 262643

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:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 - 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,412
School address:	Moor Lane North Hykeham Lincoln Lincolnshire
Postcode:	LN6 9AG
Telephone number:	(01522) 881 010
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Gamble
Date of previous inspection:	13 th December 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

North Kesteven School is located in North Hykeham, south of Lincoln. The school has foundation status and was formerly Grant Maintained. Students come from 26 primary schools located in the south of the City of Lincoln and in surrounding villages. The school is larger than most secondary schools and provides for the needs of 1,412 students, of whom 235 are sixth formers. There are similar numbers of girls and boys in the school. The school has 82 more students than at the last inspection in 1999. Forty-five of these are sixth formers and the numbers of sixth form students have risen from 190 at the last inspection in 1999 to 235. Provision for the sixth form is shared with another school on the opposite side of the road to form the North Hykeham Joint Sixth Form. The number of students who claim entitlement to a free school meal is below average. Three per cent of students are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; none are at an early stage in learning English. The school identifies a below-average number of students as having special educational needs; an average number have statements of special need. Students' needs are mainly because of learning difficulties; a few have physical impairments. The percentage of students who join or leave the school other than at the usual ages of 11 is broadly average. The school has been a specialist for the Performing Arts since 2000. It is an Investor in People, and holds the Artsmark Gold award and the Careersmark. It received a Schools Curriculum Award in 2002.

Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is broadly average. The school selects up to ten per cent of students on the basis of their commitment to and potential in the performing arts. There is open entry to the sixth form.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20224	Dr A R Beaver	Lead inspector	
16421	Mrs C Stormonth	Lay inspector	
18888	Ms J Boulton	Team inspector	Dance Physical education
30941	Mr K Brammer	Team inspector	English (main school) Drama
4355	Mr F Earle	Team inspector	History (main school)
32115	Mr J S Foster	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages German
31673	Mr J Gwyer-Roberts	Team inspector	Music Performing arts
14691	Mrs J Hall	Team inspector	Science Biology
11969	Mr J Hardy	Team inspector	Design and technology
31372	Mr R Hardwick	Team inspector	Citizenship Religious education
27416	Mr T Howard	Team inspector	Mathematics
20324	Professor V Morris	Team inspector	Business
1994	Ms H Olds	Team inspector	Geography History (sixth form)
3731	Mr W G Robson	Team inspector	English (sixth form) Special educational needs English as an additional language
20533	Mr D Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design
31096	Mr J Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

North Kesteven is a **good school**. Girls and boys of all abilities and from all social and ethnic backgrounds achieve well overall, and very well in the arts. Standards are usually above the national average. The teaching and learning are good. The headteacher leads the school very well. Governors give the school good direction. Students do not receive their statutory entitlement to information and communication technology (ICT) or to religious education in Years 10, 11 and the sixth form. Management is satisfactory and makes the most of the school's low income. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve very well in the visual and performing arts, but should attain better standards in mathematics.
- Standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests and in the percentage of students gaining five or more grades A* to C in GCSE examinations should be higher, and the school should reach its targets.
- The headteacher has the confidence of students, parents and the community, and leads the school very well.
- Good teaching enables students to learn effectively and, in the arts, very creatively.
- Students are not always fully aware of how to manage their learning to reach the personal targets that are set for them.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very positive and they behave well, because the school provides girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds with fair and equal access to a good standard of education.
- The school takes great personal care of students, who also benefit from accommodation of very good quality.
- Students do not receive their statutory entitlement to religious education and ICT.

Since the last inspection in December 1999, the school's improvement has been satisfactory. Good achievement, good educational provision and a very good ethos have been maintained. Boys now achieve much better standards. Time for lessons is now appropriate for science in Years 7 to 9 and for mathematics in Years 10 and 11. Lesson time for ICT in Years 10 and 11 and for mathematics in Year 7 remain insufficient. Students do not receive their statutory entitlement to ICT or to religious education, although both subjects are better provided for than in 1999. There is much better use of performance data to track students' progress, but students are not all made aware enough of how to adapt their learning to reach higher standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
For Year 9, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 6. For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds achieve well, overall. They reached above national average standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2003, and have regularly attained this standard, except in 2002, when results were average. In 2003, students' results in English were well above the national average, and the best that they have ever gained. Performance in the tests in comparison with similar schools was below average in 2003, and lower in 2002,

especially in mathematics, in which standards should be higher. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, students attained national average results, both overall and in the attainment of five or more grades A* to C. Students' results in ICT in the attainment of grades A* to C in 2003 were the lowest of all subjects. Mathematics results were average, but below those of similar schools, and students should achieve better standards. Results, overall, were well above average in attainment of the GCSE examination grades below C and, in some recent years, every student has gained at least one grade. Compared with those of similar schools, results were average in 2003 and in 2002. The school recognises that higher standards can be reached in students' attainment of five or more grades A* to C, but its targets have not yet been reached. Students achieved well in all years during the inspection. In the sixth form, students begin advanced courses with below average standards and generally achieve well.

Students' personal development is very good. The provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Consequently, their attitudes are very positive towards the school and to their work. They behave well and their attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education overall. The teaching is good and enables students to learn well, and often creatively. Students are very well cared for. Although they receive good support to achieve well, they are not always sure how to reach the targets that are set for them. Links with parents are good and those with the community are excellent. The accommodation is very good overall; some is excellent, but some in science is unsatisfactory. The school is well provided with resources for learning. Although the curriculum gives very good opportunities in the arts, it is unsatisfactory overall, because it does not provide sufficiently for ICT, religious education or collective worship.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership is very good and key staff contribute well. Governors are committed, well informed and supportive. However, governance is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements for giving students religious education in Years 10 and 11, ICT and collective worship are not met. Management is satisfactory. Elimination of the financial deficit is on track.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally well satisfied with what the school provides, but some want more frequent contact with the school and more information about their children's progress. Students are pleased to attend the school, although some do not think bullying is managed well enough.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests, especially in mathematics and science, and increase the numbers of students attaining five or more grades A* to C in GCSE examinations.
- Improve students' achievement in mathematics throughout the school.
- Ensure that students are fully aware of how to adapt their learning to reach the targets that are set for them and monitor and evaluate their progress towards these.
- Manage better the joint provision of sixth form courses.
- Provide more opportunities for sixth form students to enhance their personal development;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Give every student entitlement to religious education, so all achieve the standards that they should in this subject in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
- Give students their entitlement to ICT in Years 8 to 11, so that they achieve better standards.

- Give all students the opportunity for an act of collective worship every day.

THE SIXTH FORM AT NORTH KESTEVEN SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides advanced and intermediate level courses for 235 students. Provision is made jointly with a neighbouring school.

The sixth form is good. Students achieve well overall. Standards attained on advanced courses in 2002 and 2003 were below the national average. However, students achieved well in line with what might reasonably have been expected from their attainment on entry to these courses. The teaching and learning are good. The range of advanced courses provided is excellent, but students lack sufficient curricular opportunities to enhance their personal development. Good provision has been maintained since the last inspection in 1999. Overall, **provision is cost effective.**

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students' achievement in the visual and performing arts is very good.
- The teaching is good and enables students to learn successfully; in the arts, teachers inspire students with interest, enthusiasm and a high level of commitment to learning.
- Students have very positive and mature attitudes towards the school and their work.
- Joint provision with a neighbouring school gives students an excellent range of advanced courses, but the joint provision should be better managed.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to enhance their personal development and enrich their experience in addition to advanced courses.
- Students do not receive their statutory entitlement to religious education.

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 provision in English . Good teaching and students' very positive attitudes enable them to achieve well. Standards are average and improving. Satisfactory provision in German . Some students achieve well from good teaching, but those in small classes have a restricted range of linguistic experiences, and achievement, overall, is satisfactory.
Mathematics	Satisfactory provision in mathematics . The teaching and learning are good, and enable students to achieve satisfactorily, overall. However, teachers do not insist enough on the development of students' independent learning skills for them to reach higher standards.
Science	Provision is satisfactory in biology . Students achieve best in Year 12 biology, where they respond very well to good teaching. Overall, achievement is satisfactory in biology. However, achievement in human biology is unsatisfactory because many students are not committed enough to the course.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is good . Good teaching enables students to achieve well. Although current standards are below average, advanced course results in 2003 were well above the national average.
Humanities	Provision in history is very good . Standards are above average and students are achieving well. Good teaching inspires students to learn successfully.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is very good . Teaching and learning are very good; teachers have very good subject knowledge. Students' capacity to work independently and their very positive attitudes enable them to achieve very well.

Visual and performing arts and media	<p>Provision in art and design is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge rouses students' enthusiasm and they achieve very well.</p> <p>Provision in dance is excellent. Standards are well above average and achievement is very good. Teaching is very good and teachers have excellent subject expertise. Students are totally committed to the subject.</p> <p>Provision in drama is excellent. Inspiring teaching, an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities and students' excellent attitudes ensure that standards are well above average and achievement is very good.</p> <p>Provision in performing arts is excellent. The subject makes an outstanding contribution to school and community life. Very good teaching and students' excellent attitudes enable them to achieve very well.</p>
Business studies	<p>Provision in business studies is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables most students to achieve well.</p>

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

Staff are accessible to students and provide help when needed. Students receive good guidance in choice of courses on entry to the sixth form and very good support in deciding choices in higher education and employment. They find teachers accessible when difficulties with work are encountered, but no regular daily contact with tutors is provided.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership is good. Management provides an impressive range of advanced courses jointly with a neighbouring sixth form. The joint provision is a mutually beneficial partnership. However, direction is lacking both for the further development of the sixth form and for the monitoring of provision by governors and senior management. Students do not receive their entitlement to religious education. The day-to-day management is good.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are pleased to be members of the sixth form and consider the quality of education that they receive is good. Some would like a wider range of enrichment opportunities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

All references throughout the report to 'average', 'above average' or 'below average' etc refer to comparisons with national standards.

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds **achieve well** throughout the school. **Standards match those expected nationally** in Years 7 to 11. In the sixth form, students enter advanced courses with attainment below what is usually found. They achieve well in general, especially so in the arts. Their results of advanced courses are below the national average, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, overall, to reach average standards in Years 7 to 11.
- Students' results in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests are usually above the national average, but compared with similar schools, standards are below what might reasonably be expected.
- Results in GCSE examinations were average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools in 2003, but the school has not yet reached its targets for the attainment of five or more grades A* to C.
- Students achieve very well in the arts, but results in mathematics should be higher in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests and also, for many students, in GCSE examinations.
- Students do not achieve well enough in ICT in Years 8 to 11 because students do not receive their statutory entitlement to the subject.
- Although students achieve well in the GCSE examination course in religious education, most students in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their statutory subject entitlement.
- In the sixth form, students achieve well overall and very well in the arts.

Commentary

1. Students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is of the standard expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, their standards at age 11 are often below those generally expected nationally, except in the visual and performing arts, where ten per cent of students are selected because they have shown promise in at least one arts subject. Girls and boys of differing abilities from all ethnic and social backgrounds make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 9. They reached above average standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2003 and, although standards in the tests were average in 2002, they have been above average in all other recent years. In 2003, results in English were well above average and the school's best-ever performance in this subject. Although results in mathematics and science were, respectively, average and above average in comparison with all schools, comparisons with similar schools were, respectively, well below and below average. Results in the tests, especially in mathematics, should be higher. (*Similar schools for Year 9 are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*) However, the trend in results over the last five years has been above the rising national trend and indicates improving performance.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.9 (32.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.0 (34.0)	35.4 (34.7)
science	35.4 (34.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 230 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In Years 10 and 11, students from all backgrounds continue to achieve well, overall. They reached average national standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 and results were above average in 2002 and 2001. Students regularly attain well above average standards in obtaining five or more grades A* to G in GCSE examinations. An average percentage of students attained five or more grades A* to C in 2003 and 2002, but results fell short of the targets set by the school. Performance overall is average with that of similar schools, except in the attainment of five or more grades A* to C, where results were below average in 2003. The school itself recognises that this is an area where improvement is possible and needed. *(Similar schools for Year 11 are those whose students achieved similarly at the end of Year 9.)* Although the school's trend in performance over five years has been below that of the national trend, boys' performance – a key issue for improvement in the inspection of 1999 – has, proportionately, improved considerably. The few students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well and all who were in Year 11 last year stayed on into the sixth form.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	52 (51)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	36.9 (34.7)	36.9 (34.7)

There were 228 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. During the inspection, overall, girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds achieved well in all year groups. In a few lessons, students' behaviour was not helpful to their learning and, consequently, they did not achieve well enough. In English in all year groups, students achieved well and their standards were never below typical national standards. In mathematics, students often achieved well to reach nationally expected standards in the work seen during the inspection by Years 9 and 11. However, the lack of continuity in the teaching and inadequate lesson time for the subject in Year 7 lead to underachievement. Consequently, results in National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations in mathematics are below what they should be and provision in mathematics is unsatisfactory overall. In science, achievement was satisfactory in all years and students were seen to reach typical national standards by Years 9 and 11.
4. Students apply linguistic skills well across the curriculum, especially in speaking and listening. Their numerical skills also support their learning well and standards are those expected nationally. Although students applied ICT skills competently across the curriculum to reach expected standards in the work they were seen to do during the inspection in all years, they are not taught all strands of the National Curriculum in this subject after Year 7. Therefore, overall, they do not achieve well enough in this subject, either in Years 8 and 9, or in Years 10 and 11.
5. Students do not all receive their statutory entitlement to compulsory religious education in Years 10 and 11, because lesson time is insufficient. Consequently, because most students do not follow a GCSE examination course and do not learn the subject at all in Years 10 and

11, their achievement is unsatisfactory and they cannot reach the standards that they should in these years. Those who follow a GCSE examination course in the subject achieve well and reach expected standards. In Years 7 to 9, students achieve well to reach the standards expected by the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. In the performing arts of drama and dance, students achieve very well to reach standards well above those usually found nationally in Years 10 and 11, from the very good teaching that they receive.

6. Students with special educational needs achieve well. Teachers generally take these students' needs into account when planning lessons, and students achieve very well in lessons in the learning support department. However, lessons for students with dyslexia are not frequent enough, and this restricts the progress that they can make.
7. Since the last inspection, overall, the good standards achieved then have been well maintained.

Sixth form

8. Students enter advanced courses with attainment below what is usual. Results in AS, A-level and AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education) courses were below average overall in 2003 and 2002. However, students from all ethnic backgrounds reach, and often exceed, the standards that might reasonably be predicted from their levels of attainment in GCSE examinations, and achieve well. A few students in the sixth form have special educational needs. Subject teachers and support staff provide sensitive support which enables them to achieve very well.

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	n/a (87.5)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	n/a (19.8)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per student	219.6 (217.4)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 162 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

9. In the work seen in the 12 subjects that are reported in full in Part C of this report, in none was achievement below satisfactory. It was very good in all performing and visual arts subjects, and in design and technology and in history. Students' standards were well above average in the performing arts and in history and at least average in all other subjects. The good quality of teaching and learning overall, and some excellent teaching in the performing arts, are ensuring improving standards in general.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' **attendance and punctuality** are good and improving. Their **attitudes** to school and to work are very good and their **behaviour** is good. Students' **personal development** is very good and their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is very well provided for.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The monitoring of attendance and the intensive procedures to follow up absence are outstanding.
- Students are proud of their school and have very good attitudes.
- A small but significant minority of students do not behave well enough.
- Sixth form students have very positive attitudes to the school and behave very well, but lack an extensive range of opportunities to support their personal development.

Commentary

Attendance

10. The school does all it possibly can to improve attendance. It achieves a good rate of attendance and there is little unauthorised absence. Some parents do not make enough effort to ensure that their children attend school and holidays account for a significant amount of absence; the school actively discourages such absence. Truancy is rare. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

11. North Kesteven School has innovative ways of improving attendance. These include recording absences in students' planners. This makes it obvious when students have any time off school. Patterns of absence are immediately evident. Medical certificates are required for more than three days of absence. Meticulous attention is paid to recording every verbal and written communication about attendance with parents and students. Reminders of agreements made to improve attendance are given if absence continues. Persistent school refusers are referred to the school's attendance panel. All parties attend and targets are set for improvement. Contracts are signed and, in many cases, attendance improves. Failure to improve attendance results in steps leading to prosecution.
12. Students' attitudes to the school and to their work are very good. They express pride in the school and all it offers. They value highly the helpful teachers, relationships with friends, interesting lessons and extra-curricular activities. Many find school enjoyable and fun. Students appreciate the school's excellent reputation for the performing arts and enjoy the many very good facilities. The school's ethos is very positive.
13. Students with special educational needs because of learning difficulties have very positive attitudes to their work. They have good relationships with teachers and learning support assistants. They take full advantage of the extra help that the school provides and develop very well, personally and socially.
14. Behaviour in lessons is usually good, and often very good. The systems to manage students' behaviour work very well and expectations about how they should behave are clear. Most students behave well outside the classroom and there is a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Students complained about bullying. On investigation, it was found that some bullying does occur but it is not widespread. For example, a significant number of boys and girls show off and make offensive remarks; a small number of older students pick on younger ones. This behaviour is dealt with well when reported. There is no evidence of any racism. The exclusion rate is at an average level and is declining.

Ethnic background of students**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1370	84	5
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	8	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

15. The provision made for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Students' spiritual development is very good. A range of faiths is studied. Students readily empathise with others less fortunate than themselves and show compassion. During the inspection, a period of silence was observed to commemorate the victims of the recent bombings in Madrid. Students, parents and friends have contributed to trees and a memorial garden to commemorate recent deaths of members of the school. The school has managed these tragedies sensitively and with dignity. A competition has led to the selection of a Year 8 student's inscription for a commemorative garden seat to read, ' Sit with me, and let the star you have made shine with me forever', in memory of her closest friend. Departments promote spirituality through the curriculum and students grow and flourish. Emotive and sensitively performed dance themes, and work displayed in mathematics, inspire thought and reflection. Leadership believes that students are entitled to spirituality and the need to understand one another's feelings and emotions on both an individual and a global scale. A plain, quiet room is set aside as a private area for counselling and reflection. Students and teachers remove their shoes on entry. Regular assemblies are held, but the school accepts it does not provide a daily act of corporate worship for everyone because there are too few suitable venues.
16. Students' moral development is very good. They understand the difference between right and wrong. Moral issues feature strongly in historical re-enactments and comparisons between the more and less economically developed regions of the world. Students take responsibility and care for other people's property. Teachers share this trust. Students discuss maturely moral and ethical issues such as crime, punishment and prejudice. Environmental conservation is well practised and there are collection bins in the recreation areas.
17. Social development is very good. Students know what is expected of them and work in a calm and positive environment. They take a pride in their school. Most students frequently work very well together in small groups or pairs. Relationships are very good. Students show a respect for students from minority ethnic backgrounds and friendships among students from different racial groups are common. Discussions in class, in the restaurant and elsewhere are often vibrant. The school encourages students to take responsibility for the organisation of activities and charitable events. Many do so very well. Students value their time in a happy, caring and well-ordered community, which offers so many rich opportunities for their development. Students and staff welcome members of the local community into the school on a regular basis, particularly to attend performances in the Terry O'Toole Theatre. The school council is

at an early stage of development but year councils raise sensitive issues and improvements. Groups from the community and from the school work together very well - for example, to enhance the environment with areas in which to relax, seating, plants and symbolic totem poles. Year 11 students' social activities are recorded in an annual Year Book.

18. Students' cultural development is good and has some very good features. Students are interested and participate fully in artistic and cultural experiences. A significant number of students learn from instrumental tuition in music and interpretations in dance are very sensitive. The extensive programme of school visits within Britain and Europe provide worthwhile experiences. One group is preparing to visit Mongolia. Outside speakers and representatives from the prison service and the Travelling community increase students' awareness of cultural differences. Many subjects emphasise inter-cultural awareness and provide learning opportunities to inform students of contrasting societies. Displays of students' work enlighten most areas of the school. There are large-scale murals painted by outside artists to encourage students to learn about different faiths and cultures.
19. Overall, since the last inspection, students' attitudes and behaviour and the very good ethos of the school have been maintained well.

Sixth form

20. Students' attendance is good and is carefully monitored by the school. Punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory when some students who travel from the partner sixth form arrive, in some cases, up to 15 minutes late, and delay the start of the lesson. Students' attitudes to school and to work are very good. They behave maturely and very well. Students confirmed how much they enjoy being treated as adults and trusted to use their private study time well.
21. Although students want and need a more structured programme to enrich their personal development, some are pleased to accept responsibility and several are trained as counsellors. They provide support to students who are experiencing difficulties or are being bullied. The school provides training for them to carry out this role effectively. Students regularly run charity events in support of local and national organisations. Students from the neighbouring sixth form merge well into teaching groups and take an equal part in the close partnership for learning that develops with teachers.
22. Some courses provide students with an understanding of social issues – for example, delinquency, genetic engineering and the connection between religion and race. However, there is little spiritual provision and, as students are not receiving their entitlement to religious education, opportunities for spiritual development are lost.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Students receive, overall, a **good** quality of education throughout the school. Provision for their care, welfare, health and safety, and the links with other schools, colleges and the local community, are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school. The assessment of students' work is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching equally meets the needs of girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds and enables all to learn successfully.
- Teachers have very good subject expertise and use it effectively in the classroom.
- Teachers expect students to behave well and they do so in almost all lessons.

- The assessment and marking of students' work are good but, in some subjects, students are not always made aware of the best means to reach their targets.

Commentary

23. The teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11. There was little difference in the quality of teaching between that in Years 7 to 9 and that in Years 10 and 11. The teaching equally meets well the needs of girls and boys of differing competence from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Consequently, they learn and achieve well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 214 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6 (3%)	55 (26%)	108 (51%)	44 (21%)	1 (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 across Years 7 to 13; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen. (The percentage figures are rounded.)

24. At the last inspection, teaching was generally good. It remains so, but there is now considerably more teaching of very good and excellent quality. In Years 7 to 11, more than one lesson in four was of very good or excellent quality. Three-quarters of the lessons seen were of at least good quality. A particular strength is teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. This enables them to plan their lesson effectively and to help students to enhance their learning very well by acquiring subject skills and techniques, especially in the performing arts. Teachers also manage their classes very well because, in most situations, very good relationships give students confidence in the teacher and, consequently, their learning is made more secure. Students' very positive attitudes to learning are a response to the good teaching, and they largely enjoy the learning that teachers provide.
25. The teaching of literacy is good and students speak and listen particularly well as a result. Numeracy is also well taught and students apply this skill across the curriculum with confidence.
26. The teaching across the curriculum is remarkably consistent and of, overall, good quality. In dance and drama, teaching and learning are very good. Two lessons in dance were excellent. Students were highly motivated and inspired by outstanding teaching to strive for accuracy in their movements to achieve the highest standards. History is very well taught. For example, all Year 9 students researched slavery and human rights and debated arguments for and against the slave trade with enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility. A lively House of Commons debate was managed very well on the subject by the teacher in role as Speaker of the House. The enthusiastic response of the students to this innovative teaching ensured good achievement and above average standards.
27. Good teaching of students with special educational needs enables them to learn and to achieve well. Teachers from the learning support department guide very well the work of small groups of students or individuals with more severe learning difficulties. They base their teaching on precise prior assessment of students' needs and plan a very good variety of activities that they teach with enthusiasm and pace. Their high expectations of the standards that students can reach and students' positive attitudes lead to very good achievement in these lessons. Subject teachers are well aware of these students' needs. They usually plan carefully with learning support assistants. As a result, assistants provide effective, sensitive support for students who have a wide range of needs, and enable them to participate fully in lessons.
28. The quality of assessment of students' work is good. In general, the marking of work is thorough and accurate. Students receive clear indication of the levels at which they are working. For example, in science, students are provided with informative assessment sheets which match their current attainment to national criteria. This system of assessment provides

them with opportunities for self-assessment and for taking responsibility for their own progress towards their targets. However, in many subjects, there is insufficient guidance given to students on how to reach their short-term targets for improvement. Marking requirements in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 are not coordinated well enough. Nevertheless, despite some unnecessary variation in subject practice, there has been good improvement in teachers' use of assessment since the last inspection, and this is contributing to the raising of standards.

Sixth form

29. The teaching and learning in the sixth form are good, and much is very good. Three out of every four lessons in Years 12 and 13 were of good quality. One in four lessons was very good or excellent. The teaching and learning in the visual and performing arts subjects were consistently very good. Design and technology and history were also very well taught and students learned very successfully in these subjects and made very good progress. In mathematics and human biology, teachers did not ensure that students took enough responsibility for their own learning; students often remained too dependent on the teacher.

Example of outstanding practice

In a Year 12 BTEC National Diploma drama lesson, as part of performing arts, students learned how performers manage their emotions during a performance. The teacher led the session and illustrated the importance of the control of emotion during performance. After a very thorough warm-up, high levels of frank and open discussion by the students focused on what made them angry. They were given time to reflect on anger while well-chosen music was played. The teacher then supported the students individually as they expressed their anger through movement and gesture in rapt concentration. Each student wrote a speech to express the anger. They performed to each other in pairs – in role as actor or director – to evaluate their performances and to suggest how they might be improved. There was outstanding commitment and trust between teacher and students. Very difficult ideas were taught and caught in an inspiring and highly effective way to produce exceptional results in performance.

30. Teachers enable students with special educational needs to learn very well. Subject teachers and support staff work very well together to ensure that students achieve very well, but do not become over dependent upon the available support.
31. The assessment of students' work is good. Students are aware of their target grades. Regular, detailed marking and monitoring of progress give students a clear assessment of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Marking is very effective in, for example, design and technology and in music technology, where it provides an especially effective support for learning. Outstanding assessment was seen in work in dance and in theatre studies, where the feedback to students contained extensive developmental points from teachers, and often involved students' self-assessment.

The curriculum

Curricular provision in the main school is **unsatisfactory** because of omissions in statutory requirements. The sixth form curriculum is **good**. **Very good** opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment of learning are available for students in the main school, but sixth form students have insufficient opportunities for personal development beyond their main courses. The accommodation and learning resources are **very good**, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the main school, students do not receive their full statutory entitlement to religious education, or to ICT, and their achievement in these subjects is adversely affected.
- Learning opportunities in the performing arts are exceptional throughout the school.
- Curricular provision for mathematics is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Alternative curricular provision for students in Years 10 and 11 for whom mainstream courses are not always appropriate is very good.

- Careers education and guidance are of very good quality.
- Overall, the curriculum for students with special educational needs is very good.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are very good in the main school, but sixth form students lack enough opportunities for personal development through curricular enrichment outside their main courses, religious education and collective worship.
- The range of advanced courses in the sixth form is excellent, but provision of intermediate vocational courses is not adequate to meet all needs.
- The accommodation is very good and learning resources are of good quality.

Commentary

32. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because students do not receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum subject of ICT in Years 8 and 9, nor do they receive their entitlement to an act of collective worship every day. In other respects, provision has many strengths. All students follow courses in drama and in dance, in addition to the National Curriculum subjects, other than ICT, and to religious education. Provision in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because the teaching of many classes is shared between more than one teacher, and there is not enough lesson time for the subject in Year 7. Consequently, students do not achieve well enough, or reach the standards that they should, in Year 9 National Curriculum tests.
33. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is unsatisfactory in its omission of ICT for most students, and insufficient provision of religious education and collective worship. Otherwise, the good range of GCSE examination courses available is extended by 'twilight' classes after the end of the school day. These enable students to study an extra subject. Students can choose to take three science courses. An unusually wide range of options in art and design, business, and design and technology is provided. There is especially good provision for the performing arts, both in mainstream lessons and in 'twilight' classes.
34. The personal, social and health education courses for students in Years 7 to 11 include all essential requirements. There is awareness of life in a culturally diverse society, and race equality is among the topics included. Provision for careers education and guidance is very good, from Years 7 to 11. Arrangements for advising students in Year 9 on their GCSE options are exceptionally good. All students have a week of work experience in Year 10, which involves application, interview and evaluation of the experience.
35. Provision for students with special educational needs is very good. The school provides a very good mix of support in lessons and withdrawal for the teaching of small groups in the learning support department. Links with a local special school and further education college provide very good opportunities for several students for whom mainstream GCSE examination courses are not suitable. A lunchtime and after-school homework club enables students to benefit further from excellent help from learning support staff. However, there is not enough support available in Year 7. Most extra help for students with difficulties from dyslexia begins in Year 8 and this prevents students from achieving as well as they might in Year 7. Only in this respect has provision not improved enough since the last inspection.
36. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are very good, and outstanding in the visual and performing arts. Students benefit from a wide range of visits and field trips, especially for history. They participate well in sport. There is very effective support for learning outside the regular timetable.
37. Staffing is good and well matched to curricular needs in most subjects. However, difficulties in ensuring continuity of experienced specialist staff in mathematics and ICT has adversely affected achievement in these subjects.
38. Overall, the accommodation is very good and has improved since the last inspection. In media and drama, accommodation is excellent. In nearly all other departments, provision is very

good. Classrooms are not all well grouped in some subjects – for example, in science and geography. Access for those with physical impairments is of a high standard. Some laboratories have been very well refurbished and one has excellent access for the physically impaired. The three that have not been improved lack sufficient gas and water supply and when it rains, certain experiments involving electricity are suspended because of health and safety concerns. This disrupts students' learning.

39. Most subjects are well supplied with learning resources of good quality. However, the stock of books in religious education and geography are not up to date and in business studies, the supply of texts is barely satisfactory. In physical education, the equipment is of good quality and enhances students' learning well. Although design and technology is well equipped overall, CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) is lacking for work in this subject. ICT resources are sufficient to allow students to enhance their learning well. The computers in the resource centre are regularly reserved for use by subject departments.
40. Overall, the curriculum has many good, and some very good, qualities. However, the statutory omissions concerning ICT, religious education and the daily act of collective worship, all of which were key issues for improvement at the last two inspections, make curricular improvement since 1999 unsatisfactory.

Sixth form

41. The school provides an exceptional range of advanced courses jointly with a neighbouring school. The provision for the visual and performing arts is outstanding. For example, there are popular AS and A-level courses in dance, theatre studies, art and design, and music, as well as advanced vocational courses in performing arts and music technology. The theatre studies course is of excellent quality, and a substantial proportion of students continue to study arts subjects in higher education. Almost all students complete the sixth form courses they embark upon.
42. By contrast, the range of intermediate vocational courses is restricted. The minority of students pursuing intermediate vocational interests in the sixth form too often find themselves on courses which do not meet their needs and interests.
43. Some subjects provide valuable enrichment of the curriculum. For example, art and design has visits to galleries and a weekly life class. Theatre studies students have a residential week in London and enjoy opportunities for public performance. In some subjects, for example, biology and history, field trips are key features of the courses. Business studies students run Young Enterprise projects. However, the core studies programme is insufficient to provide adequately for students' personal development; there is no centrally organised and planned enrichment programme. There is no programme of personal, social and health education for the sixth form, as there is in the main school. Key Skills are not formally taught. Students have no timetabled opportunity for leisure and physical recreation, and access to the local facilities is expensive. They do not receive their statutory entitlement to religious education. A restricted number of students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, in the Millennium Volunteers project, and help younger students in class. However, provision of careers guidance and preparation for higher education are very good and rated highly by students.
44. The sixth form benefits from experienced specialists in all subjects and this has an especially positive impact on standards in history, music, art and design, and the performing arts. The accommodation used exclusively by the sixth form is very good and furnished to a very high quality. Students have convenient access to learning resources of good quality. However, textbooks in geography are not up to date. ICT resources are good and sufficient to allow students to enhance their learning in all subjects and are available for use in private study time.

Care, guidance and support

The care that the school takes of students is **very good**. Advice and guidance for students based on monitoring of their academic and personal development is **satisfactory**. Students' views are effectively canvassed and form part of the process of school improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements to ensure students' welfare, health and safety are very good.
- The care and support given by heads of year and tutors are very good; students are very well looked after in a highly supportive environment.
- The tracking system for personal development is excellent and identifies concerns that are quickly dealt with.
- The academic support and guidance to raise standards is inconsistent.

Commentary

45. The school provides very well for students' care, welfare and health and safety. Students praise staff for the help and support that they get. Heads of year and tutors are very well informed about students in their care. They actively monitor students individually and support them very effectively. Record keeping for all aspects of personal development is meticulous. Students maintain their learning despite personal difficulties because of the very good support that they receive.
46. The arrangements for students in public care are very good and all requirements are fully met. The procedures for child protection are very good. The school reports all concerns about child protection very promptly, but it does not get enough information in return from the agencies involved. Students receive very good care and attention when they are hurt at school. Students' medical conditions are well known and well provided for. Routine checking systems and risk assessments for health and safety are carried out thoroughly and regularly and record-keeping is meticulous. The security arrangements, including Internet security, are good.
47. Advice and guidance to students on their academic progress is satisfactory. Improved assessment procedures and target setting since the last inspection generally provide students with a clear picture of their progress within the school. However, students' targets are not amended in light of their progress. For example, the National Curriculum levels expected may differ from students' targets because these may be set well in advance of the point of assessment. Reports to parents contain clear data on students' levels of attainment and their predicted grade. However, they do not contain individual subject targets nor is there always indication of what students have achieved in all subjects or what they need to do to improve. Students are very clear in some subjects how well they are achieving – for example, in dance, art and design, and science. In other subjects, they lack clear understanding of the means by which they can improve to reach the National Curriculum levels predicted. The 11 grades for effort cause confusion and neither students nor parents fully understand them.
48. The impartial advice for transfer into the sixth form, further education or employment is very good. The induction arrangements within the school are good and help students to settle quickly and happily. However, there are no shared induction arrangements to the joint sixth form provision with the neighbouring school.
49. The school consults students, listens to them and responds well to their views. It has recently commissioned a questionnaire and intends to repeat this process regularly. There are year-group councils which effectively convey students' views to senior management. The ECO committee, that is concerned to improve the school environment, is a response to a students' initiative.

Sixth form

50. Students receive good academic advice and guidance. However, students say how much they miss the security of the close relationships they developed with tutors in the main school; daily meetings with tutors are not scheduled. The timetabled 'core lessons' are very helpful and provide very good support and guidance for higher education choices and careers. The school listens to students' views, which are given to senior staff on behalf of the sixth form by the head girl and head boy. There is no committee to present students' views. Overall, the arrangements for consulting students are satisfactory.
51. Students receive good academic support. The assessment system provides them with targets to be attained. These are based upon point-score predictions arising from GCSE examination results. Students' performance on courses is monitored closely by regular reviews of progress against their targets. They are aware of how well they are doing and they have a clear understanding of the criteria required by the examinations that they are to take.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**; links with other schools and colleges are **very good**. There are **excellent** links with the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parental satisfaction and confidence are strong; the school is held in high regard locally.
- Links with the 'family' of schools and other local schools are very good.
- Community links are excellent and enrich learning across the main school curriculum.
- Parents lack enough information on how their children are performing and how they can support them.

Commentary

52. Links with parents are good. The school welcomes their involvement and works effectively with them. Parents' support for school activities is very good, especially in performances of the performing arts and events run by the Friends of the School. There is contact between parents and heads of year and tutors as necessary. Home and school usually work well together to support students. Parents are consulted formally and informally and their views influence developments.
53. The special needs co-ordinator keeps parents well informed about the work that their children are doing. The school has recently obtained extra funding to inform parents about ways of helping dyslexic children. Very good links with the local special school result in very good, additional opportunities for children from both schools to learn together.
54. In a recent questionnaire, parents raised concerns about communication. The annual school report is inconsistent in quality and unsatisfactory when little more than one sentence is provided to indicate a student's level of performance and what should be done to improve. Predicted levels to be attained in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests are confusing to parents and students, when these levels are exceeded and not amended. Consequently, it is unclear what the student is then expected to attain. Year 8 parents do not have a scheduled opportunity to consult with subject teachers. Although effort grades from the 11-grade structure and National Curriculum predicted levels are conveyed to parents, the best means for students to raise their performance are not made clear.
55. Links with contributory primary schools are very good and ensure smooth transfer at age 11. Links with a special school bring mutual benefits to students' learning. Links with the local college and university and other local schools are very good and extend the curriculum.
56. Excellent links with the community enhance students' opportunities for learning. Sponsorship from business and many endorsements from the community indicate an outstanding

partnership. For example, the school has brought theatre, music and dance to the community and runs the excellent facility of the Terry O'Toole theatre. The 'Arts at Lincoln Castle' spectacular was initially begun and run by the school and has now become an annual community event. The school's specialist expertise in the performing arts is shared generously with the community. User groups include Youth Dance, Imp Theatre Group and several musical groups. Students share use of the leisure centre with the community. The shared community grief and response of funding a memorial garden when the school suffered tragedy and loss in recent times show a school very much at the heart of its community.

Sixth form

57. Links with other schools and colleges are good. The successful long-standing partnership with a neighbouring school provides students with an outstanding range of advanced courses. However, liaison could be further extended, for example, in providing joint arrangements for curricular enrichment and students' personal development. Some links with the community are very good, and practical and vocational subjects use local resources to improve coursework. Overall, community links for the sixth form are satisfactory. Few students undertake community service.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **good** overall in the main school and in the sixth form. Management is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher has taken the school forward as a specialist in the performing arts very well.
- The governors contribute well, but their leadership is unsatisfactory because they do not meet all statutory requirements for the curriculum.
- Management is satisfactory, but the management of the joint sixth form provision should be more rigorous.

Commentary

58. The school's leadership is good, overall. The clear vision of leadership reported at the time of the 1999 inspection remains. However, governance is unsatisfactory in the respect that it does not meet all statutory requirements. Students do not receive the opportunity for an act of collective worship each day. However, governors have consulted widely on this matter, and they have done all that might reasonably be expected of them to ensure that the statutory requirement is met. Governors do not provide all students with their statutory right to religious education in Years 10 and 11, or to ICT in the main school. These were key issues for improvement at the last inspection and at the inspection prior to that. Consequently, in respect of these matters, governance is unsatisfactory. In other respects, the governors lead the school well. They inform themselves well and monitor the standards and quality of education that the students receive. They are sufficiently well informed to question and challenge the recommendations and actions of the management. Governors led the school into Grant Maintained status and gained considerable improvements to the accommodation and resources from this situation and from sponsorship. Students and staff continue to enjoy the material benefits. Governors have also had the challenge of returning to funding by the local authority, and they are dealing with the accompanying difficulties as well as possible. They are very supportive of the headteacher and the school, and work very hard in its interest.
59. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The occasion of his appointment in 2000 followed the sudden and unexpected death of his predecessor; latterly, other staff and students have died equally unexpectedly. Parents express their appreciation of how well the headteacher has led the school sensitively through these emotional shocks and helped it to move forward. His vision and direction have been very effective in enabling the school to

realise the benefits of Performing Arts status. Creative teaching and learning take place of the highest quality, to which he personally contributes. Many other initiatives have been successfully pursued. The school has gained Investor in People status; it holds the Artsmark and Careersmark for aspects of its work. Latterly, the teaching staff has been reduced because of financial constraints, but staff morale remains high. The leadership group has been reduced in number, but teamwork is good. The headteacher ensures that all students equally receive the best quality of education possible to meet their needs and he is determined that the school will reach the challenging academic targets that he and the governors set.

60. The new leadership group is effective and works very well with the headteacher. There is very good teamwork and all have the confidence to express their views robustly. Commitment and loyalty to the school and the team are evident. Subject leadership is good overall, and very good in several subjects, including in religious education, despite the statutory breach in its provision. No subject is unsatisfactorily led; a permanent appointment to the leadership of mathematics is awaited. The heads of year work closely with senior staff and lead their tutor teams well.
61. Leadership and management of the school's provision for special educational needs are very good. The special needs co-ordinator manages a large team of support teachers and assistants very efficiently. Support staff work tirelessly as a very good team, committed to helping students with learning difficulties to succeed.
62. The management is satisfactory and there are some good features to its work. It enables students of differing competence and from all ethnic and social backgrounds to receive a good quality of education, overall. Performance management and other monitoring of teaching and learning ensure that these are of good quality and that students achieve well. Management's response to the key issue of the last inspection to improve assessment in the school is very good. The awareness of staff and their skills in assessing students' attainment have improved. There is better use of examination and test data for target setting, and analysis of performance is developing greater awareness of the impact of different teaching strategies and approaches. Senior management is aware of the need for further development and is currently producing a more integrated system which will provide for subject differences.
63. However, management recognises that standards in mathematics in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests and in the attainment of five or more grades A* to C in GCSE examinations have to be raised if the school is to reach its own targets. Although management has monitored lessons in mathematics, it has not overcome the underperformance of the subject in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests; the subject lacks enough time for lessons in Year 7 for students to reach the standards that they should. Many classes are taught by more than one teacher in this subject, a situation unhelpful to the continuity of students' learning. The school is in transition in its development planning. Indicators to measure performance are not clearly defined; time scales are uncertain; and resource implications are not clarified enough to enable management to evaluate the school's relative success in achieving the objectives that it sets itself. Consequently, evaluation of improvement across the range of the school's work is not precise enough for the governors or leadership group to determine whether objectives should be carried forward.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	4,767,522
Total expenditure	4,840,773
Expenditure per student	3,397

Balance from previous year	-379,519
Balance carried forward to the next	-390,927

64. The school has a budgetary deficit arising from the ending of Grant Maintained funding and the return to funding by the local authority. The school's income is now well below the average national level of school funding, whereas at the last inspection its income was a little above average. Governors and senior management are managing the situation as well as possible. Procedures are rigorous and the school is monitored very closely by the local authority in its progress towards a balanced budget in the projected two years. In this very difficult situation, brought about by circumstances outside the control of the school, it has been very successful in winning the support of sponsors. For example, it has benefited from substantial sponsorship as a specialist Performing Arts school, and the quality of education and the standards achieved in arts subjects are repaying that investment exceptionally well. Funding for students with special educational needs is used very well and this is shown by their very good achievement. Overall, the school applies best-value principles well. It draws close *comparison* between its performance and that of other schools and, although results compare generally well, it is ambitious to raise standards further. The teaching, the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities are good and provide good *challenge* for students to learn well. The school *consults* very well with its partners in the community, and parents' and students' views have recently been elicited from a commercially commissioned questionnaire. Its financial systems are very well administered and ensure *competition* and best value for the services that are purchased. Overall, the school is effective in providing a good quality of education which enables students to achieve well. It gives good value for money.

Sixth form

65. The leadership of the sixth form by the headteacher and senior staff is good within the context of the school itself. Parents and students have confidence in the quality of education that the school gives them, and the numbers of students attending the sixth form have increased since the last inspection. Governors do not provide students with their statutory entitlement to religious education, a statutory omission at the last inspection.
66. The day-to-day management of the sixth form on site is efficient. The education provided is cost effective. Students' attendance is closely monitored. The school's response to the key issue of the last inspection to improve assessment procedures is good. Departments make good use of assessment data for target setting. The majority of departments use data very well to develop their courses and provide better learning opportunities for students. The use of form tutors to monitor and collate information on students' progress gives the head of sixth form a clear view of the individual performance of each student.
67. Although there is good rapport between the school and its neighbour with which it shares provision of courses, the joint provision has weaknesses. The combined resources of the two schools provide students with an excellent range of advanced courses from which to choose. However, the direction and oversight of joint practice are insufficient. Governors have neither a committee nor a governor to liaise with the other school and there is a lack of planning and direction from the governing body, which currently leaves all matters to management. The sixth form has increased in size, and the relative costs and benefits arising from the joint provision are uncertain. Many more students from the partner school take up places on courses taught at the North Kesteven Sixth Form, than vice versa. The budget deficit makes the need to ensure a fair balance of costs and benefits even more acute. Management does not ensure a common induction for students and common criteria for admission to shared courses are not applied. There is no monitoring by management of the provision received by students off-site. Some subject departments that have joint teaching work closely with their partners in the other

school – for example, in physical education. Where there is no shared teaching, there is little professional collaboration.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

All references throughout the report to 'average', 'above average' or 'below average' are comparisons with national standards.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well throughout the school.
- Improvement since the last inspection is very good.
- Very good leadership and management are raising standards.
- Standards attained by the most competent students in Year 11 should be higher.

Commentary

68. Standards in the Year 9 2002 National Curriculum tests were below average compared with all schools, and well below average when compared with similar schools. They were well above average in 2003 when compared with both all schools and with similar schools. However, the percentage of grades A*, A and B was below average in both English and English literature.
69. Standards of work seen were above those typical of most Year 9 students nationally. Standards were typical of those of most Year 11 students nationally. Students' speaking skills are above average because of frequent opportunities in lessons to discuss, debate, explore and develop ideas. However, students' skills of listening, particularly among lower and middle-attaining boys in Years 7 to 9, are less strong. The emphasis on developing students' capacity to manage written exercises in comprehension enables them to develop their deductive and inferential skills well and to reach above average standards in Year 9. In all year groups, creative writing is often lively and entertaining. However, some critical writing, especially in literature studies as part of the GCSE examination course, tends to be descriptive rather than analytical. The most competent Year 11 students write cogently and accurately; the less competent have difficulty sustaining an argument and their vocabulary, punctuation and spelling are below average.
70. Students from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Recently rewritten schemes of work for teachers carefully identify how students can achieve higher standards. Students' good achievement is further helped by their positive attitudes and desire to succeed. All students use computers to improve their writing, research and presentation. Opportunities to enrich and develop their learning, through activities such as booster classes, paired reading, theatre visits and public-speaking competitions are very good. The support given to students with statements of special educational need is very good and enables them to achieve very well. New texts and tasks are helping to raise boys' achievement, and lunchtime classes are further boosting their attainment in Year 11.
71. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teachers use information from tests and assessment in anticipation of the GCSE examination to plan lessons effectively and to ensure that their students aim high. In the best lessons, there is considerable challenge, whilst independence is fostered through giving students choices in their ways of working. The few less successful lessons are too closely directed by teachers and students' views are not sought. Consequently, students are not fully involved in managing their own learning. However, teachers provide regular opportunities for students' self-evaluation and personal action planning. Marking is very good.

72. Leadership and management are very good. Planning for departmental improvement, and the use of performance data to set targets for individual students and for the department, are very good. The head of department has a clear vision for the future. She has taken firm and effective action to deal with underachievement and is an excellent role model for colleagues. The hard work and commitment of this team of specialists is impressive. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Standards at the end of Year 9, particularly those of higher attaining students, and boys in general, have improved, as have teaching, management and the tracking of students' progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. Overall, standards of literacy are above average in Year 9 and average in Year 11. Students achieve well. Their speaking and listening skills are stronger than those in reading and writing. There are frequent opportunities for group and class discussions. Evaluation in most lessons helps students to become confident speakers. Students write in a good range of styles which include, for example, creative approaches in history and science. Structured questions guide their responses to enable them to develop their extended writing and attain overall average standards by Year 11. Only the lowest-attaining students have difficulty with sentence construction. However, many students have difficulties with spelling and choice of vocabulary. The English department encourages reading for pleasure and develops students' comprehension of their reading well. However, many students, particularly in Year 11, tend to describe rather than analyse evidence and, as a result, they are not attaining higher standards.
74. The students who need it receive additional literacy support in Years 7 and 8. There are reading sessions for small groups of students and progress units in literacy are used to help students at National Curriculum Level 3 move up to Level 4 (which is the level expected at age 11). Literacy is planned by departments and they follow the national guidelines. Subject-specialist vocabulary is well taught. However, the overall implementation of the National Strategy to improve literacy is not yet rigorous enough. Not all heads of subject monitor the effectiveness of the teaching of literacy. There is some whole-school inconsistency in correcting spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Time in tutor groups in the mornings is not used for planned development of literacy. The learning resource centre and its staff are not yet directly involved in supporting and promoting literacy across the curriculum.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in French in GCSE examinations is very good.
- Modern foreign languages are unpopular with students.
- Leadership of the department is good.
- Teaching is good, but monitoring of classroom practice is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

75. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above average in French and average in German. Performance in both subjects improved in 2002 and there was further improvement in French in 2003. Boys achieved especially well in French. However, few A* or A grades have been attained in recent years. A few students have taken Spanish in recent years and they have achieved well. There was little opportunity to observe Spanish during the inspection.
76. Current Year 7 beginners in German and French have made a promising start. They are achieving well. By Year 9, standards in both languages are typical of those found nationally at

this age. Students from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well, overall. They have good listening and speaking skills. Some lower-attaining students underachieve. Many students' written presentation often shows lack of pride in their work. Much work is inaccurate. However, students with special educational needs achieve well. Behaviour is generally good, but some Year 9 students lack interest and commitment.

77. In Years 10 and 11, students from all social and ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Standards are above what might reasonably be expected in both languages. Students express their own ideas creatively. They understand the foreign language well and have good knowledge of vocabulary.
78. Teaching and learning are good in both languages, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan well and have very good subject knowledge. They use support materials well to enable students to be creative. They promote independent and co-operative learning effectively by enabling students to work in pairs and in small groups. However, teachers do not always match work well enough to the needs of all students. Teaching is thorough, but in some lessons, activities are dull. Teachers are good linguists and use the foreign language extensively. However, English is often used unnecessarily for routine communication.
79. The department is well led, with good vision. Management is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are effective, but monitoring of classroom practice is not rigorous enough. The questionnaire completed by students indicates that modern foreign languages are among the subjects that they enjoy least. Three-quarters of the students in Year 10 chose not to study a modern foreign language. The department also provides the opportunity for students to take a course in Italian in Year 8. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; the team of committed teachers has the capacity to ensure further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations is below that of similar schools and, over time, achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good overall and provides students with effective methods for presenting solutions.
- Staffing is insufficient. Almost half the classes in Years 7 to 9 have more than one mathematics teacher and this adversely affects students' continuity of learning and the impact of good teaching.
- Lesson time for mathematics is below what is needed in Year 7 for teachers to be able to ensure that students achieve what they should, or to enrich and extend the learning of the most competent students.
- Improvement since the last inspection was unsatisfactory until September 2003; there has been insufficient response to national initiatives to improve learning in mathematics.

Commentary

80. Results in the 2003 Year 9 National Curriculum tests were at the national average. Boys have slightly outperformed girls in the last three years in the tests, but not to an extent that varies greatly from the national difference in performance. Mathematics results were below those that students gained in English and science, and well below those gained by students in the subject in similar schools. The 2003 GCSE examination results were average, but below those of similar schools; this represents underachievement for many students. Results have remained at the same level in recent years.
81. Overall, students do not achieve well enough by the ends of Years 9 and 11. However, the work that was seen during the inspection was of the standard expected nationally. Students,

including those with special educational needs, achieved well in many lessons because the teaching was good. The quality of students' work reflects their good attitudes. Their exercise books often contain a high quality of graphic work and mathematically rigorous solutions. Nevertheless, over time, many students are falling short of the grades predicted for them to reach in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests and in GCSE examinations. This is because so many classes are taught by more than one teacher, and this adversely affects the continuity of students' learning and the standards that they reach in examinations. The issue of insufficient lesson time for the subject in Year 7, an issue of the last inspection, has not been resolved. Consequently, students do not have enough experience of the subject to make the progress that they should. Although there is no difference in the achievement of girls and boys from different ethnic or social backgrounds, those gifted in mathematics do not achieve as well as they should because there is not enough lesson time to enrich their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

82. Teaching is good in all years. However, the styles of teaching do not provide the variety of learning experiences required by different students, especially the most competent. This prevents students from making more rapid progress. The national initiative for the teaching of mathematics in Years 7 to 9 is not yet embedded in teachers' planning of work. Many lessons are very closely directed by teachers, and this restricts more active participation by the students. The use of ICT is underdeveloped and is not part of all students' experience of learning. Assessment is accurate and diagnostic but does not provide short-term targets to enable students to improve their learning. However, all students understand their levels of attainment and know what grades are predicted for them.
83. The acting head of department has provided good interim management of the subject. She is managing the administrative and assessment systems effectively and leading the development of new ICT resources. She is well supported by an effective team of teachers. However, the use of the National Strategy for improvement in the use of mathematics in Years 7 to 9 is not as well developed as it should be; the variety of teaching styles needed for students to develop their skills to the full have yet to be developed. Improvement since the last inspection was unsatisfactory until September 2003. The school is aware of what should be improved and is working hard to reduce the negative impact on learning of weaknesses in provision. Very good accommodation provides a very stimulating learning environment.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. In 2001, there was a whole-school review on the use of mathematics in all subjects. Since the appointment of a numeracy co-ordinator in 2003, all subject areas contribute satisfactorily to students' mathematical skills, where appropriate. Students' mathematics skills are at the standard expected nationally and provide good support for their learning across the curriculum. For example, numerical skills are used well in cash-flow calculations during business studies lessons. Science lessons make a good contribution to the development of graphic skills and data analysis. In design and technology lessons, students competently use a variety of measurements of weight, length and time. Geography lessons provide good practice in developing scale drawing and graphical representation of data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 7 to 9 has improved, but standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests are below those of similar schools.
- Students are taught well and receive very good support in learning.
- The head of science leads the department very well.
- Accommodation and resources have much improved since the last inspection, although some aspects of the accommodation remain unsatisfactory.

Commentary

85. Students' standards in science by the end of Year 9 are in line with those expected nationally. Girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds, including students with special educational needs, make sufficient progress to achieve satisfactorily by Year 9. The most competent students in Years 7 to 9 achieve well. In Year 9, for example, they apply their computing skills well to estimate the effects of different circumstances in an investigation on water pressure; they apply their mathematical skills well to analyse the resulting data. Students of average and lower competence achieve satisfactorily. They can describe the work they are doing, but have difficulty explaining, analysing and evaluating it. Although students reached standards above the national average in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2003 and 2002, results were below those gained in similar schools. Not enough students achieved National Curriculum Level 6 and standards in the tests should be higher. In 2003, students' science results in the tests were above those that they gained in mathematics but lower than in English.
86. By the end of Year 11, students' achievement is satisfactory. They reach the standards expected nationally. Except for a small minority in Year 11, students have positive attitudes. Students who study three science subjects willingly attend lessons after the end of the timetabled school day and achieve well. In 2003, results in the GCSE examination in double science were average; in single science, results were very high. There are no comparative data for results in the three sciences yet. All but one student studying this course attained A* to C grades in the three subjects in the 2003 examination.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Effective teaching by subject specialists, technical support, very effective assessment procedures and students' own mature approach to learning promote good achievement in most lessons. Higher attaining Year 7 students, for example, learn very well how to investigate diffusion in liquids at different temperatures. Their excellent response to very good teaching by subject specialists helps them to reflect on and to explain abstract ideas effectively. They work safely and well together; they design their own methods of recording findings from experiments. However, teachers do not plan enough for all students to develop these enquiry skills. Teachers' skills of questioning are not matched well enough to meet the full range of students' learning needs in each class.
88. The head of science leads and manages the department effectively. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have improved. The accommodation and resources have much improved, although laboratories in one area remain unsatisfactory. The amount of technical support has improved, but it is not generous because the subject is taught in different locations in the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the ends of Years 9 and 11 are below expected national levels and students do not achieve well enough, overall.
- Statutory requirements are not met in Years 8 to 11; the subject is not taught to every student in these years.
- Good teaching of the students who take the GCSE examination course is beginning to raise standards.
- Too many non-specialist teachers of the subject in Year 7 do not always enable students to make good progress.
- The numbers and quality of computers and other equipment available are very good.

Commentary

89. The school does not meet the statutory requirements for ICT in Years 8 to 11. The subject is only formally taught to Year 7 students and to the minority who follow an examination course in Years 10 and 11.
90. Overall, standards of most students are below those expected nationally by the ends of Years 9 and 11. Statutory requirements are not met and all students are not consistently taught the subject in Years 8 to 11. Consequently, they do not achieve what they should by Year 9. Most students do not follow an examination course in the subject in Years 10 and 11 and these students are not taught it in these years. Overall, therefore, achievement by the end of Year 11 for most students is unsatisfactory.
91. However, in Year 7, where the subject is taught, students reached the standards expected nationally in the work seen during the inspection. Students from all ethnic backgrounds achieved similar standards. Nevertheless, the National Curriculum subject assessments completed by teachers for Year 9 students in 2003 assessed standards as higher than those observed in the work seen. In some of this work, students' knowledge and skills were in line with national expectations; they were often competent in using ICT to enhance the presentation of their work. However, they did not fully understand how to use other applications of the subject well enough - for example, in use of spreadsheets to model everyday situations.
92. The standards of the work seen during the inspection of students who take the subject as an examination option in Years 10 and 11 were in line with national expectations. However, most students are not taught the subject in Years 10 and 11 and, consequently, lack the opportunity to achieve well enough in it. Students who follow an examination course use more advanced skills, but sometimes do not apply basic principles to more advanced situations. They create attractive presentations, but do not always understand the need to create a consistent style. The results of the 40 per cent of the year group who took the GCSE examination in 2003 were well below the national average in the attainment of grades A* to C, but average in attainment of grades A* to G.
93. Teaching and learning in Year 7 are satisfactory, and good in Years 10 and 11. Students from all ethnic backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, extend their ICT knowledge and skills in well planned lessons and are keen to learn. However, in Year 7, tasks are often not explained sufficiently to ensure that students know what to do to improve. Many changes of teachers and many non-specialist teachers have had an adverse impact on students' learning. In Years 10 and 11, lessons for the students following the examination course are planned well so that they learn effectively. They are aware of the criteria required by the GCSE examination and participate well in assessing each other's work. Individual learning is well encouraged. However, most students do not benefit from this good teaching.
94. Although there are strengths in the running of the ICT department itself, the leadership and management of ICT overall are unsatisfactory. The management of the subject is divided and students' learning lacks coordination. There is no system to track and assess departmental contributions to provide for students' ICT experience. Improvement since the last inspection

has been unsatisfactory, because the statutory requirements for the provision of ICT required by that inspection have still not been met for most students. These requirements were not in place at the inspection prior to the last one. Procedures for performance management and the monitoring of teaching are not operative. Students do not have sufficient guidance in choosing the subject in Years 10 and 11. The very good resources are well managed by the technical team and offer greater opportunities to staff and students to use ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. There is wide use of ICT to enhance students' knowledge and skills in different subjects. A school survey of the use of ICT across the curriculum indicates some good examples. However, the survey cannot show that all students in Years 7 to 11 receive their statutory entitlement to all aspects of the subject as required by the National Curriculum. For example, control and measurement are not part of all students' curriculum.
96. The ratio of students to computers is more favourable than the national situation. The well provided learning resource centre of over 100 computers is well booked by subject departments. The range of activities is developing and students are often competent in using ICT to present coursework in Years 10 and 11. Students can select appropriate software and formats and, in some subjects, strengthen their subject knowledge well through use of ICT. For example, media studies students make very good use of digital cameras and software to edit and improve pictures. Similar techniques allow students in art and design to extend their understanding of how to manipulate different images. In history, students extend their knowledge of topics such as the voyages of Cortez by researching on the Internet and making attractive presentations. In design and technology, students explore design techniques and enhance presentation of coursework well. In science, all students learn how to use special devices to collect and analyse data to appreciate how sensors work. All units of work in English include ICT and provide opportunities for students to draft and re-draft their work. However, in mathematics, opportunities to explain mathematical procedures are not taken up, and spreadsheets are not used enough.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain lower standards in the GCSE examination in this subject than in most of the others that they take. Results were below the national average in 2003 and are not high enough.
- Teachers have very good command of the subject and plan their lessons well.
- The temporary leadership and management of the department are good.
- The departmental development plan does not indicate the way forward clearly enough.

Commentary

97. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were below average. Students do less well in geography than most other subjects. Girls attain better than boys, although the results for boys were higher in 2003. Similar results have been attained in other recent years.

98. Standards in Year 9 are above those expected nationally. Achievement is good. Students with special educational needs achieve well, as do the few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students gain a good knowledge of geographical concepts. The more competent students know the location of most European countries and understand why some countries have more to gain than others from joining the European Union. They appreciate the significance of a common agricultural policy. The standard of reading and writing of less competent students is often not accurate. Not all work is finished.
99. Standards in Year 11 are above those usually found nationally for students of this age. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, but the more competent students do not always fully realise their potential. Nevertheless, students are encouraged to think for themselves and they are given clear guidance in examination techniques. Their extended writing explains well the benefits and problems of tourists living in Spain. Students recall the meaning of technical terms, such as 'infrastructure', and use these effectively. There is good use of ICT - for example, in Year 10, students' preparation of Power Point presentations, with a focus on crime and punishment.
100. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are good. Teachers have a very good command of their subject and plan their lessons carefully to include a range of interesting learning activities. Students are expected to behave well and the minority of less mature students are dealt with firmly. Work in small groups is encouraged and students cooperate well. However, the work does not always sufficiently extend the most able students to achieve as well as they should, although it is more purposeful in the Years 10 and 11 classes. Homework is usually set regularly. During lessons, teachers emphasise how to achieve the next National Curriculum level or GCSE examination grade. Students' written work is marked, but it is not always made clear to students how to improve.
101. The temporary leadership and management of the department are good. Recently, geography teachers have been encouraged to work together to broaden the range of teaching and learning opportunities and to develop curricular change. The department has been chosen to participate in a national pilot scheme for a new GCSE examination course. More students are following GCSE examination courses. However, departmental documentation is incomplete and planning for improvement is not explicit enough. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory but, as yet, standards in examinations are not high enough.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching challenges and engages students, and enables them to achieve well.
- The standard attained by boys has improved significantly.
- The very positive attitudes of most students contribute well to learning in lessons.
- Targets for improvement are not clear enough.

Commentary

102. Standards in the 2003 GCSE examination were well above average. Boys' performance improved significantly. Performance at the highest grades was above average. Girls attained very well. Many students did better in history than in their other subjects. Results in other recent years have been of a similar overall standard.
103. Standards in Year 9 are above those expected nationally. Girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds make good progress and achieve well. Good support for students with special educational needs enables these students to achieve well. Most students have good subject knowledge and use historical sources well. Higher-attaining students write with confidence and

evaluate sources very well. Lower-attaining students are more dependent on the teacher and are less competent at making independent judgements. Girls' written work is of a higher standard than boys', although boys' answers to questions in lessons show that they have a good understanding of the issues studied. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys among higher-attaining students.

104. Standards in Year 11 are above typical national standards for this age group. Students have good historical knowledge. They use this to interpret evidence effectively. Written work shows progress in detail and confidence. Achievement is good. Higher-attaining students write clearly and express their views cogently. Lower-attaining students lack confidence in interpreting sources of evidence and in offering their own conclusions.
105. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to plan challenging and interesting lessons. High expectations of all students encourage them to achieve well. Innovative teaching is particularly effective for boys. Students enjoy lessons. They have very positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Work is marked regularly, but targets for improvement are not specific enough.
106. Leadership is very good and focused on raising standards. Teaching is regularly monitored and improvements made. Management is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in boys' performance and in the use of ICT.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students do not receive their statutory entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11, because lesson time is inadequate for them to achieve what they should from the agreed syllabus for religious education.
- Visionary leadership promotes effective teaching and learning. Management is satisfactory; the scheme of work and lesson planning are underdeveloped.
- The visits to sacred places are used well in subsequent learning.
- The induction of newly qualified teachers is very good.

Commentary

107. GCSE examination results for the minority of students who take the subject in Years 10 and 11 were above the national average in 2001 and 2003, but well below this in 2002.
108. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are at the level generally expected by the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well and comprehensive efforts are being made to raise their achievement further. In a project to design their own place of worship in Year 8, students made good presentations, explained and justified their choices, and sensibly assessed each other's work. Standards in oral and written work are never below what might reasonably be expected, and they are often higher for more competent students. Year 8 students achieved very well and made excellent response to the work on personal creeds.
109. Standards of the minority of students who follow the GCSE examination course in Years 10 and 11 are at the level expected by the course. Year 10 students are attaining higher standards than those in Year 11, where a small group of boys is not reaching the standards that they should. Overall, the achievement of students by the end of Year 11 who follow the GCSE examination course is satisfactory.
110. However, most students in Years 10 and 11 do not follow an examination course in the subject. For them, the curriculum and lesson time allotted to the subject are inadequate, and

these students do not receive their statutory entitlement to the subject. Consequently, the good work done in Years 7 to 9 is not developed well enough for all students to reach the standards that they should by Year 11 and, overall, achievement is unsatisfactory.

111. Overall, the teaching and learning are good throughout Years 7 to 11. However, in Years 10 and 11, students in the compulsory, non-examination classes cannot benefit properly from the good teaching because the time allocated to the subject is so far below what is necessary. For the examination classes, a variety of approaches, practical activities, work in small groups and video presentations stimulate interest. The worship-design project is particularly effective. The indifference of some students is well managed. More able students do better because they can speak well in response to the challenges presented to them to reflect and make personal response to issues of faith. Multi-faith work is done well. Visits to sacred places are used very well to extend students' worthwhile experience and learning. Homework is used well and marking is regular, but does not always enable students to see exactly how to raise their level of performance. Although a commercial scheme gives guidance to the students, it does not replace the need for further direction from teachers. The planning of lessons is underdeveloped in relation to the different needs of some students in classes of very varied ability.
112. Subject leadership is very good and very well principled. The shared vision of the values and desired ethos of the department is shown by use of the room for meditation and reflection. Initiative and hard work have generated crucial extra income. Very good teamwork contributes effectively to the very effective induction of newly qualified teachers. Management is satisfactory but development planning does not focus clearly enough on annual priorities. The department recognises the need to develop a new scheme of work and revised planning of lessons in its current work. The strengths in the department noted in the last inspection have been maintained. However, provision overall is unsatisfactory, because the lack of curricular time in Years 10 and 11 continues to make coverage of the Agreed Syllabus impossible. As at the last two inspections, statutory requirements are not met for most students in Years 10 and 11, and improvement, overall, is unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on design and technology. Two lessons in the GCSE examination course in child development were sampled. A well-taught Year 10 lesson enabled students to achieve well. The students worked independently in completing an assignment on research into the costs of equipment for childcare. The work was well adapted to the needs of the wide range of students' abilities. A Year 11 lesson about play, following a visit to a local nursery, was satisfactorily taught. Although satisfactory progress was made, the poor attitudes of a minority of disaffected students prevented them from achieving higher standards.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good command of the subject contributes to students' good achievement.
- Students' attitudes and their capacity to work independently assists their good progress.
- The curriculum lacks use of computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) equipment and control and structures in work with resistant materials.

Commentary

113. Standards in Year 9 are in line with national expectations, although students enter the school with below average skills in both designing and making. Few students have experiences across all aspects of the subject. Girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds, including those

with special educational needs and those identified by the school as particularly able, achieve well. For example, Year 9 students created sports designs that effectively reflected the target market and gave consideration to a range of synthetic materials to be used in the manufacture of the garments. They made effective use of the well-presented support materials. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above those to be expected at this age. Overall, GCSE examination results for 2003 were above average in the proportion of grades A* to C gained. Graphics was below average as a result of continuity of staffing. In electronics, food technology and textiles technology, results were above average and well above in resistant materials.

114. Students achieve well in all years. They make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding of designing and making during Years 7, 8 and 9. In Years 10 and 11, students continue to make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 11. Students with special educational needs progress well and receive good support through effective deployment of assistants and additional help from teachers. Those identified as very competent in the subject make good progress and achieve well throughout the school.
115. Overall, teaching is good. Some is very good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge helps enthuse, encourage and engage students and good learning results. The realistic challenge in lessons meets students' needs well. Good questioning tests understanding effectively. Occasionally, objectives in lessons lack the necessary clarity to determine the most suitable choice of methods. The learning in lessons is reviewed, but sometimes insufficient time is given to this and all students are not fully involved. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. They apply themselves well, show commitment and work well independently.
116. The visionary, experienced head of department leads a good team of teachers and support staff. The department is aware of the lack of CAM, which restricts students' achievement, and there is a gap in the areas of control and structures. Monitoring of teaching is good and target-setting in place. Advances in attainment, teaching and curricular provision indicate good improvement since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The focus was on art and design, dance, drama and music, and these subjects are reported below. A lesson in media studies was sampled in which Year 11 students learned how to interpret a film, in preparation for the GCSE examination. The quality of teaching was satisfactory and enabled the students to achieve a better understanding of film effects.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good overall and some is very good.
- Standards by Year 9 and Year 11 are above those usually found nationally.
- Provision for the most talented students is not planned well enough.
- The evaluation of learning in lessons is not always rigorous enough.

Commentary

117. During the inspection, numerous classes were displaced from working in specialist rooms and were led by non-specialist teachers, because art staff were managing GCSE examinations.
118. GCSE examination results in 2003 were well above the national average, and continued the upward trend of recent years. The attainment of girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds is above typical national standards by the ends of Years 9 and 11. Students with special

educational needs make good progress. Students achieve well, as shown by their progress and level of performance by the ends of Years 9 and 11. From Year 7 onwards, teachers place great emphasis on the development of drawing and the use of colour. Consequently, many students draw well, use colour to good effect and manage three-dimensional materials skillfully. Students' imagination is fired by knowledge of the work of famous artists and they use these ideas well in their own work. Their literacy skills are well developed, and they use ICT well. By Year 11, students develop impressive drawing and painting skills and their work with clay is very successful. Finished pieces are often developed to high standards and show strong artistic influences. In Years 10 and 11, students' research is extensive and their work shows independence and originality.

119. Teaching and learning are good overall, and some is very good in all years. Teachers expect students to stretch their ideas and imagination and the students respond well. Planning of lessons is very thorough. Teachers' assessment of work is very thorough in Years 10 and 11. However, finished work is not always fully evaluated in Years 7 to 9, so that students know how to do better. Nevertheless, targets for improvement are set and contribute to students' understanding of how to improve their work. Homework is set and marked regularly and helps students to work independently. In some lessons, the pace of work is comfortable rather than brisk. Extra-curricular learning opportunities are very good. However, occasionally, teachers do not always stretch the most talented students in some classes. Students behave very well because they enjoy their lessons. Very good display of students' work contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the school's ethos.
120. The department is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic, highly experienced and dedicated specialist. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored. A very good team of specialists has established a fertile environment in which learning flourishes. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Dance

Provision in dance is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently very good.
- Students' attainment is well above that typically found nationally, and they achieve very well.
- The attitudes of students are very positive.
- The dance studio and changing areas hinder learning.

Commentary

121. The first GCSE examinations in dance were taken in 2002 and results were almost in line with the national average. In 2003, results improved and student achievement was good. Increasing numbers of boys and girls are taking the course because GCSE examination classes are taught in both the usual timetable and after school, so that students can study dance as an additional subject. All students have equal access to the subject.
122. At the end of Year 9, boys and girls achieve very well to reach standards well above those typical at this age. They cooperate well in small groups, show a wide vocabulary of movement and use technical language accurately when evaluating others' work. Boys and girls are equally involved in Year 8, where they use choreographic devices to improve their dances.
123. By the end of Year 11, students achieve very well. The standards of both boys and girls in Year 10 are well above those expected nationally. They have been taught dance from Year 7 and this provides them with a grounding of subject experience that is of high quality. Year 11 students are reaching standards that are above those usually found nationally. Determination

and energy are raising their standards, because many of these students have very little previous experience of dance.

124. The teaching is at least very good. It was excellent in two lessons. Dance is taught by two specialist teachers and their expertise enables students to develop and enjoy every aspect of the subject. Teachers' planning is very thorough and students are given calendars of weekly activities. This is especially helpful for Year 11 students' planning of their final performances. Boys and girls enjoy their lessons. They work hard and their attitudes and behaviour are very good. The department plans a broad and vibrant curriculum that meets the needs of all students and captures their interest very well. Extra-curricular activities are equally well planned. There are clubs before and after school and many opportunities for students to participate in performances.
125. Leadership and management of the department are excellent. There is a shared commitment to improvement. Students are often involved in dances that have spiritual and cultural themes. The contribution of emotional aspects of dance to students' personal development is very high. Lessons are frequently taught in the school hall where the floor is not clean. The changing rooms are unsuitable and the dance studio is a small open-plan area. This poor quality of the accommodation considerably hinders learning.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those typical nationally by Year 9 and Year 11.
- Very good teaching enables students to learn and achieve very well.
- Excellent leadership and management enable teachers to work as a very effective team.

Commentary

126. Standards in Year 9 are above those typical nationally. Girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds achieve well, especially as they only study drama every other half-term in Years 7 to 9. The more competent students are very confident and creative when performing scenes from *Henry V* as part of their preparation for the National Curriculum tests in English. GCSE examination results in 2002 were above average, but fell to below average in 2003, largely because of a teacher's illness at a crucial stage of the course. Current standards in Year 11 are well above those expected nationally and students are achieving very well. They are able to evaluate their own work and that of others sensitively and realistically. As a result, they set themselves high standards and refine their performances very well in rehearsal.
127. Teaching is very good. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and high expectations enable students to learn and achieve very well, overall. Teachers manage classes very well. They ensure that students concentrate and work hard. They capture students' interest by planning a very good variety and progression of motivating activities. Year 7 students developed their understanding of dramatic conventions very well during a lesson when they prepared to visit the imaginary, but sinister, *Darkwood Manor*. Teachers set good, challenging homework and use assessment well to evaluate students' progress. Very occasionally, lessons lack pace in Year 9, when some students who have decided not to study the subject for the GCSE examination lose concentration.
128. Students in all years have very good opportunities to perform for different audiences and the subject makes a significant contribution to all students' personal and social development. Excellent leadership and management of the department enable teachers to work together very effectively as a team. The work of all teachers and students is closely monitored and less experienced teachers receive excellent support to develop their own skills with confidence.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new leadership of the department is improving standards.
- Students are achieving at least the standards that they should.
- Teaching is good; students have positive attitudes and learn well.
- There is insufficient focus in the scheme of work on short-term planning.
- The developing instrumental and extra-curricular provision in music should be further extended.

Commentary

129. Standards by Year 9 are typical of those of most schools. Girls and boys from all ethnic and social backgrounds achieve satisfactorily. Those with special educational needs achieve as well as others. However, standards are rising above typical levels in Years 7 and 8, because of the new, effective management of the subject. Students show a good knowledge of musical vocabulary and can perform and compose with confidence. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, the starter activity consisted of performing rhythmic patterns from a selection of films which were to be heard in a later listening exercise. Students were able to clap these rhythms successfully against a steady beat. They skilfully composed contrasting variations in groups on *'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?'*
130. Students' standards by Year 11 are at the nationally expected level. This represents satisfactory achievement, given recent difficulties in the continuity of staff. There are good numbers of students opting for music in Years 10 and 11. Classes take place after school hours in Years 10 and 11 for those unable to take music within the timetable. Students are now well supported in their learning, with two members of staff present in practical lessons. Although there is a wide ability span in Years 10 and 11, all students achieve at least the standards that might reasonably be expected of them, given their differing competence in the subject. For example, all compose confidently with appropriate software. Work in these sessions is monitored by the students themselves, who maintain an individual record of their work.
131. The teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan lessons clearly and reinforce key ideas well. Students have very good attitudes to their work and these support their learning especially well in practical lessons. Short-term planning does not specify well enough the targets for learning, nor include enough challenge for the most competent musicians. Insufficient use of ICT is made in Years 7 to 9.
132. The subject is well led under a new head of department who, with a dedicated team of teachers, has already made a considerable impact on standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, but there is now much evidence of more rapid improvement. Continuity in staffing has been a difficulty. Much work is being undertaken to extend the range of extra-curricular activities and the numbers of students who are learning to play instruments. Further development is needed. The department has a busy schedule of performing opportunities, both in the school and in the community. The school's band and joint windband perform to a very high standard with obvious enjoyment and commitment.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well and their standards are above those expected nationally in all years.
- Teaching is good and improves students' performance skills very effectively.
- Students have very positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers.
- Schemes of work do not provide planned opportunities for teaching the expectation of the National Curriculum for evaluation of performance.

Commentary

133. Students enter the school with differing standards, but often these are below what is expected nationally, especially in gymnastics. By the end of Year 9, girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds attain above national expectations and their achievement is good. Students reach high standards in games and build a secure knowledge of health in their fitness lessons. They attain very high standards in swimming and by the time they reach Year 8 all students are able to swim.
134. In Years 10 and 11, students achieve well and reach above the standards that are typical nationally. They continue to improve their performance skills in the compulsory lessons. The very positive attitudes of students in all years, and their high practical expertise, linked with the very good relationships that they have with their teachers, result in standards above those usually seen. However, students are not given sufficient opportunity to warm up independently at the start of lessons, and their analytical skills are not sufficiently developed. The subject scheme of work does not emphasise these strands.
135. GCSE examination results in 2003 were above the national average and continued a rising trend. Currently, students taking the GCSE examination course have very competent practical expertise. Talented students and teams achieve high standards in a variety of activities. Their attainment is very high and they benefit from the good opportunities offered by their teachers and the very good facilities.
136. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students are helped in their learning because most year groups are divided by subject competence. Teaching effectively includes students with disabilities and ensures they make the same good progress as all other students. Teachers have very high practical expertise and promote the acquisition of skills very well through progressive practices.
137. The joint heads of department provide clear educational direction and good leadership for the subject. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Means for assessing students' progress are being developed to provide consistent and accurate results, but they are still not specific to different activities. Although teachers assess all activities to National Curriculum levels, students do not understand well enough how they can improve.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The focus was on business. A very well taught Year 11 lesson in leisure and tourism was seen. Students were very well managed to complete well planned coursework arising from a visit to a local hotel. They used computers well in their work.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' written work is not always of the very good standard of their oral work.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps students' learning.
- There is very good teamwork among teachers.
- The marking and assessment of written work do not always indicate how students can improve.

Commentary

138. GCSE examination results in the two courses of business studies and economics and business have been at least average in recent years. The results in business with economics have been especially strong and exceeded the national average in 2003. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys or between students from different ethnic backgrounds.
139. The standards in Years 10 and 11 are above those typical nationally and students achieve well. In Year 11, students have very good knowledge of financial and accounting techniques. They put this knowledge to very good effect in a business firm case study. In work on cash-flow forecasting, students apply well developed analytical skills to identify key weaknesses in a firm's financial position; they go on to suggest a range of strategies to address these problems and evaluate the potential outcomes. In Year 10 business and economics, students achieve very well to extract relevant criteria from company annual reports to measure success in growth of profits, sales and turnover. Essays and coursework do not always reflect the high standards of analysis and evaluation achieved in lessons, and students with the potential to achieve the highest examination grades do not always do so.
140. The teaching is good overall. It is often very good and enables students to learn well. Teachers use a good range of resources to bring the subject to life, including videos, slides and case studies, which contribute to a lively pace of learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Their explanations have great clarity and enable students to understand complex ideas. Their questions prompt students to think through problems for themselves. Students enjoy business studies. They are well motivated and work hard in response to interesting lessons. Participation and discussion are good. However, teachers' marking of written work is not always sufficiently detailed for students to recognise their strengths and weaknesses, or how to improve their grades.
141. The department is led very effectively. It functions well as a closely knit unit. Management is good, but schemes of work and related planning of lessons do not always fully meet the needs of all students to ensure that they achieve as well as they could. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Good standards and good teaching and learning continue.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship was inspected and is reported fully below. Three lessons in personal and social education were sampled. A lesson planned for two combined Year 10 classes was unable to take place. The extemporary lesson that was given as a replacement was a video film on racism, followed by an open discussion of the subject. The students responded in an excellent, mature manner to the topic and the teaching and learning were very good. Two well taught lessons were

seen in Years 7 and 9, in which good teaching of study skills and the implications for students of the school's code of conduct were explored well.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in lessons specifically for the subject.
- Students are active participants in charity work in all years.
- Assessment of students' progress is underdeveloped.

Commentary

142. Standards are those expected nationally by Year 9, and students achieve satisfactorily. There is no apparent difference between the standards of girls and boys from all social and ethnic backgrounds. In lessons, students often achieve well. Their oral skills are good. For example, they speak to the point in discussions prompted by video presentations. In a lesson on crime in Year 8, they made perceptive comments about rehabilitation and punishment. Students work effectively together on rights and responsibilities of citizens, and produce well-reasoned ideal conditions for living in peace. In a lesson on stereotypes, Year 9 students produced e-mail texts of good quality and maturity.
143. In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement is satisfactory and they reach typical national standards. Some students achieved well in the work seen. For example, a large group of Year 10 students asked perceptive questions of a visiting prison officer. They achieved well and made gains in knowledge and understanding as well as demonstrating skills of enquiry and communication. However, the current diverse nature of provision across the curriculum makes accurate assessment of their achievements over time uncertain. Nevertheless, they participate well in the life of the school and the wider community. For example, their achievements in charity work throughout the school are very good. The year councils work effectively. Activities undertaken outside the school are performed responsibly.
144. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and run at a good pace. High expectations are apparent in lessons. Students respond well. For example, they entered into vigorous debate on stereotyping and gave very good thought to community issues in a project in religious education to design a new community worship centre. However, progression in learning through the five years is not yet sufficiently coherent. Students are unclear about the level of their performance and do not have the means to build a portfolio of their work to show the scope of their work, skill development and participation over time.
145. A co-ordinator has recently been appointed to manage the diverse strands of subject work. Good progress is being made in improving provision. Difficulties arising from changes of staff and constraints of the timetable are being overcome as a dedicated team of staff works increasingly well together. Management of assessment, including students' self-assessment, is underdeveloped. There is insufficient understanding by some teachers of how to plan learning to bring out the implications for citizenship. Although there is good practice in geography, history and religious education, other subjects are less effective in providing a citizenship perspective. The senior management of the school is committed to improving provision.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 12 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school. The tables below show entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003 by the two combined sixth forms which form the North Hykeham Joint Sixth Form.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	5	60	80	20	24	26.0	29.9
Biology	6	50	65	0	11	13.3	20.6
Business studies	2	100	76	0	16	30.0	26.2
Communication studies	5	100	86	20	24	36.0	32.0
Dance	4	75	87	25	35	32.5	34.5
Economics	3	100	74	0	20	33.3	26.4
English/English language	11	73	83	0	18	21.8	28.7
English literature	2	50	86	0	19	15.0	30.2
French	2	0	78	0	19	0.0	27.6
Design and technology	10	80	75	50	15	36.0	25.3
General studies	81	70	74	12	18	22.2	25.7
Geography	4	75	74	25	20	27.5	26.5
German	1	0	82	0	19	0.0	28.9
History	6	100	81	17	20	31.7	28.6
Mathematics	6	67	62	0	17	18.3	22.1
Music	2	100	87	0	21	35.0	30.7
Other social studies	17	71	70	12	17	22.9	24.1
Physics	1	100	69	100	14	50.0	22.7
Religious studies	3	67	80	33	23	30.0	29.8
Sociology	13	77	72	15	18	26.2	25.4
Spanish	1	100	79	0	18	30.0	27.3
Sports/PE studies	1	0	73	0	11	0.0	23.1

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	15	100	99	33	50	86.7	87.5
Biology	16	100	96	31	39	75.0	78.6
Business studies	13	100	99	15	37	70.8	80.1
Business (AVCE)	16	100	89	19	21	77.5	60.1
Chemistry	11	100	98	46	49	81.8	84.9
Communication studies	15	93	99	27	38	72.0	82.1
Dance	2	100	99	100	45	110.0	83.9
Drama	8	100	100	50	40	90.0	83.6
Economics	4	100	99	75	52	95.0	88.3
English/English language	21	95	99	19	36	71.4	80.9
English literature	21	100	100	33	47	81.9	86.5
French	3	100	99	67	52	100.0	87.6
Design and technology	11	100	99	67	52	80.0	77.9
General studies	53	76	94	19	31	51.7	73.1
Geography	16	100	99	44	45	82.5	84.0
German	2	100	98	0	48	60.0	84.8
Health and social care AVCE	24	92	93	0	22	50.8	63.5
History	20	100	99	45	45	80.0	84.6
Information technology AVCE	18	100	87	50	28	86.7	64.9
Leisure and recreation AVCE	8	100	88	0	15	50.0	57.9
Mathematics	25	84	97	28	56	71.2	88.8
Music	6	100	99	33	39	83.3	81.1
Other social studies	42	100	97	24	43	75.2	81.8
Physics	8	88	97	25	45	72.5	81.7
Religious studies	5	100	99	40	47	72.0	85.6
Sociology	6	100	98	17	44	80.0	83.6
Spanish	4	100	98	0	50	75.0	86.9
Sports/PE studies	6	100	98	33	31	70.0	81.9
Travel and tourism AVCE	16	81	90	6	20	53.8	62.2

Some courses are jointly provided with a neighbouring sixth form, through the North Hykeham Joint Sixth Form. Reference to the joint provision is made where possible in the subject reports for German, design and technology, ICT and business. Overall, where jointly provided courses were inspected, the teaching, learning and standards were of broadly equivalent quality in both schools.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English and German, but French and Spanish were also sampled. In two Spanish lessons for Years 12 and 13, the teacher used Spanish very well. The students' learning was satisfactory, but not better because they were not required to speak the language enough themselves. In French, one well taught Year 13 lesson was seen in which students entered into animated discussion on the habits of viewers of television. The lesson was well prepared, and well pitched to the students' level with the language. However, the teacher did not take every opportunity to speak in French.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well and standards are improving.
- Good teaching enables students to learn well but teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to contribute in lessons.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their work.

Commentary

146. The school provides AS and A-level courses in English literature and has started to teach the jointly provided English literature and language course at AS level. Students can also study English language wholly at the neighbouring school. A-level results for the joint sixth form were in line with the national average in English literature in 2002 and 2003. They were below average in English language.
147. Year 13 students from all social and ethnic backgrounds are building well on their AS results. Current standards are average for this stage in the course. Students are achieving well as they entered the sixth form with standards below those typical for admission to advanced courses. They have a good understanding of the social and historical background to set texts such as Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Most are articulate in discussion. They structure their essays well and have very good note-taking skills. However, they often make unsubstantiated assertions in their essays, with insufficient reference to the text to support their views.
148. Year 12 students are also achieving well overall and reaching expected standards for the AS level course. English literature students are developing good analytical skills, for example, when responding to the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy. Students on the English literature and language course can identify ways in which speechwriters use rhetorical devices for effect. However, they have not yet developed a sufficient grasp of specialist vocabulary to enable them to analyse such speeches with confidence.
149. The quality of teaching is good and allows both girls and boys to learn well. Teachers plan carefully and prepare resources of good quality to focus students' discussions on key aspects of texts. Teachers' marking of students' coursework is detailed and supportive, and provides valuable advice that helps students to reach good standards. Teachers refer consistently to the assessment objectives for each module of work so that students are aware of what they need to achieve. Students' very positive attitudes help them to achieve well. They are prepared to take responsibility for their own learning through independent research. In some lessons, however, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to contribute. A lack of variety of teaching methods, with too much domination of discussion by the teacher, constrains students' development of a personal response to set texts.

150. The subject is well led and managed. The head of department and colleagues work very well as a team and have successfully introduced the advanced English literature and language course this year. Careful monitoring of teachers' work has helped bring about good improvement since the last inspection. In particular, A-level results have improved significantly. Students have the opportunity to study a very good range of courses through links with the neighbouring school. However, there is insufficient communication between English teachers in the two schools.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

151. Students' language and literacy skills are good overall and allow them to achieve well in the subjects of their choice. Their speaking and listening skills are very good and many students make very articulate contributions to discussion in class. Students' good reading skills enable them to manage texts well in all subjects. They write good, well-structured essays and have good note-taking skills. Teachers help them to develop style and structure in their writing. For example, in art and design and physical education, students improve the accuracy and fluency of their personal studies by following very good literacy advice and guidance from subject teachers.

German

It is not possible to comment on the quality of educational provision for the school's students in the neighbouring sixth form, because German did not fall within the remit of that inspection.

Provision in German is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, but there is not enough enrichment beyond the timetabled curriculum.
- German is not a popular choice in the sixth form and classes are small.

Commentary

152. Few students have taken AS or A-level examinations in recent years. Overall, results have generally been what might reasonably have been expected of the students involved. In 2003, results were below average at both AS and A-level. Very few discontinue the courses that they begin.

153. Standards in Year 13 differ markedly from those in Year 12. In Year 13, they are well below average. Students underachieve, because they do not work hard enough outside lessons. Students are sometimes permitted to join courses without essential basic knowledge and skills. Even so, there are very few students following the course and this restricts their range of learning experiences. In Year 12, standards vary from well below what is expected by course standards, to well above. The more competent students write very well, have good command of grammar and compose accurate extended essays. Less competent students write with considerably less skill and make basic linguistic errors. All understand their teachers' excellent German with ease, and are competent speakers who express their ideas well. Overall, Year 12 students achieve well, given their below average standards on entry to the course.

154. The teaching is good. Learning in Year 12 is also good, but in Year 13 it is barely satisfactory, because of students' lack of preparation. Teachers' planning of lessons is good. They prepare helpful materials to support all students to participate fully. They use skilful questioning techniques to stretch students' learning of the language. They promote lively discussion, when there are sufficient students present in the class to permit this. Teachers are excellent linguists and very good role models – as users of German - for the students.

However, teachers sometimes talk too much, and allow students to be too passive. They know their students well and advise them well on how to improve.

155. Students do not have a wide enough range of linguistic experiences. They are reluctant to go on a study trip or exchange visit, or to undertake the work experience offered to them in Germany. They have no contacts with German-speaking students, although they do have weekly conversation classes with a German assistant.
156. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Teachers communicate well with those from the neighbouring school, as part of the joint sixth form provision, and work well as a team.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons very well.
- Teachers ensure that all students learn and make good progress.
- Assessment of students' work is thorough and helps students to understand how well they are doing.
- Teachers often direct students too much and limit the development of students' independent learning skills.

Commentary

157. A-level results in 2003 were well below the national average. Students entered Year 12 advanced courses with a wide range of attainment. More than half did not reach their predicted grades. Girls attained better than boys. Both usually complete the courses that they begin. There is no difference in the attainment of students arising from their social or ethnic backgrounds.
158. The standards attained by students are in line with those expected in A-level courses nationally and students achieve satisfactorily overall, and sometimes well, in lessons. Their range of mathematical competence is wide and some Year 12 AS level students find difficulty in developing mathematical content from real-life problems. For example, in a Year 13 lesson for both A and AS level students on networks, two students approached the question in a slow, mechanical manner, whilst others confidently demonstrated their understanding and rapidly presented accurate solutions. Students tend to be very passive learners and do not develop independent learning skills enough. They are over-reliant on teachers for their note-taking and do not challenge teachers' explanations of concepts sufficiently. However, some students' work is often of a very high quality and shows good mathematical rigour.
159. Teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and experience. They plan lessons that are insightful and well structured. This enables students to learn well and provides solid foundations for further progress. However, teachers do not involve students sufficiently in the development of new ideas because their teaching styles are too directive and do not encourage students to be more creative and independent in their learning. Nevertheless, teachers know their students well and provide good challenge and pace in lessons. They mark students' work thoroughly and analytically and provide good guidance about how to improve. Teachers support students well in individual work. They ensure that those with difficulties in understanding the language in which problems are posed, or those returning from absences, are quickly brought up to the required level of understanding. ICT is not used enough in teaching and this restricts the range of opportunities from which students might learn.

160. The acting head of department is managing the subject well. She has ensured that courses are running successfully during the absence of staff. Students are being well supported prior to the arrival of the newly appointed head of department. Better co-ordination of records of students' assessment is developing. The system of assessment is effective; students are monitored and kept informed of their progress. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

161. Students' mathematical skills support their learning well. Students of mathematics are very confident in using their skills in other subject areas. For example, there is good use of statistical analysis in business studies. In physics, students competently calculate refractive index and use calculators confidently when necessary. A-level physical education students make very good use of their data gathering and graphic presentation skills during their investigations into personal fitness in different sporting activities.

SCIENCE

The focus was on biology. Chemistry and physics were sampled. In 2002, standards in jointly provided A-level chemistry and physics courses were above average. In 2003, A-level chemistry results were average. A-level physics results were below average. Students prepare for lessons thoroughly and respond very well to good, specialist teaching in both chemistry and physics. However, teachers do not always match their questions well enough to students' capabilities. Students apply mathematical skills well. In physics, they were able to calculate the refractive index when light passes from air to glass, and used mathematical formulae confidently to understand gas, volume and pressure laws. In chemistry, they developed a good understanding of how to calculate alcohol levels in the blood in a topic on medicines and drugs.

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievements in biology are satisfactory, but achievement in human biology is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Most students approach their studies diligently, but in human biology the attitude to work of a significant minority is not good enough and this adversely affects their achievement.
- Students receive very good individual support and guidance, but departmental management to raise standards is not as effective as it could be.

Commentary

162. Students' results in A-level biology and human biology were in line with the national average in 2002 and 2003. In relation to their GCSE results, students achieve well enough in biology, but their achievement in human biology is unsatisfactory. The students who begin these courses almost always complete them.

163. The standards of students from all ethnic backgrounds are at the level expected by the AS and A-level courses that they are following. Students whose first language is not English achieve well and work especially hard to reach the standards that they should. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

164. Year 13 A-level biologists learn well about agricultural management, because they combine laboratory work and private study with practical visits to farms. However, model-making

activities, although interesting, do not challenge these students enough. However, students develop very good skills of self-evaluation. In the laboratory, they work well together to organise investigations into transpiration.

165. In Year 12 human biology, a small number of students are achieving better than predicted by their GCSE examination results. They have adapted well to sixth form study. They research independently, and use information from the Internet to prepare Power Point presentations on cell division. They listen well to teachers' very good guidance and support, and take action to improve their work. However, for a significant number of human biology students, attendance, punctuality and revision for examinations are not good enough and they underachieve.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their expertise well. Students appreciate the high level of support they receive to help them to make progress. The quality of learning is higher in biology than in human biology because biology students are able to work more independently and productively. Less competent students in human biology, especially, do not have the required independent learning skills to make good enough progress. They still require a more direct teaching approach to gain understanding of the subject. Teachers give Year 12 biologists very good guidance about improving their work, most recently about cell structure and function and transpiration in plants.
167. Leadership and management in biology are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards, accommodation and use of computers have all improved. However, procedures for monitoring achievement, and review of how appropriate the course in human biology is proving to be, require further consideration.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is shared with the neighbouring sixth form. The quality of education provided was very similar to that reported below.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, and standards are at the expected levels for advanced courses.
- Good teaching enables students to learn well, but some tasks do not challenge the more competent students enough.

Commentary

168. In 2002, A-level results were below average and no A or B grades were attained. In 2003, results from the newly adopted AVCE course were well above average, and half the candidates attained grades A or B.
169. Currently, standards in Years 12 and 13 are below those typical of advanced courses. However, students achieve well because their attainment on entry to the advanced course is below that usually found. Students are competent in a range of ICT skills. Year 12 students have a basic understanding of how to test a solution to a problem. They write effective programmable instructions, and can explain advanced terms, such as 'look up tables', confidently. In Year 13, students use the basic facilities of programming software to develop data-capture forms and report pages. However, they do not always check procedures well enough to prevent the input of inaccurate data. They are articulate about the topics that they undertake, but are not always secure in their understanding of why they use ICT. One group reported on a visit to a local manufacturer with ICT. They were able to explain most of the technical terms, but not always apply them in different applications.

170. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well to focus on the requirements of the examination courses. Teachers involve students in discussion about the tasks set, so that they fully understand what has to be done. However, there is not enough challenge in the tasks to enable some more-competent students to achieve higher grades. Teachers encourage students to manage their own learning and progress. They provide good individual support and identify what students have to do to improve their work. However, teachers do not always pace their lessons to allow for a proper assessment of students' learning near the end. Students use ICT confidently. They concentrate on their work and show a lively interest in the subject.
171. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. Courses appropriate to students' needs are provided and soundly managed. Good resources in the ICT department allow students to experience a range of ICT skills and support individual work well. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The equipment available has improved and more appropriate courses have been introduced.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

172. In Years 12 and 13, students are confident users of ICT. Their level of competence is very good. They select appropriate software and formats for various tasks. The experience that students built up in earlier years provides a sound basis for their use of ICT. They use it well in a wide range of ways – for example, to improve the quality of coursework, to extend their skills in editing images, and to explore different techniques and approaches to design. They learn well from practice of their skills in ICT.
173. Students have good access to computers in the learning resource area, around the school and in the study area for sixth formers. The use of ICT is generally included in subject schemes of work to enhance students' understanding, such as in the development of skills of research and analysis in history.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on history but advanced courses in geography, psychology, sociology and religious education were sampled. Two geography lessons were seen in which standards were very good. Teaching and learning were good and Year 12 students, especially, achieved well. The four Year 13 A-level students were achieving as well as their GCSE examination results predicted. Two lessons were seen in psychology. Very good teaching of a large Year 12 class of students from both sixth forms enabled them to consolidate work on ethical issues well. A Year 13 class, also involving students from both schools, was well taught, because the teacher's very good subject knowledge was used well to help students to manage carefully structured revision successfully. A well managed Year 13 sociology lesson enabled the students to review work on feminist theory well, although some students were reluctant to enter into discussion.

In two well taught Year 13 A-level religious education lessons, the few students were encouraged by warm relationships with the teacher to achieve well in consolidating prior work. However, most students do not follow the advanced courses in religious education and no other opportunity is given to enable them to receive their statutory entitlement to this subject in the sixth form.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students are achieving very well.
- The teaching is very good and inspires students to learn successfully.
- Experienced leadership and management encourage many students to study history.

Commentary

174. A-level results were below average in 2002 but improved in 2003 to be in line with the national average. Results in the AS level examinations were above average in 2003. Students performed better than their prior attainment predicted to achieve very well. Fewer girls study history than boys but they often achieve higher grades. Several students begin the course with below average GCSE examination grades and some have no prior qualification in history. Many of these students gain higher grades than might reasonably be expected. Students' attainments are unrelated to their ethnic backgrounds. Very few do not complete their courses.
175. Current standards are well above those typical of advanced courses. Students' achievement is very good in Years 12 and 13. Students in Year 12 gain a very good knowledge and understanding of Bismarck's foreign policy. They analyse well his strategies for building alliances with other European powers. Students showed and shared a good understanding of the political situation in the early twentieth century during a class discussion. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to raise issues for discussion from their reading.
176. Students in Year 13 are achieving better than their previous attainment predicted. They readily interpret and inter-relate historical events – for example, they understand the ideology and impact of propaganda involved, when they study racism in Nazi Germany. Students enjoy the challenge and academic rigour of debate during lessons. However, in one lesson, their discussion of the beginnings of the Weimar Republic lacked factual knowledge. More competent students present well-structured and focused arguments from well-organised notes. Teachers emphasise the correct use of language. Although lower-attainers understand the topics, their written work often lacks relevant detail. They do not consider enough the evidence on both sides of an argument.
177. Teaching and learning are very good. In one lesson, they were excellent. Teachers are experienced specialists in the subject. They organise their lessons purposefully to enable all students to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable. Probing questions and, sometimes, melodramatic interpretations of the past challenge the depth of students' understanding and use of key words and ideas. Teachers show how different sources of evidence should be used. They share fully with students how written work will be assessed. Occasionally, however, the teaching involves too much teacher talk, lacks sparkle and does not involve students enough. Good marking helps students to improve their work well.
178. The leadership of the department is very good and the management is effective. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the department retains its positive ethos and enthusiasm for the subject.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The focus was on design and technology. The subjects reported collectively below are: electronics, food technology, graphic products and textiles. The quality of education provided for the school's students in the neighbouring sixth form is similar to that reported below.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' independence and very positive attitudes contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge engages students and encourages successful learning.
- There is insufficient equipment to support the teaching of computer-aided manufacture (CAM).

Commentary

179. Attainment on entry to AS courses is slightly below that usually expected. The department considers a student's commitment to be as important as evidence of high performance in GCSE examinations. However, all students have some knowledge and skills in their chosen subject areas on entry to advanced courses. A-level results were above average in 2003. However, few students continue from AS to A-level courses in each subject area and, therefore, comparisons with national performance are unreliable. Students have equal opportunity and their performance is unrelated to their social or ethnic origins. Almost all students complete their courses each year.
180. Current standards are above those expected for advanced courses in both Year 12 and Year 13. Students are achieving very well, given their attainment on entry to advanced courses. Higher attainers have a very good understanding of design. Their work takes account of the end-user and reflects their thorough understanding of aesthetics and ergonomics. They produce practical examples that show highly developed design-and-making skills in all subjects. In A-level textiles, for example, students produce portfolios with very good levels of detail presented in a highly professional manner. Extensive, selective research is evident throughout all work seen.
181. The teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which helps students to make products of high quality. Students have a high level of independence, because teachers support learning very well and make themselves readily available to give students extensive support outside lessons. Teachers produce resources of high quality to support students' work. Oral and written assessment is used very well to enable students to improve their work. Teachers are quick to follow up students who are failing to realise their full potential. Students have very positive attitudes and appreciate the high quality of specialist accommodation available to them. A very good curriculum is available to meet the needs of students who wish to pursue a particular focus within the range of design and technology opportunities.
182. The subject is very well led and managed by a competent and experienced head of department. The committed team of teachers and very good support staff work as a cohesive unit. The department is aware of the lack of computer-aided manufacturing equipment (CAM), which places a restriction on students' potential higher achievement, especially in resistant materials.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design, dance, performing arts and theatre studies. Media studies, music and music technology were sampled. Two lessons were seen in media studies of varying quality. In Year 13, the teaching and learning in preparation for the A-level examination were very good and students achieved well. However, a Year 12 AS lesson on the significance of mobile phones was barely satisfactory, and presented the students with little to challenge the more competent students. Good teaching and learning in a well planned Year 12 music lesson enabled the students to achieve a much better appreciation of the development of jazz. Good teaching in two music technology lessons with Years 12 and 13 students enabled them to create and manipulate sound effectively; the students managed the very good-quality technical equipment well.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected for advanced courses and students achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good and teachers have very good subject knowledge and skills.
- Students have very positive attitudes and are enthusiastic.
- The department provides very good learning opportunities beyond the normal timetable.
- Not enough students attain the highest grades in examinations.

Commentary

183. A-level results in 2003 were in line with the national average. This level of attainment, at least, has been maintained over several years. However, few students gain the highest grades. Overall, students achieve very well because standards on entry to the course are below average. The department accepts several students who have not followed a GCSE examination course in art and design and they often achieve very well. Students from different social and ethnic backgrounds attain similar standards.
184. Current standards are above those typical nationally, and students in Years 12 and 13 are achieving very well. Students have well-established skills in learning without close direction from teachers. They explore and select visual images to develop their own ideas. They work with a wide variety of fine art and three-dimensional materials and processes to communicate their ideas. Their work reveals imagination, inventiveness and confidence. Their research and experimentation are extensive. Strong personal artistic styles emerge in many cases. The introduction of life drawing classes after school provides very good opportunities for all to advance their formal drawing skills and is helping students to reach still higher standards.
185. Teaching is very good and ensures that students' learning is very well organised. The teachers are very enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge. They have very high expectations of what students can achieve. Their support for students with special educational needs is outstanding and enables them to achieve very well. Very thorough assessment procedures, frequent individual tutorials and regular target setting inform students of how well they are doing and of the most important areas for improvement. Students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of art are extended by visits to galleries, visiting specialists and the extended writing they undertake in compiling their personal studies. Students have very positive attitudes and are enthusiastic about their work. They have very good relationships with teachers.
186. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department provides clear vision and direction for the subject. Strategies for increasing the number of students who attain higher grades have recently been identified. Organisation, planning and record keeping are very thorough. The department plans varied and interesting content for courses. A fertile, lively learning culture fully engages the learners. Although no accommodation is available, specifically reserved for the use of sixth formers, a timetable of the art rooms that are available throughout the week allows students good access to subject facilities beyond timetabled lessons.

Dance

Provision in dance is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above those typical of advanced courses and achievement is very good.

- The leadership and management of the department are excellent.
- Very good teaching is grounded in excellent subject expertise.
- Students are totally committed to the subject and their attitudes are excellent.

Commentary

187. Most students have attained high grades in AS and A-level examinations since the courses began in 2001, but comparisons with national averages are unreliable, given the small numbers involved.
188. Students are currently achieving very well and reaching standards well above those typical of advanced courses. Most students are extending their knowledge and understanding from dance in the GCSE examination course very well. The few students who had little experience of dance before joining the course make excellent progress, especially in practical work. Students are totally committed to the subject and spend much time in the department. They work independently and in their choreographic groups to achieve technical accuracy. Students benefit considerably from the excellent opportunities given by the hard work of their teachers, who organise many additional activities. These include before and after-school workshops, theatre visits, dance-company visits, and performances for local schools and friends.
189. The teaching is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and lead stimulating and exciting lessons. They enable students to deepen their understanding of all aspects of the subject discipline. Students' learning is very good because teachers have the highest expectations of what students can achieve in performance and question them rigorously to ensure they understand the work. Teacher, peer and self-assessment are used to improve students' work and teachers consolidate this with thorough written feedback.
190. The head of department provides very clear educational direction and excellent leadership for the subject. Both teachers are highly motivated and the students find inspiration in the way that they are taught. Results have been well monitored, but analysis of students' performance prior to entering the course does not take into account the practical element and is not an accurate means of measuring progress and setting targets. The examination courses have been established since the last inspection. The department makes a major contribution to the enrichment of the life and ethos of the school.

Drama

Provision in drama and theatre studies is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in practical work are very high and achievement is very good.
- Extra-curricular opportunities and links with the community are outstanding.
- Excellent leadership and very good teaching challenge and inspire students.

Commentary

191. Standards attained in AS and A-level examinations are consistently above the national average. Most students do better in drama than they do in most of their other sixth form subjects. There is no difference in girls' or boys' attainment that results from their social or ethnic backgrounds. All students have equal opportunity to take the subject and, almost always, complete the course.
192. Overall, standards are well above those typical of AS and A-level courses. Students' writing is above what is usually expected for the courses. It shows thorough research, through the use of the library and the Internet, to investigate: writers, leading performers, plays, themes and

historical, social and cultural contexts. Students have excellent understanding of assessment objectives. Consequently, most of their writing is fluent and analytical. Interpretations are well justified and illustrated. However, some written work is not evaluative enough. Planning and story-boarding are impressive. Students' own scripts display a thorough understanding of leading practitioners such as Brecht, Stanislavski and Artaud. Their textual studies and annotation are perceptive and mature. They have very good skills of discussion and problem-solving. Standards of performance are very high. Ensemble, improvisation, creativity and teamwork are excellent. Students readily explore together concepts and themes. They challenge and support each other and work quickly and creatively. They use body language, voice, space and levels of stage performance effectively to shape and direct performances well. Their ability to evaluate their own and others' performances is assured and brings about immediate improvement.

193. Students' achieve very well because of their commitment, enthusiasm and their participation in an outstanding programme of enrichment experiences. There are frequent theatre trips, visiting theatre groups, drama festivals, drama in the community and regular contact with professional actors and directors. These provide superb opportunities for students to gain valuable practical experience of how the theatre and drama contribute to society. Because there is a subject technician, students can choose the technical and design options of the courses. The excellent theatre enables all to work and perform in ideal surroundings.
194. Teaching and learning are very good. Students are inspired and motivated to achieve their best. Teaching promotes confidence, trust, independence and creativity among students. It also gives students a realistic view of drama. All teachers have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations of what each student should achieve. Lessons are carefully planned, stimulating, challenging and enjoyable. Teachers involve students thoroughly in assessment procedures.
195. Leadership and management are excellent. The heart of the success of the department is that it is dynamic, innovatory and has a total commitment to the highest standards. Development planning is clear and precise; teaching and students' achievements are well monitored. Communication and teamwork are significant strengths. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Performing arts

Provision in performing arts is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently very good.
- Students' excellent attitudes and very good relationships with teachers enable them to achieve very well.
- Leadership is excellent and the department makes an outstanding contribution to school and community life.

Commentary

196. Students follow the BTEC course in performing arts and consistently attain well above average results for the course. An impressive number of students gained merits and distinctions in 2003. There is no difference in the performance of students because of their different ethnic or social backgrounds and almost all regularly complete the course.
197. An increasing number of students, especially boys, are opting for this popular two-year course. They achieve very well. Many students go on to study performing arts related courses in higher education. Former students are regular professional performers on stage and television. Standards seen in lessons were well above those usually to be expected. Students have very

good dramatic and performance skills. For example, Year 12 students in masks showed considerable skill in developing semi-improvised performances that explored contemporary issues.

198. The quality of teaching is very good and is a clear strength of the department. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They plan stimulating lessons very well. The teaching challenges students to strive for their highest level of achievement. Teachers support students very well in their work and give them clear feedback and encouragement. Students have great application and concentration in lessons. Key features of the department are the trust, care and respect teachers and students show for each other.
199. The leadership and management of the department are excellent. The committed team of teachers gives students a specialist education of the highest quality. There are many extra-curricular opportunities for performances and workshops – for example, for local primary schools, homes for the elderly and contributions to the Arts Day at Lincoln Castle. There is an annual ‘Director’s Challenge’, where Year 13 students devise and direct an original piece of theatre. This culminates in an evening of plays which are adjudicated by a panel of professionals. The department’s contribution to the life of the school and community is outstanding.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

200. Physical education and leisure and tourism were sampled. Physical education is taught jointly with the neighbouring sixth form. Two lessons were seen in which standards were at the level expected for the courses; students achieved well. Students have excellent attitudes to the subject. Secure planning of the courses between the two schools helps students to make good progress. A Year 12 lesson in the Intermediate level course in leisure and tourism was seen. The teaching and learning were good and the students present achieved well in their individual work using computers on marketing a leisure attraction. Several were absent and lack interest in the subject. The curriculum requires them to include this course in their studies, but they have no particular vocational interest in leisure and tourism. Consequently, the course does not meet these students’ needs, and their interest in it is low.

BUSINESS

Business studies

The quality of education provided for the school’s students in the neighbouring sixth form is similar to that reported below.

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers’ good subject knowledge enables students to learn well.
- The quality of leadership ensures good teamwork and joint provision between the two sixth forms.
- Some more-competent students do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers make good use of current and global business problems in lessons.

Commentary

201. A-level results have been consistently above average in recent years. They fell to below average in 2003, but this is not typical of the general trend. Results in the AVCE business course and in A-level economics are also above average. There is no significant difference between the attainments of students arising from their social or ethnic backgrounds. The vast majority complete the courses.

202. Current standards are above those usually seen in advanced courses in both Years 12 and 13. Students achieve well, given their standards at the start of the courses. In a Year 13 lesson, students analysed the impact of external factors on the growth patterns of two business firms that had had to restructure in recent years. Students used good skills of deduction and interpretation of evidence in their analyses. They applied a range of business concepts to identify the key problems, and made suitable recommendations for action to promote growth. In a Year 12 lesson, students showed good understanding and ability to think through problems in marketing, human resource management, the external economic environment and their impact on new enterprise.
203. Teaching is good overall and some is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan stimulating lessons based on an excellent selection of contemporary resource material. This is supported by well directed, challenging questioning and a good range of activities which enable students to apply their knowledge to increasingly complex business problems. For example, in a challenging Year 13 statistics lesson, students used eight different sets of market-share data to investigate and prepare commentaries on product sector growth. As a result, students learn well and make good progress. However, some more competent students do not always achieve the highest grade of which they are capable. Relationships between teachers and students are good and students are well motivated.
204. The head of department's very good leadership and management ensures good joint provision with the neighbouring sixth form. Very good teamwork results in effective curriculum development and assessment. Very good monitoring of teachers' and students' work takes place. Learning resources and opportunities for teachers' professional development are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

205. Two lessons in the double award, vocational, GCSE examination health and social care course were sampled. Standards were broadly in line with those expected for the course. Students responded well to good teaching, especially in oral work, where they showed good recall of previous learning and good understanding. Students get on well together and relate well to their teachers. They achieve well. One lesson of the BTEC first diploma in early years' childcare course was observed. The teacher's very good knowledge of course requirements and students' evident enthusiasm and hard work enable them to achieve very well.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

206. The school runs a course of core studies for one lesson each week to provide for students' personal development. The course includes good careers advice and preparation for higher education. However, it does not give students enough opportunity for their personal development. There is no centrally planned enrichment programme, either within the school, or as part of joint provision with the neighbouring sixth form. Students said that they would like more worthwhile, extended opportunities to enrich their learning.

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

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