

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Broadoak Community School**

Weston-super-Mare

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109315

Headteacher: Mrs L J Heaven-Woolley

Lead inspector: Helen Silverstone

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 258583

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	802
School address:	Windwhistle Road Weston-super-Mare
Postcode:	BS23 4NP
Telephone number:	01934 422000
Fax number:	01934 413903
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Lawford
Date of previous inspection:	9/2/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Broadoak is an 11-to-16 co-educational comprehensive school in the southern part of Weston-super-Mare in North Somerset. It occupies a new building, completed in 1999. The number on roll is 802. This is a considerably smaller number than at the time of the previous inspection when the school still had a 6<sup>th</sup> form. The school contains the full range of ability and socio-economic backgrounds. About one quarter of the pupils are on the special educational needs register, and 21 have statements of special educational need. This is higher than the national average. Of these pupils and of the ones, who are at the school action plus stage, the majority have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school recently received funding for a learning support unit under government funding and the centre opened this September. Pupils entering the school present a profile of attainment that is below the national average. Many pupils at the school are drawn mainly from three neighbouring estates, areas of urban deprivation with social and economic difficulties, whilst others come from more affluent areas. The school draws its pupils from about 20 primary schools that cover an increasingly wide area. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is low. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is very low.

Since the last report, the school has undergone a period of turbulence that resulted in the removal, in 2002, of the right of governors to manage their own budget. The local education authority has created a strategy to help the school that included the placing of a team of experienced leaders in the school last year. This was effective and there is clear evidence that the advent of a new and permanent management team in September 2003 should enable the school to move forward.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1258	Helen Silverstone	Lead inspector	
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector	
32222	Chris Marshall	Team inspector	English
11548	David Lee	Team inspector	Mathematics
30433	Christopher Corp	Team inspector	Science
17156	Edward Graham	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
32173	Barbara Brown	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
20247	Roger Parry	Team inspector	Geography History
10385	Keith Hopkins	Team inspector	Information technology
15866	John Forster	Team inspector	Music
32225	Christine Hough	Team inspector	Physical education
32225	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education

102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire

GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES –</b>	<b>20</b>
Learning Support Unit	
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>40</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Broadoak School can now be considered an improving school. Currently, pupils enter the school with below average standards and the same is true when they leave. This represents satisfactory value for money. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a series of difficulties, but is now making significant improvements. Teaching and learning have improved considerably and, although standards are still well below average, the achievements of pupils in Years 7 to 9 suggest that the teaching is likely to raise standards in the future. The appointment of a visionary headteacher, who has been very successful in other schools, augurs well for the future of the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The standard of teaching and the commitment of teachers are good;
- The leadership of the new headteacher is visionary and she is well supported by her management team;
- Most pupils are enterprising and take responsibility;
- Standards have been unsatisfactory, particularly at GCSE;
- Standards of literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory;
- The support and care of the pupils are very good;
- The school buildings and accommodation are very good;
- The information and communication technology provision is good;
- The school does not meet all statutory requirements in respect of the curriculum, which makes governance unsatisfactory;
- A significant minority of pupils display unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour;
- Provision for design and technology is unsatisfactory;
- There is insufficient consultation with parents.

Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school still has some outstanding issues, but it has improved on others. The raising of attainment is still an issue, as is that of involving parents more. The standards of teaching in music have improved and the work of the new senior management group is very good, although it still has to prove its effectiveness. The governing body has done considerable work to improve its committee structure and to develop new skills, although it is still failing to meet statutory requirements. The reduction of the new budget deficit is well in hand and, this time, there is a strong partnership with the local education authority, which continues to monitor both the budget and the work of the school. In addition to this, the school has greatly improved the quality of teaching and the GCSE results, which, whilst still well below average, have improved. The school has also developed a centre for pupils at the risk of exclusion and for those, who need extra help and support, and this is beginning to work well.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 11 results

**In lessons observed, achievement was satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4.**

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	D	E	E	E

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

**In Years 10 and 11, standards are low overall.**

**Overall, GCSE results in 2002 were well below average** as the table above indicates. This was partly because not enough pupils gained one or more GCSEs at grades A\* to G. In 2002, a significant number of the less able pupils were not entered for GCSE or any other form of nationally recognised accreditation. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C and at grades A\* to G were also well below average.

At GCSE in 2002, pupils performed best in drama, physical education and ICT and performed least well in Spanish and history. Girls did better than boys in all three core subjects, although the difference was most marked in English. Boys did better than girls in design and technology, although both were below national averages, and girls did better than boys in art and design, where the girls were above national averages.

In nationally accredited tests at the end of Year 9, attainment in 2002 was well above national averages in English and in line with national averages in science. In mathematics, it was below. In 2003, the results were below average in English and they were also below in mathematics. In science, they were at the national average.

**Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning and take a full part in the activities available. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development is good.** Attendance has been unsatisfactory, but has begun to improve and so far this term is in line with national averages. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and take a full part in the activities available. Behaviour in and around the school is good and it is good in most lessons also. Pupils and staff have good relationships.

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Overall, the standard of teaching is good with a number of very good and some excellent lessons seen. This ensures that learning is almost always at least satisfactory.** In nearly all lessons, most pupils are motivated by good teaching, are interested in learning and they behave well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, although attainment could be improved by more attention to the skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils for whom English is not the first language and more able pupils achieve as well as their classmates. Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements are not met in religious education in Years 10 and 11 and there is, as yet, no citizenship curriculum. Neither is the requirement for a daily act of collective worship met. However, the curriculum is broad and balanced and suits the needs of the pupils, although opportunities for further enrichment of the curriculum could be better. The school provides a healthy and safe environment and looks after the needs of the pupils well.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is very well led by the headteacher and other senior managers and areas within the school are well led by other managers. Governance is currently unsatisfactory because governors do not have control of their budget and are also failing to meet statutory requirements. However, they are working well with the local education authority to develop the school. Day-to-day management is currently satisfactory.

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

The school has satisfactory links with parents and with the community and there are good links with other schools. However, although parents are generally satisfied with the work of the school, they feel that they would like to be consulted more. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning is satisfactory and this contribution is good for pupils with special needs. Pupils, in discussions, indicated that they were happy at school and felt that standards of learning and behaviour were improving.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards overall and particularly at GCSE;
- Raise standards of literacy and numeracy in all subjects in order to enable pupils to access fully the curriculum and to develop as autonomous learners;
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by providing proper entitlement for all;
- Address the unsatisfactory provision in design and technology;
- Improve the attitudes of a significant minority of pupils and ensure that the best practice in behaviour management currently in the school is spread to all;
- Improve communication and consultation with parents;

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide lessons in citizenship for all pupils;
- Provide religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11;
- Provide an act of collective worship each day for all pupils.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards at the school, compared with pupils in other schools, are low, although achievement, in terms of how pupils improve on what they can do, is at least satisfactory. There is no real difference in how pupils from different backgrounds achieve, although girls generally do better than boys in line with national figures.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE rose in 2002 and again in 2003, although they are still well below national averages.
- Pupils for whom the first language is not English and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils' competence in ICT is good.
- Standards of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are low.
- Insufficient opportunities are given for less able pupils to gain nationally recognised accreditation.

#### Commentary

##### Key Stage 3

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	70 (55)	66 (64)
mathematics	58 (54)	67 (66)
science	54 (53)	66 (66)

*There were 173 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Standards of pupils in national tests at age 14 rose in English and science during the academic year ending July 2002. In mathematics, they remained constant. This attainment was well above national averages in English and in line with national averages in science. In mathematics, it was below. At the time of the previous inspection, all three subjects were in line with national averages and there have been fluctuations in mathematics and science each year since. However, when attainment was compared with that in similar schools, it was well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. When compared with the attainment of the pupils previously, their attainment in English was considerably above what might have been expected, in science it was well above and in mathematics it was above. Overall, in the three core subjects, attainment is well above average compared with the previous attainment of the pupils. In 2003, however, the results in English fell below the national level and there has not been a clear trend over the last five years. In mathematics, the 2003 figures were still below the national average, but in science they rose to the national average. No comparisons with similar schools were available at the time of the inspection.

## Key Stage 4

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades	33 (28)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades	79.(81)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades	92.(91)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.9	39.8

*There were 145 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- At GCSE, standards are low. In 2002, compared with all schools nationally, attainment was well below average, as it was when pupils are measured against their previous attainments. Compared with schools in a similar context, attainment was below average for pupils achieving five GCSE subjects at grades A\* - C. For those attaining five or more subjects at A\* - G and those attaining one or more subjects at A\* - G, it was poor. This is because some pupils were not entered at all for GCSE, although this was rectified in 2003. The overall point score was very poor.
- At GCSE, pupils attain best in drama, physical education and ICT and least well in Spanish and history. Girls do better than boys in all three core subjects, although the difference is most marked in English. Boys do better than girls in design and technology, although both are below national averages, and girls do better than boys in art and design, where the girls are above national averages.
- In lessons observed, pupils' achievements were considered satisfactory overall with a close correlation between teaching, learning and achievement at Key Stage 3. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Attainment was average in about two thirds of those lessons, a number of which were classes where pupils were set according to their abilities. Standards of work in pupils' exercise books and folders were satisfactory for pupils aged 11 to 14, but low for the older pupils. Overall, in the school, they were low.
- Overall, the standards of English language and literacy skills across the curriculum are below average. Less able pupils often experience difficulties in reading and understanding the materials provided in mainstream classes and this means effective learning does not always take place. Their limited writing skills hinder their ability to communicate ideas clearly in all areas of the curriculum and spoken contributions are often underdeveloped. Pupils' competence in numeracy is also unsatisfactory. The national numeracy scheme has been well implemented in mathematics, but not elsewhere in the curriculum to any great extent. Pupils' competence in ICT is good. Most pupils use computers and a broad range of software with good levels of confidence and competence. They research work effectively using the Internet and gradually develop satisfactory and often good skills in selecting and using only the information that is relevant to their projects.
- Standards are highest in religious education lessons where they are good, as is achievement. In mathematics, history and music, they are below average. In English, mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education, they are better for younger pupils than they are for older ones. Standards are better for older pupils in modern foreign languages and geography.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and is similar to that of other pupils, especially when support is given in lessons. Higher-attaining pupils with

physical disabilities achieve well, as do pupils in small classes that focus on raising levels of literacy. These pupils use their ICT skills competently to access reading and spelling programs. Teachers assess their achievement regularly, as do teaching assistants, and this is recorded so that progress is noted. Standards attained by those pupils, who have English as an additional language, are satisfactory and are in line with those of other pupils of similar ability.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

**Attendance was unsatisfactory, but has improved considerably this term. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Behaviour in and around the school is good.** Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance was unsatisfactory last year, but, so far this year, it is satisfactory.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to learning.
- The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance, which are beginning to be effective.
- Pupils show a ready willingness to take responsibility and respond maturely when they do.
- There are good relationships between adults and young people within the school.
- Moral and social development is good.
- In a small minority of lessons, there is a low level of disruption, which mars the effectiveness of the lessons and prevents more responsible pupils from learning.
- Limited opportunities were observed for learning about other cultures.

### **Commentary**

#### **Attendance**

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 89.2%**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.9%	School data :	3.9%
National data:	7.8%	National data:	1.2%

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

8. Attendance has been unsatisfactory, but has begun to improve and so far this term is in line with national averages. The pupils enjoy coming to school and punctuality, overall, is satisfactory. Unauthorised absences have been higher than the national average. The systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and are beginning to become effective. There is good liaison with the educational welfare officer. All statutory requirements are met. Occasionally, some of the older pupils do not arrive promptly for the start of lessons.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	723	244	2
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	12	5	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	2	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	3	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	3	0
Chinese	3	2	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	0	0

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

9. In lessons, pupils concentrate for long periods of time and contribute well to the lessons, which helps them to achieve. However, in a small minority of lessons, a few pupils sometimes disrupt lessons, affecting the progress of themselves and other pupils. Exclusions last year were very high, but indications are that they will be much lower this year.
10. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning when well supported. Occasionally, support lacks sensitivity and does not allow pupils to develop independence in learning.
11. Pupils and staff have good relationships. Pupils, in discussions, indicated that they were happy at the school and felt that standards of learning and behaviour were improving. At lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils socialise well together and behave well. This is particularly noticeable at lunchtimes. There are few lunchtime activities, although the ones that are held are very well supported and the school library is very well used. A small number of pupils play football, but otherwise, all over the fields and around the school, the pupils can be seen talking together happily in friendship groups.
12. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility and this is demonstrated through the Student Council, which is very effective. The headteacher's ambassadors also respond very well to their new roles and are a credit to the school. Examples of other opportunities for pupils' personal development are through the house activities and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. During the inspection, "Pop Idol" auditions were held and about 70 pupils performed in front of a judging team of church youth workers in very realistic conditions. There are other links with

the community, but these are mainly through house events and work experience, although there is a very useful link with the local newspaper.

13. Pupils' spiritual awareness and cultural development are satisfactory. Spiritual awareness is addressed very well in religious education, but is more limited in assemblies and other subject areas of the school. There is insufficient examination of other cultures of the world, although there was a good example in modern foreign languages during the inspection. Moral and social development are good. This is mainly delivered through assemblies, tutor time and PSHCE lessons. Moral development begins from the time they start at Broadoak and is reinforced throughout the school. The social development is evident in the house activities and in pupils' behaviour generally.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** Teaching is good. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because some statutory requirements are not being met. Otherwise, however, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that suits the needs of the majority of pupils. A curriculum review is planned by the new headteacher.

### Teaching and learning

**During the inspection, teaching was good and often very good** with some excellent lessons. This was true for pupils of all ages. Pupils generally behaved well in lessons, which allowed them to learn well. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is not the first language learned as well as their classmates.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 123 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2 %)	21 ( 18 %)	57 (46 %)	38 (32 %)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' command of their subjects is very good.
- Teachers plan effectively and time is also used effectively.
- The encouragement and engagement of pupils are good.
- Teachers manage pupil behaviour well and have high expectations of good behaviour.
- Assessment is generally thorough and systematic, but is not always well used to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of the standard of work pupils can achieve, nor do they challenge them sufficiently.
- Resources, including teaching assistants, need to be used more effectively.
- Pupils are not given sufficient guidance about how to improve or how to work either independently or together.
- Homework is not always used well.

### Commentary

14. Teaching in the school has improved considerably since the time of the previous report and is now generally good with some very good and excellent teaching observed. Improvement has come about through the recent consistent monitoring of teaching and the spreading of good practice and because teachers of high quality have recently been appointed to the school.

15. There was very little difference in the overall percentage of satisfactory or better teaching between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, although there was more good and very good teaching for pupils aged 14 to 16 years. This good teaching ensured that pupils' learning too was good overall in just under two thirds of all lessons seen. Teaching is best in religious education where it is very good. Overall it is satisfactory or good in all other subjects.
16. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching, they plan effectively so that lessons are well structured, well targeted. This should leave time for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and this was the focus for some training days last year. This was seen to good effect in a majority of lessons, but in some lessons, although it was planned for, the third part of the lesson was not reached, and pupils did not have the opportunity to reflect on what they had learned, nor to consolidate key points.
17. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well in many lessons, which enables learning to be productive for all. Teachers generally encourage pupils well and treat them as young adults. In many lessons, teachers are very good at involving all pupils in oral sessions. A feature of the best lessons is the praise and encouragement offered by teachers and assistants when pupils respond well.
18. Although many teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve, this is still a weakness in some lessons. More able pupils are grouped together for teaching to match their abilities in the core subjects and this is often effective. In some other subjects, they are taught in mixed-performance groups and gifted and talented pupils are informally identified and expected to produce more extended or more detailed work. However, more able pupils are not always challenged and standards are not as high for those pupils as they should be. This lack of challenge can extend to other pupils too. Teachers are generally aware of the few pupils, who have English as an additional language, but specific planning and support for these pupils is not yet in place.
19. Most teachers use resources very well, but not all do. Use of teaching assistants is satisfactory, but there is variation across subjects in how teachers make use of this valuable support. Teachers have very good access to documentation about pupils with special educational needs that sets out targets for improvement in their learning and/or behaviour over a short period of time. While teachers have a good awareness of the learning needs of these pupils, there is a lack of specific planning to address them in appropriate tasks and activities in lessons and homework in many subjects.
20. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. The marking of pupils' work is constructive and linked to improving their performance. All pupils receive regular assessments based on data from the school's existing registration system that is based on their attainment, effort, and achievement. This also includes predicted grades for GCSE and vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11. Assessment data is used to track pupils' progress, but further use of this data to inform target setting and curricular planning is variable across subject areas. In a minority of subjects, teacher assessments are not standardised. The Learning Promotion Faculty assesses pupils with special educational needs on entry to the school, using a number of tests for reading, spelling, number, and spatial awareness. Regular tests provide evidence of progress, especially in reading and spelling. Pupils also ask to be assessed if they feel concerned about their progress.
21. Senior managers are in the process of implementing a new, whole-school assessment system. This is designed to permit a more sophisticated analysis of performance data that will better inform staff and pupils in target setting and raising levels of achievement.

## The curriculum

**Provision is unsatisfactory** because statutory requirements are not met in three areas: the provision of citizenship, religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the daily act of collective worship. However, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that suits the needs of the pupils, although opportunities for further enrichment of the curriculum are limited. Staffing and resources are good and the accommodation to support the curriculum is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A curriculum review is planned and the new management in the school have clear and incisive plans to address weaknesses in the curriculum.
- There is a broad and well-balanced curriculum that engages pupils' interests and which is suited well to their needs.
- Staffing, accommodation and resources all support the curriculum well.
- Statutory requirements are not met in religious education in Years 10 and 11, and in citizenship in all years.
- The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- Opportunities for the curriculum to be enriched through extra-curricular activities are rather limited.

### Commentary

22. The curriculum provides a sufficiently wide and balanced range of learning opportunities to suit the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. The school is in the process of reviewing the whole of the curriculum in order to enable all pupils to benefit from all available opportunities.
23. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 builds on the strengthening links with the primary schools, in particular through the exchange of pupil information and pupils' achievement in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6. All National Curriculum subjects are taught together with religious education and personal, social and health education. These subjects provide a good range of appropriate and stimulating activities.
24. The school has created a curriculum that offers pupils a broad range of choices in Years 10 and 11. Additional and vocational GCSE subjects, together with a specifically designed programme for some pupils, enhance the breadth and relevance of the curriculum for this age group. The school offers an alternative education programme for those pupils, who would benefit from a reduced National Curriculum through the Youth Award Scheme. The course and the teaching in Year 10 were judged to provide a good range of opportunities for the pupils. However, the provision for religious education and citizenship is unsatisfactory, although there are plans to address this by September 2004.
25. The curriculum is no longer as well managed as it was at the time of the last inspection. The teaching time of 25 hours a week meets government recommendations, but the school does not meet statutory requirements.
26. The school recognises the need to widen the opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The formal curriculum is enhanced by enrichment opportunities across a range of sporting, arts and other activities. All pupils are encouraged to take advantage of this limited range of extra-curricular activities, but the degree of pupil participation is rather limited. Greater opportunities are needed in order to enhance the taught curriculum further.
27. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. This fully meets pupils' statements of special educational needs, and they are faithfully linked to targets in individual education plans (IEP). Full curricular access is given to pupils with special educational needs in classes set according to ability or in mixed-performance classes. Additional teaching is

provided before and after school for pupils, who benefit from intensive small group work in literacy. Gifted and talented pupils are not yet formally identified, but a co-ordinator is currently being appointed to develop policy and practice to ensure that these pupils are well provided for and to enable them to achieve their potential.

28. Previous difficulties in recruiting staff have now been resolved and the staffing situation has stabilised and is now satisfactory. There is a good match of staff to the curriculum, but there are not enough support staff for pupils, who have special educational needs. The school is aware of this deficit and has implemented the process for recruitment in this area.
29. The quality of accommodation in the school is very good. The effects of this are reflected in the overall good quality of teaching, but music requires further space for practice and composition work. The headteacher has drawn up a premises and building plan review and plans to amend accommodation and facilities in line with aspects such as best value, fitness for purpose, inclusion and health and safety. Resources for learning are generally good overall and very good in information and communication technology. The extension of the curriculum through visits to museums, theatres etc and fieldwork is satisfactory only with missed opportunities to enhance pupils' learning experiences.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Child procedures are good and are sensitively and efficiently applied.** There are good health and safety procedures and they are effectively followed. There is satisfactory support, advice and guidance based on monitoring, but the advice and guidance for careers has not been effective. The school seeks pupils' views through the Student Council. This arrangement works very well. Induction arrangements are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils are well looked after in the school. The school provides a healthy and safe environment and looks after the needs of the pupils well.
- Pupils' views are encouraged well through the Student Council and they are considered carefully. The pupils feel that their views are valued.
- The form tutors and heads of year groups provide an ethos where pupils feel that they are able to approach a range of adults if they feel that they have a problem to deal with.
- The provision of careers advice and guidance is a weak area. However, the school has recognised this and has already started to address it.

### **Commentary**

30. The school provides good care, welfare and health and safety for the pupils. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. However, although the support from the careers service is valued, the careers guidance offered by the school is weak. The school is good at seeking, valuing and acting upon pupils' views.
31. The school has good procedures for child protection and these are sensitively and efficiently applied. Health and safety procedures are comprehensive and are effectively implemented. All statutory requirements are met and there are a number of persons qualified in first aid.
32. Outside support is well generated and managed. The school has adopted a multi-professional approach to the organisation of outside specialist agencies and this works very well. Form tutors, supported by heads of year provide good day-to-day support for the pupils. This is supplemented by all staff in the school, who have a caring approach to the pupils. The Learning Support Unit plays an important part in supporting some of the pupils with particular needs.



33. Pupils' performance is monitored by the heads of year, who are responsible for tracking the extent to which pupils achieve targets set by the school. Appropriate awards acknowledge any special achievements. The form tutors and heads of year help individual pupils with particular problems and the level of attention given is sufficient. Some recent alterations to procedures mean that the heads of year are re-assessing some of the ways in which they approach pupils' behaviour.
34. The school has a very good Student Council. It is structured through year councils, who feed, via elected year representatives, to the main Student Council. Through this, the school is able to seek the views and ideas of pupils. It does this well and many of the suggestions and requests have been acted upon.
35. Induction arrangements with feeder primary schools are good. Pupils have complained about the handling of career guidance for Year 11 last year. The school recognises this and has already arranged a careers evening for the current term and is re-assessing its approach to the delivery of career advice.
36. Pupils with learning difficulties know that the Learning Support Faculty staff are readily available to give them support with their learning, emotional and behavioural needs. They contribute to discussion about their targets, and it is planned to extend this practice. A special educational needs support teacher arranges concessions and support as necessary for internal and external examinations so pupils with special educational needs have full access to accreditation. Subject teachers consult the faculty about the readability of question papers.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

**The school has satisfactory links with parents and with the community and there are good links with other schools.** However, there were only 13 parents at the meeting with inspectors and only 12 per cent of questionnaires were returned. Parents, who responded, feel that they would like to be consulted more. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning is satisfactory and is good for pupils with special needs. The school provides good information to parents to keep them informed about events in the school and their children's progress. The school has good links with other schools and there are good induction procedures.

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

- The school provides good information to keep parents informed about their children's progress and to let them know about events in the school.
- There are good links with other schools.
- Links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Parents feel that they are not properly consulted and that there is no forum for parents' views to be heard.

#### **Commentary**

37. The school has satisfactory links with parents and the community. Educational links with other schools are good.
38. The small group of parents, who attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting, were largely supportive. Their only concerns were that the new mixed-performance groups in some subjects did not stretch the more able pupils, although this was not borne out by the inspection team's observations. They felt that they had not been effectively consulted in some of the recent decisions that had been made and that there is no effective parent forum.
39. The parents' questionnaires, although few in number, reinforced the feeling of not being involved, with parents expressing concerns about information on progress, behaviour in the school, the level and regularity of homework, how approachable the school is and the range of outside activities. They liked the fact that the staff expect the children to work hard, and that

their children like school. They liked the induction arrangements and felt that the staff treat their children fairly and that their children are encouraged to become mature. They felt that teaching is good.

40. The inspection team agrees with all the positive comments. It feels that there is some basis for parents' views on consultation, but regard the information provided on pupils' progress as good. Behaviour is considered good and any incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with well. Pupils, too, had no concerns about bullying. Homework has some inconsistencies in the school, but the programme, if adhered to, is satisfactory. It is felt that the school is a friendly place and that staff are approachable and welcome parents. The range of outside activities is limited at the moment, but the school, in conjunction with the Student Council, will be able to address this.
41. Parents of pupils with special educational needs receive regular reports on the progress of their children. They contribute to individual education plan targets and attend review meetings.
42. The school works with other secondary schools and a special school in Weston-super-Mare to enable the sharing of good practice and joint work on solutions to problems. The school also works with primary schools in an "excellence cluster", which encourages joint working across age groups.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is very well led by the headteacher and other senior managers and areas within the school are well led by other managers. General management is currently satisfactory, but likely to improve rapidly. Governance is currently unsatisfactory.

Leadership by the headteacher is excellent and by the senior management group it is very good. The newly appointed headteacher has very clear views about the raising of standards and her vision and energy are excellent. At the moment, management is satisfactory because the new management team has not yet had the time to translate its plans into action and so have a real impact on the school.

Governance of the school is unsatisfactory at the present time, but governors are working well to develop the skills they will require once control of the budget is resumed.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has extremely high aspirations for the school and excellent clarity of vision and sense of purpose.
- Other key staff share this sense of purpose and work very well to promote it.
- Leaders provide very good role-models to other staff and to pupils.
- The headteacher and other leaders are extremely committed to the promotion of equality and have great concern for the needs of individuals within the school.
- The governing body does not hold a delegated budget.
- The governing body does not yet ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties.
- The arrangements for the performance management of staff were unsatisfactory at the time of the inspection.

### **Commentary**

43. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory at the present time. Governors lost control of their budget in March 2002, but they are undertaking training and informing themselves well, ready for its return. In the context of the removal of the delegated budget, the local education authority and the governors have been working closely together to improve provision. However, the governors are currently failing in their statutory duty to ensure that the school

provides religious education for pupils aged 14 to 16, citizenship for all pupils and a daily act of collective worship.

44. Leadership by the headteacher and senior management group is very good. The newly appointed headteacher has laid a very clear agenda before staff that consists of the raising of standards in all areas of school life. Although she has only been in post for a few weeks, she is already making her presence felt in the standards of behaviour she demands, the appearance of pupils and staff and the work on the agenda for raising academic standards. Pupils report that they are already able to see improvements and readily identify that many teachers are following her lead. Other members of the senior management group are also newly in post. Two are new to the school and a third is new to senior management. They are a cohesive group of people, who clearly share a common agenda and, who have complementary strengths. The presence of the fifth member of the group, who was previously a senior manager in the school, helps to ensure that vision and enthusiasm are also informed by the knowledge of best previous practice. However, because of the newness of the team, the effectiveness of this leadership has yet to be fully felt in the general management of the school.
45. It is clear that the management team has the will and the capacity to effect considerable school improvement. However, there is, at the moment, no strategic plan that would translate the vision into a series of planned steps. The school lost the delegation of its budget in March 2002 and, as a result, finds it necessary to consult with the local education authority on the production of the new school development plan. This slows the process down considerably. The headteacher has produced a document that shows how the school would like consultation to happen. There is also a plan that shows how senior staff will manage areas of work and of the curriculum.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£2,314,349	Balance from previous year	-£250,047
Total expenditure	£2,216,757	Balance carried forward to the next	-£152,455
Expenditure per pupil	£2,875		

46. Financial management is currently outside the remit of the school, although the school identifies its needs and requests finance from the budget held by the local education authority.
47. At the level of middle managers, leadership and management are generally good. In ICT, history, geography and religious education, leadership is very good and management is only slightly less so in history and geography. In mathematics and English, leadership and management are good with the heads of department being new in post this term. In modern foreign languages they are good. In science and music, leadership is good, but management is satisfactory. In art and physical education, both leadership and management are satisfactory, whilst in design and technology they are both poor.
48. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership and management of the Learning Support Faculty. The organisation of the special needs support is very good, but the way in which teachers use learning support assistants in classrooms is under review. The work of the learning support centre is also very well organised with considerable attention being paid to detailed and helpful paperwork to support the needs of very vulnerable children. The work of this faculty is set fair to provide invaluable support to the clear commitment of senior managers to inclusion and the promotion of equality as well as to the concern for the needs of the individual.

49. The newly appointed co-ordinator for pupils, whose first language is not English, has very good awareness of the issues involved and the processes needed to implement a secure support system for those pupils. The school has the potential to put into effect positive strategies to support learning and much of the initial planning has already been addressed. There is, as yet, no co-ordinator for the work of the school with the most able pupils, although there is an appointment imminent. In defining the role of this co-ordinator, senior management is setting an ethos in which pupils of all abilities will be challenged across the curriculum, through well-differentiated teaching and schemes of work. The co-ordinator will be expected to give priority to ensuring that gifted and talented pupils are identified, well supported and monitored, and that parental involvement is harnessed.
50. The arrangements for the performance management of staff are currently unsatisfactory. The school is aware of the issues involved and plans are in place for the re-launch of the process in the near future. However, continuing professional development for staff is at least satisfactory across the school, except in design and technology. It is good in mathematics and religious education and very good in information and communication technology. There is a 100 per cent take-up of the ICT staff-training programme. The process for staff induction is satisfactory. Arrangements for reviewing the curriculum are currently being addressed. All staff will have the opportunity to contribute to it through a clearly defined consultation process.
51. The school's contribution to initial teacher training is good. There are strong links with partner institutions – Bath Spa University, Bristol University and the University of the West of England. Students on teaching placements in school are well inducted and supported.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Learning Support Unit**

**Provision in the Learning Support Unit is very good.** The unit opened this September and very good processes and documentation are already in place. There is every indication that this facility will prove of enormous benefit to the school.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

- The work of the centre is very well planned and managed.
- The staff are well prepared, confident and caring.
- The area is quiet, calm and conducive to work, and pupils work well there.
- Resources are interesting and appropriate and support pupils on their journey of self-discovery and self-development.
- Work for pupils in practical subjects is unimaginative.
- A limited range of inputs was seen.

### **Commentary**

52. The work of the centre has been planned in considerable detail by the recently appointed special needs co-ordinator. The unit was set up with money from the “excellence cluster” and is aimed at supporting pupils with attention deficit problems, behaviour difficulties and those children, whose attendance is a concern because they are unwilling to come to school. The aim of the unit at all times is to return pupils into mainstream classes as quickly as is appropriate. The entry procedures enable staff to have a clear, planned approach to the support of the children, who enter the unit. Pupil Support Plans are carefully drawn up and will be regularly reviewed. Clear exit strategies are also planned.
53. Pupils are very well supported in the unit and, when they come for discrete teaching, work well in small groups led by teachers or assistants. Where pupils come into the unit in order to spend a period of time, the subject teachers supply work and pupils are supported by staff in order to complete this satisfactorily. In addition, there are opportunities for sessions in anger management for those pupils, who need it. The co-ordinator provides information about pupils

in the unit to all staff so that help during any time they spend in mainstream classes can be properly targeted.

54. Materials supplied by the unit to target and assess pupils are attractive and useful and pupils are required to analyse themselves and their motivation to a considerable extent. Some of the material supplied by subject teachers is also attractive and useful to the pupils. However, difficulties arise when pupils are away from practical subjects and a large amount of the work is paper-based. The unit has four computers and pupils are able to use these, but there is a need to explore other types of inputs and tasks.

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

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4.**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

The overall provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- There is some good teaching.
- Schemes of work are detailed and clear.
- Classrooms provide a very positive learning environment that supports learning.
- Results are too low for both GCSE English and English literature.
- The teaching strategies seen in the best lessons are insufficiently embedded across the department.
- There is not enough attention to differentiation in the planning of lessons.

#### **Commentary**

55. In 2002, the Year 9 test results were above the national level and both boys and girls performed above their national averages. In 2003, however, the results fell below the national level and there has not been a clear trend over the last five years. The GCSE results in 2002 for both English and English literature were well below the national level. Girls performed better than boys in English and in English literature. In 2003, the GCSE results were again well below the national level with English falling lower, but English literature showing some improvement.
56. The standard of work seen was at the national average in Years 7 to 9, but there is clearly scope for improvement in Years 10 and 11. By Year 9, higher-attaining pupils write with a sound grasp of punctuation and spelling, and use more varied sentences. They structure their work well and write in detail, referring more closely to texts. Lower-attaining pupils continue to have difficulty with spelling and sentence construction and sometimes fail to paragraph their work. They find it particularly challenging to develop the detail of their writing. In Years 10 and 11, higher-attaining pupils make thoughtful oral contributions, write accurately and give evidence to support their views. However, many find it difficult to write well-sustained, closely analytical essays and the style of their writing is often too informal or imprecise. The work of some lower-attaining pupils is very brief and underdeveloped and they experience continuing difficulties with basic skills.
57. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, but again there is scope for improvement in Years 10 to 11, especially, where there is considerable variation between the achievements of pupils of different ability. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and a number of good lessons were observed where pupils achieved well as a result. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, set clear objectives and plan well-structured lessons that are varied and taught at a good pace. Good use is made of teaching styles associated with the National Strategy, especially whole-class work with teacher modelling of reading and writing skills, and well organised and purposeful group work. Questioning is well pitched, pupils are provided with helpful materials to support their work, and teacher marking is very constructive. In these lessons, pupils learn well. They are well behaved, engaged and keen to contribute and work at a good pace.
58. However, some teachers are less confident with the teaching styles they use and need to ensure pupils are completely clear on tasks set and how to complete them successfully.

Occasionally, texts are not well matched to the ability of the class. In these lessons, pupils learn less well and become inattentive, especially boys in lower-ability GCSE sets, and this means some lessons lose their momentum and coherence. It is important that the best practice is spread and embedded throughout the department and that teaching styles are refined so that they have the maximum impact on learning. The department also needs to develop its approaches to differentiation to ensure that pupils of different ability are fully challenged. An increase in staffing is required to support pupils with special educational needs in lessons and the current organisation of short visits to Year 7 by teaching assistants to support phonics work is not wholly effective.

59. The recently appointed head of English, ably supported by a new second in charge, has made a vigorous start and both leadership and management are good. A very detailed and helpful departmental handbook has already been developed and the newly written schemes of work provide both a clear overview and detailed lesson plans. As a result of a thorough self-evaluation, a clear action plan has been developed, which, if fully implemented, should quickly improve standards and the overall effectiveness of the department. A number of different initiatives are already underway, including lesson observations, the setting of regular assessment tasks, and improved target setting. Classroom displays include valuable guidance for pupils and provide a good environment for learning. All the evidence points to a clarity of vision and sense of purpose, and the department is very well placed to move forward.
60. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Teaching and learning have become far more active and the department is very capably led.

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

61. Overall, the standard of English language and literacy skills is **low**. When pupils join the school, their literacy skills are well below average. Overall, the standard of English language and literacy skills across the curriculum is below average. Less able pupils often experience difficulties in reading and understanding the materials provided and this means effective learning does not always take place. Their limited writing skills hinder their ability to communicate ideas clearly and spoken contributions are often underdeveloped. There has not been any recent attempt to develop a coherent whole-school approach to improving pupils' competence in language and literacy. However, the new headteacher has identified literacy across the curriculum as an issue to be addressed in the school's development plan.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

The overall provision for modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving at GCSE.
- Staff have an excellent command of both French and Spanish.
- Good planning leads to clear lesson aims, which are shared with pupils and consistently used as points of reference.
- The support for improving pupils' literacy is good.
- Pupils need to be challenged to work more independently.
- The successful strategies used in Years 10 and 11 need to be further developed in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Teachers need to provide more differentiated tasks within each teaching group.
- The end-of-lesson review needs developing.

## Commentary

62. Standards for 2002 in the GCSE examinations were just below the national average in French and well below in Spanish. The overall trend has been up over recent years, although the pattern is not stable. Results in 2003 indicate a narrowing of the gap between boys and girls, with boys improving their results. Work seen during the inspection demonstrates that achievement is satisfactory at all levels, and this bears a direct relationship to the standards of teaching and learning observed.
63. The large majority of teaching is satisfactory, with some good or very good and a small proportion of unsatisfactory practice. Where good progress is made, teachers make extensive use of their excellent command of the languages to challenge and stimulate learners. They plan lessons effectively, share lesson aims with pupils and make consistent reference to these aims as the lessons unfold so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing. Relationships with classes are productive and most classroom management is very good. However, in less satisfactory lessons, teachers use far too much English, depriving the pupils of the opportunity to hear and develop the foreign language. When tasks are too pedestrian, expectations too low and lessons too centred on the teacher or the textbook, pupils are not inspired to give of their best and make unsatisfactory progress. In most lessons, the plenary session needs further development in order for pupils to consolidate their learning. Better progress occurs in Years 10 and 11 because pupils are very clearly aware of what they need to do to improve. The department is aware of the necessity to extend this good practice into Years 7, 8 and 9 so that younger learners are also aware of their National Curriculum levels and targets.
64. The leadership and management of the department are both good. The head of department has a clear vision for future development and sets priorities for the use of funding. Assessment practice is consistent across the department and the monitoring of teaching and learning and use of data is satisfactory. The head of department uses his knowledge of staff and pupils to good effect and is aware of the need to develop a departmental improvement policy and to raise standards in Years 7, 8 and 9.
65. The department makes consistently good input into improving pupils' literacy both in the foreign language and in English, although there is a need for more differentiated tasks within teaching groups to cater for all learners. Support for pupils' mathematical skills is satisfactory and teachers make good use of information and communication technology.
66. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Staffing is stable and banding arrangements are more congenial to language learning. Standards are rising, but there is still room for further improvement.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national average.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below the national average.
- Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good.
- Good teaching succeeds in motivating pupils.
- The attitudes of a minority of pupils in some lessons inhibits learning.
- Numeracy skills have yet to be developed in a systematic way in many subjects.



## Commentary

67. Results in National Curriculum tests for Year 9 pupils in 2002 were below average. The 2003 results were similar to those in 2002, and still below the national average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Standards at end of Year 11 in 2002 were well below the national average. In 2003, standards fell below the 2002 results and were very low. The performance by boys was slightly better than that of girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Overall, the standards in mathematics since the last inspection have slightly improved by the end of Year 9, but have deteriorated by the time pupils complete their education in Year 11.
68. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good because learning is interesting and teaching engages and motivates them to learn. The work in pupils' books builds on the work they have undertaken in the primary phase and depicts a greater rate of progress that is not always reflected in test results at the end of Year 9. Pupils build a strong knowledge base in these years, developing a good understanding of working with number, algebraic processes and shape. Regular practice in the manipulation of number ensures that pupils are confident to manipulate and convert between fractions, decimals and percentages and apply these skills in other contexts.
69. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Insufficient number of pupils, who achieve the national average level or above at the end of Year 9, go on to achieve the higher grades at the end of Year 11. There were no A\* grades in 2003. Pupils do not build sufficiently strongly on their earlier experience. In particular, girls achieve less well than boys. The work seen during the inspection suggests standards are higher than reflected in examination results at the end of Year 11. In the higher-attaining groups, pupils are achieving high standards because energetic teaching captures their interest and motivates them. Work is challenging and expectation is high.
70. In all years, teachers are following the guidance and good practice outlined in the National Strategy for mathematics. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to engage pupils in interesting and varied activities. Effective use is made of mini whiteboards, graphical calculators and ICT to enhance learning. Teachers know pupils well and the good relationships ensure that individuals are well supported and helped. Teaching is less effective when the poor attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is allowed to interfere with learning. In these lessons, expectations are not high enough and the pace slow. Good marking and written feedback gives pupils a clear picture of their progress and where they need to improve. However, insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan for pupils of different ability in teaching groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to teachers and where there is additional support in the form of teaching assistants, they make good progress with their learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar good progress.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The recently appointed subject leader has identified the priorities for the subject and set challenging targets for improvement. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject with a focus on improving teaching and learning. There is a strong team of experienced teachers, who support each other and are determined to raise standards. There are opportunities for pupils to receive out-of-school support and the Easter revision courses have proved to be very successful and valued. There is a need for more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the work of the faculty to identify what works well and where improvements are needed. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

The national numeracy strategy has been implemented well within mathematics, but few other areas have systematically planned the development of numeracy in their subjects. There is good practice in science, geography and design and technology, and good use is made of basic number skills in the teaching of Spanish. There is a need for more use to be made of pupils' numerical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

## SCIENCE

The overall provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning is good, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The teachers are enthusiastic, have a good subject knowledge and teach in very good surroundings.
- The monitoring of all aspects of teaching and learning is not sufficiently extensive to ensure consistency across the department.
- The achievement of pupils is good in Years 7 to 9.
- The groups for double science in Years 10 and 11 are too large.
- The lessons are well planned and there is a wide range of teaching styles.
- The literacy skills of some pupils are low and this affects their progress.
- There are good relations between teachers and pupils.
- The attitudes and behaviour of some lower-attaining pupils must be improved.

### Commentary

72. By the end of Year 9, the results in 2002 were at the national level. The level of attainment has improved in 2003 and results are at the national level. The trend has been upwards over the past five years. The GCSE results were below the national figure in 2002 and remained below in 2003.
73. The standard of work seen met the expected standard in Years 7 to 9, both in lessons and in pupils' work. The highest-attaining Year 9 pupils could describe the current flow in circuits in detail. In Years 10 and 11, the standard of work seen was below the national average. The higher-attaining pupils could devise the appropriate ray diagrams for a range of lenses, while lower-attaining pupils could calculate the speed of sound in simple calculations.
74. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. The pupils join the school below the national level and make good progress up to the end of Year 9. This is due to the well-planned lessons using a wide range of teaching styles that the pupils enjoy. There are many opportunities to perform practical activities and investigations. Most pupils carry out these activities well. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 to 11 is satisfactory. The pupils previously attained lower levels at the end of Year 9 and find some of the topics difficult due to their lack of prior knowledge. This situation is not helped by the fact that these pupils are taught in groups of up to 35 in a class. In these lessons, the teachers are unable to offer the level of support these pupils require, nor can they monitor progress effectively.
75. The teaching and learning is good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons being observed. Lessons are generally well managed by teachers, who have good subject knowledge. Some teachers make good use of computers to enhance the learning, especially for the lower-attaining pupils. All teachers in the department have the expertise, but not yet the confidence to use this approach. It is important that the current good practice seen is shared amongst all the staff. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory achievement and are supported by teachers with suitable resource material. These pupils achieve better when the

learning support team is present in lessons. All staff know their pupils well and are aware of their needs in detail.

76. In the most effective lessons, the teachers have the necessary skills to motivate all the pupils with careful planning linked with high expectations of behaviour. In these lessons, there was a focus on success with a good relationship between pupils and teachers. The department has made a good improvement in the aspect of investigations in science. In the less successful lessons, the attitude of some pupils, especially lower-attaining boys, affect the pace and learning at times. The literacy skills of some pupils are low and this restricts their progress, especially in writing notes and reading texts for understanding. The school has strategies planned to improve these skills and these must be fully implemented.
77. The leadership of the department is good. The acting head of department is experienced, teaches well and gives good support to all the teachers. The management is satisfactory. While awaiting the newly appointed head of department, the implementation of the development plans has been delayed, but all other aspects have been maintained. This has been possible because the teachers work as a team and there is a shared desire to improve the standards. The department is fortunate in teaching in an excellent suite of laboratories and is well supported by very efficient technicians.
78. The teaching and learning of all teachers are not fully monitored and this needs to be extended. At the present time, the outcomes of any monitoring do not ensure that all teachers' expectations are sufficiently high and consistent for all pupils. The department's assessment procedures for pupils' attainment are good, but again need to be extended to review progress and to identify successful teaching strategies.
79. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, especially in the areas of teaching, and pupils' attitudes.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are in line with the national average and amongst the best in the school. This represents good achievement over time.
- Good and often very good teaching and good relationships exist in most lessons.
- Very good leadership provides a very clear direction and sense of purpose for information and communication technology.
- The tasks set for lower-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not always suitable to challenge or support them at the right level.
- Over-large class sizes in Year 10 affect standards. The progress made by large groups is affected by poor ventilation in some ICT suites.
- Control technology is at a very basic level. Pupils' skills in programming a machine to design or manufacture a product are very much underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

80. Results in 2002 in the GCSE full and short courses were broadly in line with the average for A\*-C grades. All pupils entered for the examination achieved a grade in the range A-G, which is above the average. Pupils achieve as well in the subject as they do in their other most successful subjects at GCSE.
81. By the end of Year 9, overall standards are in line with the national expectation across all of the ICT strands with the exception of control technology. This represents good achievement

because most pupils enter the school with below average skills of knowledge and understanding in the subject. Apart from a very small minority of lower-attaining pupils, most pupils show good keyboarding skills and most pupils use the mouse very effectively to select and manipulate menus and functions. Pupils in Year 7 quickly develop appropriate skills in word processing and desktop publishing, working through the Key Stage 3 strategy workbooks. However, progress for lower-attaining and special needs pupils is affected by the language level used in the workbooks, which is targeted at more fluent readers. In Year 8, pupils show good skills when using a spreadsheet to handle and model information about a school fete that includes complicated formulae. Throughout Years 8 and 9, pupils develop their skills well in using ICT for a variety of tasks, including researching projects using the Internet. In general, pupils with special educational needs show considerable interest in their work and make good progress, especially when supported by specialist staff.

82. By the end of Year 11, standards are in line with the national average expectation. Higher-attaining pupils achieve in line with the average for 'A' grades, reflecting very good achievement for these pupils. Overall, the standards represent good achievement in Key Stage 4 since pupils entered school with well below average attainment in the subject. Pupils build effectively on their prior knowledge and skills and make good progress in lessons. Higher-attaining pupils show very good skills and confidence levels and can use the technical vocabulary of the subject well. Lower-attaining pupils show a less secure use of the appropriate technical terminology. Pupils' work reflects good planning and satisfactory independent learning skills in the completion of their coursework folios. Year 11 pupils show good skills in word processing and spreadsheet work when completing the business and administrative module for their GCSE coursework.
83. Teaching is mostly good and often very good. Teachers successfully structure lessons to stimulate pupils' interest and to maintain a good attitude to learning throughout each lesson. Tasks are well matched to pupils' interest and enable pupils to build effectively on their prior knowledge and skills. Teachers provide high levels of individual support, challenge and guidance, working with pupils at their computers. The system to assess pupils' attainment and to record progress is very good. The teaching is also successful in promoting mainly good behaviour in most lessons. The good level of technical support provided ensures that all equipment works effectively and provides an invaluable contribution to pupils learning occasionally working with pupils at their computers.
84. Since the last inspection, a very substantial investment has been made in maintaining and improving the resources for ICT. The very good provision of hardware and software with a pupil to computer ratio of 4:1 is undoubtedly impacting very positively on standards throughout the school. Standards have at least been maintained and improved at GCSE since the last inspection. The very good leadership and management of the subject ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully implemented within the limitations of resources. The leadership has also facilitated good opportunities for pupils to use ICT in most subjects, but there remains some underdevelopment in a minority of subjects.

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

85. Most pupils use computers and a broad range of software with good levels of confidence and competence. They research work effectively using the Internet and gradually develop satisfactory and often good skills in selecting and using only the information that is relevant to their projects. In science, modern foreign languages, history and geography, pupils use computers well to find information from the Internet. They present their coursework effectively using word processing, desktop publishing and, occasionally, presentation software. In mathematics, pupils use logo software effectively to construct shapes. In information and communication technology lessons, pupils show good skills in extracting information from a spreadsheet about profit and loss accounting for a school fete. In many subjects, teachers use presentation software well. Occasionally, pupils do not have access to computers when required.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is improving because the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Good-quality teaching is raising standards, but they are still too low.
- Assessment data is underused: a weakness that the department recognises as an area for development.
- There is insufficient use of levels and grades to describe pupils' achievement.
- Very good leadership is improving teachers' involvement in curriculum development.

#### Commentary

86. Standards were below expectations by the end of Year 9 in 2003, but from work seen they are now close to expectations. This represents good achievement by pupils, who started with below average standards. By the end of Year 11 in 2002, when teaching was inconsistent, standards were below average for GCSE grades A\*-C, but above for grades A\*-G. 2003 results show improvement, and work seen indicates standards are close to average as a result of consistent specialist teaching. Achievement is satisfactory.
87. Pupils improve their skills in locating places on maps of different scales and also their ability to recognise features. They use statistics well to create distribution maps using colour coding to show, for example, unemployment by region. Pupils learn effectively about the formation of physical features and their impact on people. For example, pupils in Year 7 know that deaths from volcanic explosions are greater in poorer countries because rescue services have fewer resources. Pupils use photographs well to identify different types of landscapes, but lower-attaining pupils' weak literacy limits their communication of what they know and understand. Pupils draw well upon prior learning when they explore new topics. Year 11 pupils have good understanding of the reasons for industrial change in South Wales. They use their geographical skills well to investigate independently the reasons for siting a local shopping centre out of town as part of their GCSE assessment.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall – ranging from satisfactory to very good. Lesson planning is good. Teachers use starter activities to consolidate and extend knowledge and understanding. Year 7 pupils found town names in Britain ending in 'ck' to improve literacy and skills in locating places. Provision made for pupils with special needs is variable because there is inconsistency in matching tasks to ability. Teachers do not always deploy teaching assistants to benefit all pupils, who need support. More able pupils have few specific tasks to extend their learning. Good teaching methods and effective use of resources makes much learning lively and brings reality into the classroom, for instance, by very effective use of ICT. Written comments by teachers on work acknowledge pupils' learning and point out how they may improve. However, they are not linked to levels or grades listed in pupils' notebooks so the opportunity for pupils to become familiar with standards is missed.
89. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for improvement. She involves teachers in curriculum development through review and re-writing schemes of work. Some analysis of examination performance has been done, and the aim is to use more assessment data to inform planning. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and the management of pupils have improved. Statutory requirements are met.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good.
  - Standards are above average by the end of Year 11.
  - Assessment data is underused: a weakness that the department recognises as an area for development.
  - There is insufficient reference to levels and grades pupils' achievement.
  - Leadership is very clear-sighted, and the subject is well managed.
90. In 2002-2003, teachers assessed pupils' standards as being below expectations. Girls were above expectations and boys were below. Current work seen is broadly in line with expectations at the end of Year 9. Pupils enter with below average standards and they achieve well by the end of Year 9 because of good teaching. In 2002, GCSE results were poor. Pupils achieved very well in 2003 and results improved to above average because of good and consistent specialist teaching.
91. Learning is effective because lesson planning is very good and pupils quickly engage in starter activities. Much use is made of individual whiteboards so teachers assess what pupils know and understand by their answers. Quick questions probe further, and more able pupils tackle deeper issues. Pupils gradually build a sense of chronology: time-lines help them to understand BC and AD. Pupils question resources to gain an understanding of an historical period, as when Year 9 pupils analysed cartoons of 1815-1832 to see why people protested against the effects of economic changes in England. Year 11 pupils have good skills for analysing cause and effect, such as the events leading to the 'Cold War' period between the USA and USSR.
92. Teachers use time efficiently so that most pupils achieve lesson objectives. Teachers deploy teaching assistants satisfactorily to support pupils with special educational needs: a pupil in Year 10 achieved much from a lesson because support was planned so that the teaching assistant was effective. Methods that provide for all are being developed in mixed-performance classes new this term. The use of different questions and tasks to match ability levels is evident, but not yet consistent. Marking acknowledges pupils' effort and progress, and guides them towards improvement. However, teachers omit links to levels and grades to establish standards to aim for.
93. Good teaching (very good in one third of lessons) is rooted in teachers' commitment to raising standards and achievement. Very well-planned lessons and teachers' assured knowledge of and enthusiasm for history engage pupils' interest so achievement is good and improving. ICT is used very well as a resource for teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for developing the curriculum and raising standards. Examination performance is analysed, but she plans greater use of assessment by all teachers to further improve teaching, standards and achievement.
94. Since the previous inspection, standards by the end of Year 11 have improved, which is linked to the rise in the quality of the specialist history teaching. Statutory requirements are met.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Provision in religious education in terms of teaching and learning is very good, but overall, provision is unsatisfactory** owing to the lack of adequate provision for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject.
- Teaching is very good and contributes very well to pupil achievement.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of work in the subject are well developed.
- The subject does not fulfil the requirements of the LEA agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11.

### Commentary

95. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average in relation to the North Somerset LEA Agreed Syllabus. Standards in the work seen in the GCSE course are also above average. By Year 11, pupils have developed good skills of analysis and evaluation and their research skills are very good.
96. In Years 7 to 9, there are some good examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. Pupils make sense of what they study and can relate it to their experiences of life. They are able to link their knowledge of religion with their everyday experiences. The teachers' use of discussion and questioning enables pupils to express their opinions and form clear judgments about religious and moral issues. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work enable pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. The use of a wide range of teaching styles enables pupils to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion. In many lessons, teachers enable pupils to reflect on their experiences and, as a result, pupils achieve well.
97. In Years 10 and 11, the teachers' excellent knowledge of the subject enables pupils to make very good progress in the GCSE course. Very good use of questioning, characterised by the teachers' awareness of the needs of the individual, allows pupils to extend their understanding of how they can learn from religion and apply it in their lives. Homework is well used to allow pupils to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed, and this is very effective in contributing to very good pupil achievement. However, the limited amount of curriculum time in the general course means that pupils do not receive their proper entitlement to religious education.
98. The assessment procedures provide a clear basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. The subject does set detailed targets against which it can assess pupils' progress. These need to be shared with pupils. However, pupils are clear from the detailed comments in their books about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve.
99. Curriculum leadership is very good, with a clear sense of purpose and direction. The head of the department approaches the task with enthusiasm and commitment. She has been very successful in developing a strong team approach, and is very well supported by the teachers, several of whom are not specialists. The monitoring of the work of teachers and pupils is well developed. The subject is managed very well and this is reflected in the rich diet of religious education provided for the pupils.

100. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is particularly strong. Pupils demonstrate a clear respect for the views, faiths and traditions of each other.
101. Pupils behave very well, are well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate very well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and pupils is excellent, and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Pupil behaviour makes a very good contribution to pupil achievement and progress.
102. Since the last inspection, standards have improved. Good improvements have been made in planning and in the schemes of work. The hard work of the curriculum leader has achieved great credibility for the subject within the school. The quality of teaching has also improved. However, the limited amount of time given to the subject in Years 10 and 11 continues to be a cause for concern. As a consequence of this, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**This example of excellent teaching demonstrates the standards that can be reached by a mixed-performance group of pupils in Year 10 when the basis for the lesson is the needs and experiences of the individual.**

#### **EXCELLENT TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Through the use of a highly stimulating and thought-provoking question and answer session characterised by the teacher's clear awareness of the needs of the individual, the teacher enables pupils to locate the relationship between personal belief and actions within their own experiences. Pupils engage with the teacher in generating their own questions extremely well and with complete confidence. The expert knowledge of the teacher and the ability to draw out very difficult ideas ensures that all pupils develop a clear understanding of the last supper. This is reinforced through the use of an extremely well-structured exercise that enables pupils to clearly understand the act of serving others. The relationship between pupils and the teacher is outstanding. The highly effective use of video clips, group work and attention to literacy skills enable pupils to develop their own skills of investigation, analysis and presentation of argument. The high degree of challenge to both groups and individuals by the teacher enables pupils to explore their own thoughts, feelings and moral standpoints in a structured and safe way. The teacher provides several opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and consider what they might do to act upon their views.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

#### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

The provision for design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- The commitment of teachers in the department to raising standards is good.
- The standard of teaching in food is good.
- The new accommodation is conducive to learning.
- The leadership and management of the department require development, particularly in relation to the co-ordination of curriculum planning, assessment and development planning.
- Standards need to be raised in all courses and particularly in Key Stage 4 for resistant materials and electronics.
- The range and quality of resources needs development in order for pupils to undertake research and design development in all the year groups.
- The ICT facilities available, particularly in relation to computer-aided design and manufacture, are not well used.



103. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are similar to the national averages for design and technology. Boys are achieving slightly better than national averages, but the girls are underachieving. In lessons, standards are generally satisfactory for all pupils and in line with the expectations for each year group. As pupils progress through Key Stage 3 they gain a satisfactory experience of food technology, textiles and resistant materials. There is little indication of pupils performing at a higher level because there is a lack of technological challenge in the work. The work being covered is weak in aspects relating to systems and control, product evaluation and the common use of computer-aided design and manufacturing processes. Pupils are making good progress with product evaluation in food technology and are starting to use computer-aided design and manufacture processes in textiles.
104. The Key Stage 4 GCSE results in 2003 are satisfactory and similar to national averages for GCSE food technology and textiles. However, the GCSE results for resistant materials and electronic products are poor and well below the national averages. The same was true in 2002. In all the design and technology GCSE courses, there is a fundamental weakness in the research undertaken by pupils and in the development of their design ideas. Pupils are not challenged to extend their design thinking and are not provided with the resource material needed to stimulate creativity. In both Years 10 and 11, some pupils are starting to make good use of computer-aided design in product design, but this has yet to become well embedded and for the outcomes to impact on raising standards.
105. The quality of teaching and learning varies from satisfactory to good and in a few instances it is very good. Teachers plan lessons well. They share lesson objectives with pupils and set clear expectations for the completion of work and behaviour. Where lessons are good or better, pupils progress well with their learning and the work is both challenging and interesting. Teachers effectively challenge pupils to respond to questions and to become fully involved with the activities of the lesson. Many classes have a substantial number of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are fully aware of these pupils and address their needs effectively by regularly monitoring their work to ensure they make the appropriate progress with their learning. Disruptive behaviour is a problem with a few pupils, but this is generally dealt with firmly when it occurs. There is a high absence rate for a substantial number of pupils and this leads to their poor progress. In all lessons, there is good emphasis on developing literacy skills.
106. The quality of curriculum leadership and the management of design and technology are poor. This is having a detrimental impact on the standards being achieved by pupils because there is a lack of co-ordinated planning and monitoring. In Key Stage 3, there is a timetable structure enabling movement between each material area. However, the work in each area is carried out in isolation rather than as an agreed co-ordinated series of activities to ensure ongoing progression in the learning of skills and knowledge. Some teachers have reviewed their schemes of work well, but not in the context of an overall planning strategy. The Key Stage 3 curriculum for design and technology meets the statutory requirements, but the lack of a co-ordinated approach to planning results in overlap and duplication in some of the skills being covered.
107. There is not a common assessment strategy across the department. Assessment data is not collated within the department to monitor the progress of pupils as they complete work in each material area. There is no cross-moderation of marking between the different material areas to ensure that common standards are being set.
108. There is not an inclusive approach to departmental development planning and there are no links to the overall school development plan. Teachers in the department are not directly involved with the future development of the department or in the identification of the in-service training needed to maintain teaching expertise and the awareness of developments in the subject.

109. A number of factors affect the learning and achievement of pupils. Many of the classes are very large for the teaching of design and technology. A number of classes have nearly 30 pupils in them. This has an impact on the progress of pupils, lesson planning, the equipment required and the material resources available. It also raises concerns regarding health and safety. In Key Stage 4, the option structure for courses makes it difficult for the more able pupils to select design and technology as a GCSE subject.
110. The accommodation of the department is good. Teaching areas are well maintained and well organised, although storage is still a problem. Facilities are generally good, but there is a need to upgrade the basic hand tools and small equipment in all the material areas. The stock of materials available for making activities is poor, particularly in resistant materials.
111. There has been little progress since the previous inspection apart from moving into new accommodation. The weakness in designing has not been overcome and is limiting the standards pupils are able to achieve. The quality of teaching remains unchanged. There has been a decline in the quality of leadership and in the management of the design and technology department.

## **Drama**

Provision for drama is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of drama is good, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- The departmental handbook gives very useful guidance to teachers.
- The schemes of work are very detailed.
- The department provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Non-specialist staff do not receive sufficient training.
- There is no system for monitoring the teaching of drama.
- Departmental documents for Years 7 to 9 do not indicate where the English National Curriculum requirements and English framework objectives are addressed.

### **Commentary**

112. In 2002, GCSE results were well above the national level and drama was the only subject in the school to achieve this. Twenty-five pupils were entered and 20 gained A\*-C grades. In 2003, the GCSE results fell below the national figure.
113. The standard of work seen in Years 7 to 9 is above the national average. Year 9 pupils are able to discuss how dramatic techniques can be used to convey emotion and improvise short scenes with good attention to language and movement. They develop ideas productively and perform confidently, making good use of gesture, facial expression and movement. In Years 10 and 11, the standard of work is also above average. Year 11 pupils perform scripted scenes effectively, showing a good understanding of character and an awareness of pace, volume and intonation. Their written work is well organised and shows an ability to reflect constructively on their own performances.
114. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 11 is good. GCSE pupils maintain the good progress made in Years 7 to 9 and further develop their performance skills. They are able to look closely at texts to find evidence about characters and they use dramatic terms confidently when discussing both scripts and performance.
115. This good achievement is the result of good teaching. The well-planned lessons have clear objectives and classes are skilfully managed. There is good movement between discussion and practical tasks, and lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace. In the best lessons, the level of subject knowledge is good and teacher questioning is searching. Key points from discussion are drawn out helpfully and clearly recorded. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate

their performances and good links are made between the specific techniques used and their more general importance in drama. Consequently, pupils learn well. They are keen to contribute, work purposefully and confidently, and comment thoughtfully on their own work and that of their peers.

116. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has developed a comprehensive handbook that provides very helpful guidance on policy, assessment and teaching strategies. The very detailed schemes of work are especially useful given drama lessons are often taught by English specialists in Years 7 to 9. However, the units need to identify where the English National Curriculum requirements are addressed and where the English framework objectives are taught. The head of department has a very good understanding of the subject and provides a good role-model for other staff. He is keen to offer training to non-specialist staff and monitor their teaching through observation, and it is important that both are implemented to ensure the quality of teaching is consistent.
117. A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered, including theatre visits, regular school productions and drama clubs. The department has good accommodation, but catering arrangements sometimes hinder access before and during lunchtimes. This difficulty needs to be resolved.
118. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Accommodation is no longer a significant problem and detailed schemes of work have been developed.

## **MUSIC**

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a positive ethos, good relationships and a commitment to continuing improvement.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Lesson activities motivate the pupils and promote learning skills.
- The curriculum is coherently planned.
- Standards and achievement at both key stages remain below expectations.
- Assessment methodology is confused, leading to unreliable information on standards.
- Creative tasks lack sufficient structure to enable the pupils to succeed.
- Accommodation for music is inadequate and restricts learning.

### **Commentary**

119. In contrast to the time of the last inspection, the leadership in music is now good. Although the standards in Years 9 and 11 have yet to reflect this, achievement in Year 7 is good and provides a basis for improvement. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is systematic and imaginative and this is beginning to improve the achievement of pupils. There are now several effective extra-curricular groups and around 10 per cent of pupils learn to play instruments. The department has high aspirations and a commitment to professional development.
120. The standards demonstrated by pupils entering the school now in Year 7 are a little below the national expectation, but these pupils are now learning well. By the end of the key stage, however, most pupils now in Year 9 are below the expectation. Pupils are able to play together in groups, but their skills are limited, and few can create melodies beyond a few notes or use simple chords. There is no evidence to show that listening and appraising skills are developed.
121. At Key Stage 4, pupils do not regain lost ground. Therefore, the proportion achieving A\*-C grades at GCSE is well below the national average. Year 11 pupils demonstrate basic knowledge and some satisfactory practical skills. More able pupils make effective use of composing software and create simple, but well-crafted, pieces.

122. Teaching is satisfactory. Overall, it is stimulating and the lessons are enjoyable. Activities are imaginative and the pupils respond well. There is a good atmosphere for learning. As a result, pupils now make progress in the tasks that they are set.
123. There are, however, weaknesses that prevent pupils from achieving as well as they could. Many pupils, at both key stages, need a more structured approach in order to develop secure technical skills. Assessment criteria needs to be related to the task in hand, so that the pupils can understand what they have achieved and what they should do next. Overall, the accommodation is not satisfactory because there are no nearby spaces where pupils can work without disruption from others. As a result, progress is too slow and the quality of work is compromised.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

The provision in art is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Accommodation is good.
- There is a developing resource base on the school Intranet.
- Standards are too low.
- The scheme of work for Key Stage 3 does not offer an acceptable range of activities, particularly in the case of ICT.
- Assessment procedures need improvement to collate data and monitor pupil progress.
- More stimulus resource material and display in the classrooms needs to be provided in order to promote creative thinking and to broaden the experience of pupils.

### **Commentary**

124. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are below the national averages for art. In lessons, standards and progress are generally satisfactory in the development of knowledge and skills. However, the breadth of experience provided is limited and pupils need to progress through a wider range of activities and skills. Too long is spent on some topics, for example on face drawing, and there are only limited opportunities for pupils to experience three-dimensional work. Pupils make good use of sketchbooks for class work and homework tasks. However, sketchbooks are not used for recording a range of ideas, observational drawings and techniques to use as a resource at a later stage.
125. The Key Stage 4 GCSE results in 2003 for art are similar to national averages and results are similar to those in 2002. Coursework involves, painting, ceramics and sculpture. However, in coursework, there is a lack of real creativity, breadth and originality to enable pupils to attain the highest grades.
126. In lessons, the quality of teaching is mainly good and is never less than satisfactory, although a number of non-specialists teach the subject in Key Stage 3. Overall, lesson planning is good, practical sessions are well organised and lesson objectives are shared with the pupils. However, in both teaching areas there is a lack of resource material and display to support teaching and learning or to promote interest. Very little use is made of ICT for artwork, although the department is developing a database on the school Intranet as a resource.
127. A number of classes have a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers address the needs of these pupils effectively by regularly monitoring their work to ensure they make the appropriate progress with their learning. Discipline is firmly maintained with difficult pupils. In lessons, there is good emphasis on the development of literacy skills.

128. Leadership in art is satisfactory, but the schemes of work need to be reviewed to provide a wider and more interesting curriculum. The Key Stage 3 curriculum for art does meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers in the department are not monitored to ensure consistency in teaching and the use of assessment. The cross-moderation of work is not undertaken between teachers in Key Stage 3 to ensure consistency in marking and to match national expectations.
129. Two teaching rooms provide good accommodation for art. These are well organised and well maintained. The level of equipment is satisfactory for painting, drawing and work in clay. In each art room, display is mainly used to show the work of pupils. There is very little display to show the work of other artists or to identify high expectations of quality and creativity.
130. There has been little change since the previous inspection apart from moving into new accommodation. In lessons, the quality of teaching remains as mainly good. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are still below the national averages for art. Sketchbooks are still not being effectively used as a resource for the development of artwork.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The overall provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes are good and achievement is satisfactory.
- Very good teaching in the older year groups provides pupils with plenty of opportunities for independent learning.
- Very good accommodation enables the department to offer a good breadth and range of curriculum opportunities.
- The extra-curricular programme provides a good range of activities for both team players and individuals.
- The time allocation for PE for those pupils studying two languages in Years 8 and 9 is less than that recommended nationally, which limits their range of learning experiences.
- The disruptive behaviour of certain groups of pupils in Years 9 and 10 restricts the overall progress of their teaching groups.
- A more systematic approach to analysing pupil data would enable staff to set targets that better meet the needs of individual pupils and groups.
- Staffing difficulties of the past have resulted in exam choices in Year 11 that do not best match pupils' needs.

### **Commentary**

131. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessments show that standards are broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 11, pupils reach standards that are just below the national average. Of the 20 pupils entered for GCSE dance in 2003, there were no passes.
132. Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9 is good and by the end of Year 11 it is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 – 9 is good. The needs of pupils are well catered for and the level of challenge is realistic. In a Year 8 gymnastics lesson, the teacher successfully adapted a lesson plan to address an identified shortfall in pupils' movement experience of held, balanced positions. A well-chosen, directed task gave pupils an immediate understanding of the next steps needed to answer the set task more successfully.
133. In all years, pupils' attitudes and values are good. In those lessons where attitudes are unsatisfactory, the behaviour of the minority restricts overall progress.

134. Across Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and the best teaching is exciting, consistently challenging and enables pupils to make considerably better progress than might be expected.
135. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory, with areas that need strengthening. There is a clear drive for improvement. The head of department shows a good understanding of the curriculum across all stages and provides a good role-model for pupils and staff. Pupil data is recorded and used to inform pupils of their levels of attainment and further potential. A more rigorous approach to using this data would enable staff to refine the process of target setting in a way that is better suited to pupils' individual needs. Teaching and learning need to be monitored and evaluated more effectively and the existing best practice shared throughout the department. In the past, the recruitment and retention of physical education staff have been weaknesses. In the last year, the head of department has successfully appointed a new full-time teacher and this has undoubtedly contributed to the very good quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

#### Example of outstanding practice

**This example of excellent teaching demonstrates the progress of which a group of low-ability pupils is capable when their needs are understood and addressed.**

#### **EXCELLENT TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

In an excellent Year 11 GCSE dance theory lesson, a group of low-ability pupils made very good progress as a result of well-selected teaching methods that successfully matched their preferred learning styles. A brisk warm-up engaged them immediately in a competitive oral exercise that fired their enthusiasm for the main task of the lesson. This was team-based and focused on the analysis of key technical terms from the dance syllabus and assessment criteria. The use of word cards and a competitive scoring system motivated the pupils to learn independently and from each other, thereby extending their understanding of complex words and phrases. Very good social interaction amongst the group reinforced the learning climate, evidenced by their insistence on finishing off the written worksheet in this lesson rather than at the start of the next.

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

136. PSHCE at the moment comprises Schemes of Work for separate identified unit areas, i.e., Health Education, Relationships, etc. Although, overall, it is considered satisfactory and some parts of it are delivered very effectively, it is felt that a re-assessment of the programmes would be beneficial. The school has recognised this and has already launched a review. It plans to introduce a much more comprehensive programme, which links the units, i.e., Health Education and Relationships and is also built into and across the school curriculum. Careers advice and citizenship will also be built into this programme.
137. The school provides opportunities for pupils to have sound advice and guidance with regard to choices made for Year 10, but the degree of careers advice with regard to future career or educational opportunities is underdeveloped.

#### **Citizenship**

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

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

- There is a need for the development of a full curriculum programme. The requirements of the programmes of study are not being fulfilled.
- Good teaching.
- Good leadership and management.
- The contributions of other subjects to citizenship education are underdeveloped.

- The systematic use of assessment is underdeveloped.
- The monitoring of citizenship is underdeveloped.

## **Commentary**

138. The school is committed to the provision of citizenship education and sees it as integral to pupils' personal development. The programme was launched in the autumn term 2003 and so is still in the early stages of development. However, significant steps have already been taken to plan for the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum. Careful thought and attention has been given to how to deliver this aspect of pupils' personal development. Citizenship education is taught as part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. It is not, as yet, supported by related themes and topics covered in other subjects. The delivery of citizenship themes through subjects is unplanned and is not monitored in a systematic way. Pupils have additional opportunities to develop an understanding of responsible citizenship and the democratic process through activities such as the school council. The use of citizenship themes such as law, economics and industrial understanding is underdeveloped. Overall, these activities require considerable development if citizenship is to feature effectively in the school's provision.
139. Teaching is good overall. In the limited number of lessons seen in Years 7 to 9, teachers prepare their lessons well and through the skilful use of questioning, challenge pupils' thinking about social issues. Effective use is made of a range of resources to support teaching and learning. Teaching time is well used with time limits set for the completion of learning activities. This helps to focus pupils' attention and ensures that lessons proceed at a good pace. Pupils' learning is underpinned by effective classroom management, which is based on the good relationships observed in all lessons.
140. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The review of where citizenship elements can be taught is part of future planning in terms of the contributions that other subjects can make.
141. At present, the statutory requirements to provide citizenship education and its reporting to parents are not met.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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