

INSPECTION REPORT

THE STONEHENGE SCHOOL

Amesbury, Salisbury

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126458

Headteacher: Mr Andy Packer

Lead inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi

Dates of inspection: 9th - 12th February 2004

Inspection number: 258830

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 707

School address: Antrobus Road
Amesbury
Salisbury
Wiltshire

Postcode: SP4 7ND

Telephone number: (01980) 623 407
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Lynne Blakemore

Date of previous inspection: 9th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Stonehenge School is a small mixed comprehensive in the Wiltshire town of Amesbury. The majority of the 707 students on roll come from Amesbury with the rest coming in from surrounding villages. The number of students on roll has risen by 100 since 2001 as the school's enhanced reputation has spread because of improved GCSE results. Almost all the students in the school are white. Although the school has a comprehensive intake, some of Amesbury and surrounding areas suffer from significant socio-economic deprivation. There is a significant minority of students from military families with the accompanying disturbance of their education. Prior attainment on entry is very poor. Two students speak Portuguese and are at an early stage of using English as an additional language. The numbers of students eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs are below the national average. Eighteen students have statements of special educational needs including nine in the hearing impaired unit.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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8076	Terence Bendall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English
13155	John Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
20719	Ann Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Art Design and technology
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	History
31850	David Nevens	Team inspector	Music
20247	Roger Parry	Team inspector	Geography
19925	Margaret Price	Team inspector	Mathematics
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school led by an outstanding headteacher whose vision of an effective learning environment is being realised. Students' attainment is average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11. Students make very good progress in all years. Teaching and learning are good. Students respond well to their teachers. Leadership by key persons is good. The school provides **very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and has led to the establishment of an effective learning environment within which students achieve very well.
- Student's behaviour and attitudes are good.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good.
- Students are very well looked after and cared for and their academic and personal development is effectively monitored.
- Provision for special educational needs in the school is good with some very good features.
- Links with parents and the community are very good. The school's strategies for listening to and acting on parental concerns are outstanding.
- The school benefits from the support of a very good governing body.
- The science laboratories are too small to accommodate the occasionally large groups.
- Although the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has been extended to allow some vocational courses the choice is still limited.
- Some subjects do not identify the gifted and talented students in order to offer them a curriculum that better matches their aspirations and capabilities.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. All the 14 key issues for action listed in the last report have been successfully addressed. Two related issues remain to be improved: the science laboratories are too small for the occasionally large groups and the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology cannot be fully met because of the lack of sufficient opportunities for computer assisted design and computer assisted manufacture.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	D	C	C	D

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

Students' achievement is very good. Some students join the school with very low prior attainment and leave it with above average GCSE results for the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A*-C. Students with special educational needs and the recently arrived students with English as an additional language make good progress.

Students' personal qualities are very good. Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Students can take responsibility successfully and they show considerable pride in their school. Their personal development is good. The students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural attitudes are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the students' education is good. Teaching is good and often very good. The good quality teaching leads to the students achieving very well. The proportion of excellent lessons was also high in comparison to the national figures. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well.

Curriculum provision is good. Those students following the few vocational courses receive outstanding support. However, there are as currently limited opportunities for students to study vocational courses. Students are well cared for and their views are listened to attentively and acted upon. Links with parents and the larger community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. His vision is effectively shared by the governing body and senior managers. The recent specific focus on learning has begun to produce significant improvements across the school. Governance is very good. The school does not comply with the legal requirement to hold a daily act of corporate worship and the design and technology National Curriculum requirements are not fully met.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the range of recent improvements in the school. They feel that these improvements include improved teaching, enhanced standards and very effective leadership. Some parents still have concerns about behaviour. These concerns are not fully justified as behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. **Students like their teachers** for being effective in the classroom and for being generally kind and helpful. They also like the school because of relationships with their friends and because of the very good provision for enrichment activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the school identifies the gifted and talented students and offers them a curriculum that fully matches their needs and aspirations.
- Continue to expand the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 in order to increase the number of existing opportunities for students to follow vocational courses.
- Improve accommodation in science so that the laboratories can accommodate the large groups and improve the unsatisfactory design and technology workshops.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the school offers all its students a daily act of collective worship.
- Provide ICT opportunities for computer assisted design and computer assisted manufacture in order to ensure that the National Curriculum statutory requirements for design and technology are fully met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Students join Year 7 with very low prior attainment. By the end of Year 9 their National Curriculum Test results are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. This indicates significant value added education. By the end of Year 11 the GCSE examination results are above the national averages for those attaining five or more grades A*-C and grades A*-G. This shows very good achievement by the students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results have improved significantly and are now above the national average.
- Students' achievement is very good.
- Low levels of literacy and numeracy skills improve quickly and dramatically.
- Students with special educational needs achieve consistently well.
- The newly arrived students with very little English language skills are making good early progress.

Commentary

1. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, results in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science were an improvement on those of previous years. In terms of the number of students achieving the expected Level 5 or above the proportion in all three subjects was below the national average. Given that the students come into the school with standards well below the national average in all three subjects, this shows good progress. By the end of Year 11 GCSE results in English and mathematics are above the national average and in science below average. This shows very good progress over the two years.
2. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C and five or more grades A*-G is above the national average. Over the last three years the school has seen the figure rise consistently from 38 per cent in 2001 to 48 per cent in 2002 and then to 58 per cent in 2003. The school's target for 2004 reflects the increasingly high expectations emerging over the last two years. The target of over 60 per cent is a challenging but realistic one.
3. GCSE results were well above the national average in 2003 in English, art, history, ICT and music. They were above the national average in mathematics and geography and in line with the national averages in design technology and modern foreign languages. GCSE results were below the national average in science, physical education and well below average in religious education.
4. Standards of work in Years 7 to 9 during the inspection were above the national expectations in art. They were in line with the national expectations in English, science, citizenship, geography, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. Standards were below national expectations in mathematics, design technology and ICT.
5. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection were significantly higher than the national expectations in English, art and information and communication technology. They were above in mathematics, history and music and in line with in science, citizenship, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education.
6. Achievement is very good overall. Students enter the school with very low prior attainment and leave with broadly above average results. Achievement is at least good in all subjects in Years

7 to 9 and very good in art, geography and history. It is satisfactory in religious education in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is at least good in all other subjects and very good in art, history and ICT.

7. By the end of their schooling, students' standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing have improved significantly. They are good listeners. They can speak to different audiences well. Any poor reading skills are quickly improved on entry. Similarly, writing skills also improve significantly over the five years. Literacy skills across the curriculum improve rapidly with a strong emphasis on keywords and on the quality of writing, although progress is inconsistent between subjects. Two new students with English as an additional language make good progress.
8. As in their use of literacy, students come into school with very low numeracy skills. By the end of Year 9, students can find the areas of fairly complex shapes, use calculators competently and understand the use of graphs. Many students still lack sufficient proficiency in mental arithmetic. By the end of Year 11 numeracy skills improve significantly. This indicates good progress all through their schooling. The main weakness in the lower school is that the lack of good knowledge of multiplication tables slows students down. In subjects such as science, design and technology and geography, students are able to use graphs and charts well and to interpret as well as to present data accurately.
9. Students with special educational needs achieve well in their lessons as well as when they are withdrawn for small group and individual teaching. They achieve well in relation to specific targets on their individual education plans. Students with literacy difficulties make very good improvements in their reading ages through the effective use of interventions such as Successmaker, a computer program that helps students enhance their literacy skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.5 (34.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.2 (34.2)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.6 (34.7)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 131 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	58 (48)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (88)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (92)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	36.4 (34.7)	33.0 (34.7)

There were 123 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **very good** and improving. Punctuality is **satisfactory**. Behaviour and attitudes are **good**. Students' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance monitoring and intensive absence follow up procedures are outstanding.
- Behaviour has significantly improved since the last inspection.
- There are many very good opportunities for students to take on responsibility and develop greater maturity as they move up through the school.
- The limited vocational education provided extends the personal development of students very well.
- A significant minority, mainly boys, cause minor nuisance although this is effectively dealt with by good teachers.

Commentary

10. Attendance has improved significantly in the past three years and is well above the national average. At the same time unauthorised absence has declined and is at a very low level. The school is supported by a highly effective welfare service that does not hesitate to prosecute if absence persists. Several students are on “supervision orders” and are being closely monitored for improvement. Punctuality on arrival at school is satisfactory and is spoilt by a minority who are regularly late. Punctuality to lessons is also satisfactory. A small number of students dawdle across the large school site and this causes some lessons to start late.
11. Attitudes are good and students express pride in a school that has improved so much. An analysis of the student questionnaires indicated a very positive picture across most aspects of the school apart from the students’ concerns about some aspects of behaviour. Students particularly value good and helpful teachers, very good relationships with staff and friends, fun and interesting lessons and very good extra-curricular activities.
12. Notwithstanding the parents’ and students’ concerns about some aspects of conduct, behaviour in lessons is mostly good and is often very good. The assertive discipline systems for behaviour management are working well and expectations for behaviour are clear. In some lessons, especially in lower ability sets, teachers have to work very hard to sustain interest and maintain a positive working environment. Behaviour outside the classroom is good for the majority and there is a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Students complained about bullying and on further investigation it was found that bullying does occur but it is not widespread. It is dealt with well when reported, but does reoccur in a minority of cases. Some students responding to the questionnaire confused bullying with nuisance. A significant number of boys show off by name calling and making personal remarks that cause offence and can be hurtful. Teachers deal effectively with these incidents. Racism rarely occurs and is simply not tolerated. The exclusion rate is slightly below average and is declining.
13. Students’ personal development is fostered very well and participation in sports, music and the arts is high. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to have a daily act of collective worship. Moral and social development are strong elements and students have many golden opportunities to take on responsibility and are developing into mature young adults with good social skills. Cultural development has many strengths as shown, for instance, when the highly successful “Dance Production” was staged. Dances from all around the world were featured and celebrated. In subjects like citizenship and religious education, students are becoming more aware of the main world faiths and the plight of asylum seekers and refugees in Britain’s multicultural society. Overall, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	1.1

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

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Other
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
Mixed - White and Asian
Mixed - any other mixed background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – any other background
Any other ethnic group
Parent/student preferred not to say
Information not obtained

Number of students on roll
657
16
2
3
1
1
1
1
23
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
40	1
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Students’ achievement is very good. The primary reason for this rate of success is the good and often very good, quality teaching. Another major contributory factor has been the headteacher’s outstanding success in establishing a productive learning environment along with a hard working and committed staff.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **good** and often very good. Every lesson seen was at least satisfactory. This good quality teaching has helped to establish opportunities for students to learn well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and often very good.
- Teachers have successfully created an effective learning environment with students responding readily and behaving well in the classroom.
- Although assessment strategies are at least satisfactory, there are inconsistencies in the way students’ work is marked and in the way that students are given advice on how to improve further, especially in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching was at the very least satisfactory in all the lessons seen. It was good or better in the overwhelming majority of lessons. This is a significant improvement on the last

inspection when the quality of teaching was good or better in only half of the lessons seen and it was unsatisfactory in seven per cent of lessons.

15. Over the last three years the school has had a clear and strong focus on teaching and learning. Continuing professional development concentrated on accelerated learning during the last two years and the current focus is on transforming learning. These activities have had considerable success in enhancing teaching and learning. Almost every teacher starts the lesson by detailing the exact lesson objectives and by sharing the expected learning outcomes with the students. These targets are also written on the board. The result is that students know exactly what it is that they are working to achieve. Teachers are confident and invariably well prepared. They have high expectations of their students. Their equally high expectation of good behaviour means that students are consistently on task, work hard and are clearly interested in what they are doing. Teachers maintain their interest by using a variety of activities. This means that students listen well. Relationships are good and students are happy to contribute to maintaining the pace of each lesson. They work together effectively and support each other well. Assessment is satisfactory.
16. The gifted and talented students are not identified in every subject with the consequence that some of them are insufficiently challenged. In a few subjects marking is inconsistent and occasionally teachers do not give sufficient advice to students on what to do next in order to improve their work further.
17. Teaching and learning are very good in all years in history and in Years 10 and 11 in English and art. They are good in all years in mathematics, science, citizenship, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. They are good in Years 7 to 9 English, art and religious education and in Years 10 and 11 in ICT. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in ICT in Years 7 to 9 and in religious education in Years 10 and 11.
18. One of the main issues relating to teaching and learning discussed in the last inspection report was behaviour. At the time the then new headteacher had instituted an 'everybody matters' compassionate policy which was meant to empower everyone by giving them responsibility for their own behaviour. This policy was only partially effective since, as the report then stated "In the emerging new ethos of individual responsibility, a significant minority of students lacks the maturity and readiness needed to understand that they should not take advantage of a system that appears to them not to punish misbehaviour or rudeness". Such an attitude eventually led to a significant deterioration in behaviour and to teachers having to expend enormous energy managing and controlling student misbehaviour. With the new emphasis on teaching and learning and with a clear and united whole school response to dealing with every incident of misbehaviour, this is no longer an issue. Teachers are now able to get on with the business of ensuring that students are learning within a safe and comfortable environment. Behaviour is now at least good and often very good. This indicates a significant improvement on the last inspection.
19. Individual education plans are of good quality, having a useful range of information such as specific targets for the students and practical strategies to be used by teachers to support them in class. However, although most teachers use them well to plan for students with special educational needs, others are not so skilled in their use. The support provided by teaching assistants is very good. The teaching assistants have a central role in providing information to teachers and in monitoring the progress of students with special educational needs. Students are taught well in small groups, or individually, when they are withdrawn from class, because the teaching is well matched to the students' needs.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 128 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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5 (4%)	36 (28%)	58 (45%)	29 (23%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and balance of the curriculum are good.
- Very good opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment activities enhance the students' learning experience significantly.
- Despite recent successful innovations, students in Years 10 and 11 still do not receive sufficient opportunities to follow vocational and work related courses.
- Accommodation has been significantly improved although the science laboratories are too small to accommodate some large groups.
- Staff are generally well matched to the requirements of their teaching and other duties.

Commentary

20. The school meets the statutory requirements except for the lack of computer assisted design and computer assisted manufacture use in design and technology, an issue which is now being addressed.
21. In Years 7 to 9, there is a good range of courses. In Years 10 and 11 the range of courses is satisfactory with some outstanding provision in the few vocational courses some of which are provided through successful links with other institutions. Students do not have sufficient opportunities in Years 10 and 11 to follow vocational and work related courses. Impartial career and further education advice are very good.
22. Provision for activities to enrich the students' learning experiences is very good. There is a huge variety of activities available to the students to choose from. A considerable number of students take up these opportunities and attend regularly during lunch breaks as well as after the school day. They enjoy what they do and speak highly of these opportunities, including the sporting ones.
23. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The great majority of teachers have appropriate qualifications for the subjects they teach, although in art, ICT and religious education a few teachers are non-specialists, but they receive very good support from heads of department. The limited knowledge and technical skills of non-specialist teachers of ICT mean that students in Years 7 to 9 do not always get tasks that extend them enough. Technicians provide very good support in science and ICT, but the lack of support in textiles and food technology affects the quality of learning. The school has a full complement of staff, although mathematics has a temporary teacher, until a permanent teacher takes up the position in the summer term. The school uses good strategies to secure the employment of high quality staff.
24. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Music has good ICT facilities and a wide range of multicultural musical instruments. Access to ICT resources is good for humanities subjects and for physical education. In specialist ICT rooms, access to resources is very good. Across the curriculum, the availability of equipment for ICT is satisfactory except in English and improving. Design and technology does not meet the requirements for ICT in the National Curriculum, as there is no equipment for computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD-CAM). The provision of reference books in art is poor. Library provision in the school is satisfactory, although the number of volumes available to students falls short of the number recommended by the school library association. Shabby and outdated stock has been recently

culled and the number of books remaining supports reading for information and pleasure. Although it is well used throughout the day, with fortnightly library lessons provided for younger students, the library is not open before or after school, which limits its effectiveness.

25. The accommodation available is satisfactory, with some good accommodation in mathematics, modern languages and music. There are shortcomings in the accommodation for science where some laboratories are too small for the size of teaching groups when practical work is done. Design and technology workshops are in need of refurbishment. Since the last inspection the appearance of the many areas of the school has been much improved. Recently established ICT facilities are very good.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and health and safety of students are **very good**. Advice and guidance for students are **good** and are based on the monitoring of their academic and personal development. Students' views are widely canvassed and form part of school improvement planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral system is a key strength of the school. Students are well looked after and can achieve their best in a safe and highly supportive environment.
- The tracking system for personal development is very thorough and identifies issues that are quickly and effectively dealt with.
- The management of health and safety is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Student surveys and an effective school council give students a real voice in the school.
- There are not enough fully trained first aiders to provide adequate first-aid cover.

Commentary

26. In their questionnaire returns, students identified and praised the help and support they receive unstintingly from staff as the most important strength. Heads of the lower, middle and upper schools are highly knowledgeable and actively monitor students to an individual level and are able to channel support very effectively. Access to the layers of support from the school nurse, school counsellor, Connexions staff, behaviour co-ordinator, peer supporters and a range of external agencies enables wider educational issues to be addressed and this has major benefits for learning.
27. The arrangements for child protection and for students in public care are good and all requirements are met. When students are ill or injured they receive good care and attention. The school knows that it has insufficient fully trained first aiders and is asking for more staff to come forward and be trained shortly. Students' medical conditions are well known and catered for and underpinned by expert advice from the school nurse. All the routine checking systems and risk assessments for health and safety are carried out thoroughly and at the right frequency and the record keeping is meticulous. The security arrangements, including Internet security, are good.
28. Marking is inconsistent and students feel that they could do with better day-to-day advice on academic improvement. They are very clear in science how they are performing and feel that they need similar good quality information in other subjects on how to achieve higher National Curriculum levels.
29. Students' views are important and in Years 10 and 11 various surveys have identified issues and these have been acted upon to improve student satisfaction in a most impressive way. The school effectively uses student evaluations and ideas as part of continuous school improvement. The impartial advice for post school transfer to further education and employment placements is very good. Support is targeted at students who are having difficulty

making up their minds and pursuing their career action plans. The arrangements for the induction of new students are very good. Students are able to become familiar with school routines and the complex campus very quickly.

30. The school has very good links with an extensive range of outside agencies from which advice and support are regularly sought. There are very good links with feeder primary schools so that students with special educational needs are identified and planned for prior to their entry into the school. The Learning Support Forum ensures very effective co-ordination of support for students with hearing impairment, special educational needs and behavioural difficulties.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good** and links with other schools and colleges and with the wider community are also **very good** and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parental confidence has improved markedly and the school has been oversubscribed this year.
- The partnership with new students and their families is forged very effectively.
- Parental views are very carefully and thoroughly analysed and form an important part of school improvement. This is an example of outstanding practice.
- The school's reputation in the community has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Although there are some curricular links with other schools, these are insufficient to ensure curricular continuity across subjects between the education phases.

Commentary

31. The school recognises how important it is to work closely with parents as part of its drive to raise standards. Parents are always welcomed and there is an open door to the headteacher who deals with any concerns very quickly. The school works very effectively with parents to support students' learning and ensure their happiness. Support for other school activities is very strong. For instance more than 150 students play musical instruments and are in a variety of bands and parents follow their progress keenly. Parents are provided with mainly good quality information about progress. As a result of the school improvement plan, annual school reports are now consistent and include targets for improvement.
32. There is a great deal of regular contact between parents and pastoral staff whenever issues arise. Joint approaches support students' work well. "On-call" behavioural incidents are reported to parents who help to support the school. Parents' views are regularly gauged both formally and informally and show high satisfaction levels across most aspects. Parents' opinions help shape future plans and parents appreciate this.
33. The school strives hard to work with the community and has successfully raised its profile and reputation in the locality. This has had a very good impact on the community spirit engendered and on the students' learning. It takes an active part in local groups such as the Northern Area Safety Group which has a focus on crime prevention, youth issues and community relationships. The school shares the community sports facilities, which enhance the provision for physical education very well. Mencap is currently the major donor to the school's specialist status bid and there are excellent links with the Activity Centre. Joint after school activities funded by Barclays "New Futures" project enable some outstanding and very rewarding musical and ICT links. There are some excellent musical, design and technology and ICT links with the local senior citizens, churches, charities, military band and the community. High participation levels in sport, Young Enterprise and local festivals have all helped to put Stonehenge School firmly on the local map as a major contributor.

34. Links with contributory primary schools and receiving sixth forms and colleges are very good and enable smooth transfers to the next phases of students' education. The joint activities, taster days, staff links and induction arrangements help Year 7 students to settle quickly and happily. Curricular links with other schools are developing and are good in mathematics with master classes for the brightest students; "fun maths" was the focus of the latest "celebration days" with primary schools. Physical education and musical links are also very strong. Links with Tidworth College of further education are very good supporting the vocational education programme and work with other partner secondary schools. Stonehenge School contributes effectively to Local Education Authority policies as part of the Wiltshire Secondary Schools Association, where behaviour management and inclusion are current priorities.
35. The school has very good links with the parents of students with special educational needs. All parents attend the annual review of their child's statement. There are strategies provided on individual education plans to enable parents to support their child's learning at home.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of the headteacher's leadership is **outstanding**. He has provided strong, visionary, focused and influential leadership across the school which has caused significant improvements in achievement since his arrival. Supported by a **very good** governing body, he has succeeded in creating an effective learning environment. Management systems are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is outstanding.
- The governing body provides very good leadership which supports and challenges senior managers appropriately.
- School development planning is very good and relates effectively to the school's very good financial management.
- The leadership of all persons in positions of responsibility has been strongly focused on teaching and learning in a way that has achieved considerable improvements since the last inspection.
- Staff performance management is outstanding and relates well to the very good continuous staff development programme.

Commentary

36. Since his arrival in September 2001, the headteacher has focused on creating a successful learning environment. Supported by an able and hard working governing body, a very good senior management team, effective key leaders and a united and committed staff, he has succeeded in establishing a clear focus on learning. The result has been a much happier school which knows itself well, monitors its work rigorously and focuses exclusively on enhancing the students' achievement. This is a remarkable improvement on the previous inspection when students' behaviour was an issue that occupied much of everyone's energy to the detriment of teaching and learning. This has now been resolved with teachers being able to concentrate on teaching and learning and on students' achievement. Senior managers have been successful in dealing with any behaviour issues arising, freeing teachers to do their work confidently.
37. The governing body knows the school well. They have very clear ideas of its strengths and weaknesses and share a strong commitment to the ongoing improvement agenda that the school has. They are consistently supportive of senior managers. They are also able and willing to challenge where necessary. They have continually demanded that each subject area accounts to them for its performance. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties of ensuring that a daily act of collective worship takes place or that the design and technology National

Curriculum requirements are fully met by providing adequate opportunities for computer assisted design (CAD) and computer assisted manufacture (CAM).

38. The headteacher maintains a highly visible presence around the school, knows staff and students well and relates to each on a personal and sensitive basis. The result has been a significant improvement in the way that the school works on a day-to-day basis. He has high expectations of himself, his senior team, his teaching and other colleagues as well as of all students. These high expectations are beginning to transfer themselves into the school's community as well as into the local community both of which are now beginning to take considerable pride in their school. Roles are clear and everyone understands who does what which allows individuals to develop their skills in the job to a considerable extent. Leadership has been particularly successful in creating a self-evaluating school where staff feel that they know where they are going and what they need to do next to achieve the school's ambitious targets for improvement.
39. The school is good at monitoring its work effectively. Extensive data on each individual student are available to all staff and are well used. Key leaders also have a wide range of data on such matters as incidents of misbehaviour, sanctions and rewards, call out where it occurs, attendance, punctuality and many others. Key staff look for patterns within these data and use them to help and support students as appropriate and to inform parents of concerns or of good news where necessary. Senior leaders walk around the school regularly and fill in proformas on teaching, learning and make other observations which are then used to evaluate performance and to help and support staff through either personal connections or through dedicated programmes and continuous staff development.
40. Despite the considerable improvements, there are still areas that the school needs to work on to continue its progress. These issues are all known to the school through its monitoring procedures and many are either being currently addressed or are included in the long term strategic plans. The gifted and talented students are not identified in many subject areas and are therefore insufficiently challenged. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has been extended to allow some vocational courses but the choice is still somewhat limited. Accommodation in the science laboratories does not always accommodate the large groups. The school does not offer all its students a daily act of collective worship. The design and technology statutory requirements are not fully met because of the lack of CAD/CAM facilities. The design and technology workshops are unsatisfactory.
41. Leadership and management in the various subjects are either good or very good. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. Leadership is reflective, realistic and recognises the need for measured change. Changes in the Code of Practice for special educational needs have been very effectively introduced. There is very close co-ordination of provision for special educational needs, behaviour and hearing impairment. A team of very effective teaching assistants has been developed. The status of the teaching assistants is high; they are very well respected and their professional development a priority. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Improvements have been made so that there is more consistent use of individual education plans and the educational support assistants are now very effective.
42. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. The last inspection contained f14 areas for development. These have been addressed successful in almost every single case. Curriculum provision for design and technology as well as accommodation for design and technology and science remain areas for development.
43. The school has a small historical deficit. An agreed recovery plan with the local education authority is well on track to eliminate the deficit within three years. Given the very low prior attainment on entry and the above average GCSE results as well as the good quality provision and the very good student achievement, the school is providing very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,141,400.69
Total expenditure	2,200,102.48
Expenditure per student	3,600.82

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21,534.92
Balance carried forward to the next	- 41,085.57

Hearing impaired unit

Provision in the unit is **good** with some very good and excellent features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The nine students in the unit achieve well in their lessons. They also achieve well in relation to specific targets set for them.
- Students' attitudes are very good. They remain positive despite the difficulties they suffer from.
- Students behave very well and take responsibility for ensuring that their equipment is working properly.

Commentary

44. Individual education plans provide a useful range of information such as specific targets for the students and practical strategies to be used by teachers to support them in class. Additionally the unit provides a wealth of specific information to enable teachers to provide appropriate strategies and resources to meet the students' needs in lessons. However, although most teachers use this well to plan for students with hearing impairment, others are not so skilled in its use. The support provided by teaching assistants is very good and the teachers use them effectively in the classroom. The teaching assistants have a central role in providing information to teachers and monitoring the progress of students in the unit. Students are taught well individually when they are withdrawn from class, because the specialist teaching is well matched to their needs. This is informed by very good specific assessment related to their individual difficulties.
45. Students in the unit are very well integrated into all aspects of school life and are members of tutor groups. They are taught alongside their peers in class groups for the majority of lessons, where they benefit from the Soundfield system. When they are withdrawn for individual teaching, it supports the work they do in lessons. Unit students feel very well supported by staff and know that if they need help or advice, it is always available. The hearing impaired unit makes a strong contribution to the school's safe, inclusive and warm environment.
46. The unit has very good links with a range of outside agencies from which advice and support are regularly sought. There are very good links with primary schools so that the unit students' needs are well known and planned for prior to their entry. The Learning Support Forum ensures very effective co-ordination of the work of the unit with that of special educational need across the school. Students receive excellent specialist care within the unit. The unit maintains close links with parents. All parents attend the annual review of their child's statement.
47. The unit is very well led and managed by a very knowledgeable and skilled teacher of the hearing impaired. Very good quality information is provided to all staff about the students' needs and it is regularly updated. The teaching assistants are very effective and, together with

the teacher of the hearing impaired, they provide a very high level of expertise to support the students.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Achievement is very good.
- Students' work is well assessed and there are good opportunities for self-review.
- Management is very good.
- The department is well led.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

48. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below the national average which indicates good progress given the students' very low prior attainment on entry. By the end of Year 11 the GCSE examination results in English were well above the national average in 2003.

Standards and achievement

49. Students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills are well above the standards expected for Year 11. This represents very good achievement in relation to standards which were very low when students entered the school. Students have already made good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills by the time they leave Year 9. At this stage, girls do better than boys. By the age of 16, the gap between the achievement of boys and girls has been virtually eradicated. Students reach very good standards in both English language and English literature. Students with special educational needs make the same progress as the rest. The very few students for whom English is not their mother tongue are newly arrived at the school. They are making satisfactory progress during a brief settling in period during which they are receiving support from the local authority.
50. Students respond well to teachers' skilful questioning and make good oral contributions to lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher and to other students. Well-developed skills of oral collaboration help them to learn. In drama lessons students have good opportunities to speak, formally and informally, to specific audiences and their skills improve as they move through the school. Frequent whole school productions improve their confidence and motivation. Poor reading skills in Year 7 are tackled vigorously and effectively. Library lessons encourage

students to read for pleasure and they are shown how to look up facts. Younger students struggle with their writing, but rapidly improve so that by the end of Year 11, work is written to good length, with a strong sense of its intended audience. Essays in English literature produced by students in Years 10 and 11 show good skills of analysis. Redrafted work is substantially correct.

Teaching and learning

51. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Students make the very good progress that they do because they are very well taught. Teachers show a thorough understanding of their subject. They know the requirements of the external examinations well and lessons are well focused on them. Teachers question skilfully, so that students think on their feet and make the greatest possible progress. Skilful teaching of subject specific vocabulary, systematic promotion of the skills of analysis and emphasis on the close reading of texts help them to do well in English literature. The good standard of assessment allows teachers to improve weaknesses and build on students' strengths. Good opportunities for self-evaluation and target setting assists this process.
52. Three drama lessons were sampled during inspection. Teaching and learning were consistently good. Students are enthusiastic learners. Their practical work is a significant strength. Standards at GCSE comfortably reach the national average. The department stages annual productions involving large numbers of students, which are highly successful. Management of the subject is good.
53. Students learn well in pairs and small groups. They are capable of independent learning, although they do not always have enough access to computers to draft their work. They rapidly engage with the task in hand, work hard and show themselves capable of extended concentration.

Leadership and management

54. The very good standard of management of the English department has produced a very good level of improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of students achieving Level 5 and above in the national tests in Year 9 has increased from well below average to being broadly in line with the national average over time. The percentage of students achieving grades A to C at GCSE has increased from average to significantly above average, with boys' performance particularly improved. The improvement of teaching and learning and the careful and regular monitoring of the delivery of the improved curriculum have achieved this. Teaching styles known to suit the learning of boys have been introduced in a range of lessons and this has improved the learning of boys and all students. Resources have been improved to support this provision. Students are now grouped according to their ability, which better serves the requirements of the external tests and examinations, although this arrangement is still too dependent on students' achievement in science and mathematics. Schemes of work have been rewritten, although more detailed planning is now required to better meet the needs of very able students. Effective leadership of a well motivated and highly skilled teaching team is a key strength of the department.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Provision for the development of language and literacy across the curriculum is devolved to departments, where provision is good. Most subjects have a policy to guide their work. Keywords are well emphasised in a range of subjects. History and science make particularly strong contributions to students' language and literacy, but provision is still being developed in geography and ICT. There is a simple whole school policy which has recently been monitored by senior staff. A staff meeting has recently been used to further promote this aspect of students' learning.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students respond well to good and often very good teaching.
- Learning is effective and most students achieve well.
- There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection.
- The school provides a good curriculum for modern foreign languages.
- Teachers do not always have consistently high expectations of the most capable students.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning.
- The departmental scheme of work is not sufficiently detailed.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

56. Results in GCSE examinations have improved considerably since the last inspection. In 2003, the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C was close to the national average and in the case of girls it was above the national average. Boys performed markedly less well than girls in the 2003 examination, but this is not the usual pattern for the school.

Standards and achievement

57. Students make an excellent start to their languages learning when they come to the school. Students in Year 7, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well when their attainment on entry to the school is taken into consideration. Achievement throughout the school is good; students respond well to good teaching which often provides a good range of interesting and enjoyable activities. Only in a very small proportion of cases is there underachievement and these tend to be where some older students' attitudes towards learning languages are unsatisfactory. Standards in Years 9 and 11 are close to the national expectation overall; both boys and girls attain standards which represent good progress in their learning. Some more able students could achieve higher standards if teachers expected more of them, especially in the more active use of language for communication.

Teaching and learning

58. Teaching is good and a significant proportion of the teaching is very good. Teachers plan their lessons well and ensure that they have pace and variety. Teachers encourage and promote good learning and students respond with great enthusiasm. Just occasionally lessons do not contain sufficient challenge for the more capable students, especially in terms of their active use of the spoken language. Teachers make good use of the resources available and the German assistant makes a positive contribution to students' learning. At present, modern foreign languages teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT to support learning.

Leadership and management

59. The modern foreign languages department is well led. The department has made much progress in the past five years and there is a determination and the capacity to improve further. The subject leader has good vision and a clear awareness of how the department needs to progress. There is a good team spirit; teachers work well together and share a common purpose. Management is good; the department operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The documentation on which the department bases its work could, however, be more detailed, draw together with greater clarity what it does well and give clearer guidance about what it expects of all its members.
60. The improvement since the last inspection has been very good. There has been a clear improvement in the quality of teaching and this, along with the considerable efforts the department has made to combat poor attitudes, has had an extremely positive effect on the attainment and achievement of students, which have improved markedly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 and the GCSE examination results at the end of Year 11 are consistently improving; GCSE results are now above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are good with some very good features; teachers work well with the National Numeracy Strategy to improve standards.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; teachers are well supported and teamwork is strong.
- An occasional weakness in teaching results in a minority of students not working hard enough to improve their levels of attainment.
- Too often the presentation of students' work is unsatisfactory.
- The inconsistencies in the marking of students' class work result in little information offered to help them improve.

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

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

Commentary

Examination results

61. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below the average when compared with those in all schools nationally and with those in schools in similar contexts. However, results were very high in relation to students' attainment on entry to the school. GCSE results are steadily improving and, in 2003, they were above the national average. All students were entered for the examination and all gained a grade. Boys perform better than girls; there are strategies in place to ensure performance is more equable between boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

62. Standards in Years 7 to 9 during the inspection covered a wide range and overall were average for students of their age. Students enter the school with below average attainment and overall make good progress. By the end of Year 9 students are able to find areas of complex shapes using formulae and have some understanding of relationships within circles, for example, that of the diameter and circumference. Although students demonstrate competence in using calculators only the highest attaining are proficient in mental number operations. Too many are not sufficiently knowledgeable of multiplication tables and this slows down their pace of work. Students develop an understanding of charts and graphs and use these to illustrate data. Higher attaining students have a good understanding of upper and lower levels of accuracy when rounding answers to a given number of significant figures or decimal places. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good.
63. All students in Years 10 and 11 prepare for the GCSE examination. Students consolidate number work and develop algebraic skills to find the n th term in sequences; however, basic errors remain in their understanding of rules of indices. They use their knowledge of areas of simple shapes to develop formulae to find areas of more unusual quadrilaterals, for example, kite, rhombus and arrowhead. Higher attainers continue to develop high-level skills in constructing and using charts and graphs; they understand and use the idea of testing hypotheses of events.
64. The practical skills of lower attaining students improve and they transform shapes by translation and reflection using positive and negative axes. Standards are satisfactory. Achievement, overall, is good.

Teaching and learning

65. Students learn well due to the good quality teaching. Occasionally teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this helps them explain the work clearly so that students understand it well. Lessons are well structured and in Years 7 to 9 plans are linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. This provides varied activities that help maintain students' interest and concentration throughout the lessons and hence they make good progress. Students with special educational needs make similar progress. In a minority of lessons where teaching is weaker students are less well managed and this slows down progress. Relationships are mostly good; students are able to work both independently and with each other. The progress of students is monitored through regular tests and weaknesses in their work are identified. Teachers have yet to develop plans of future work to assist students better to overcome these weaknesses. More detailed marking and comments on class work would also help students improve. Homework is set regularly to reinforce the learning but a minority of students too often fail to complete their homework.

Leadership and management

66. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department has done much to unite the teachers of the subject to focus on a common purpose to raise levels of attainment. A systematic review of performance is undertaken. Teachers meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss ideas and share good practice. Established links with primary schools have resulted in the provision of master classes and summer school numeracy groups in which primary school students participate. These have proved to be most successful. The head of department offers extra classes, after GCSE examinations, to students hoping to continue studying mathematics at AS level; this prepares them for sixth form studies.
67. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Higher standards are being reached at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examination results are now above the national average. Teaching and learning have improved assisted by the more comprehensive scheme of work that not only supports teachers in their work but also gives continuity to learning.

Numeracy across the curriculum

68. Overall standards are satisfactory. In mathematics students demonstrate satisfactory number skills in writing but some weaknesses exist in mental operations. Due to inadequate knowledge of tables the mental calculations of some students are prolonged and this slows down the pace of their work. Students are able to use calculators proficiently. Teachers' plans to include number activities for the start of many lessons are making improvements.
69. Although some subjects use numeracy well most lack planning for promoting numeracy skills. In science, younger students use data to construct simple bar charts and line graphs; older students interpret data relating to rates of change of coastal erosion and standards are good. Although there is no planned approach in geography, students demonstrate competency in their use of different graphs. In design and technology, students measure and weigh accurately and use graphs to represent data and scales to draw plans; standards are satisfactory. No plans have been developed in physical education and there are many opportunities lost where number could be promoted.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan very well to suit the needs of all students.
- Laboratory accommodation is unsatisfactory because the laboratories are too small to accommodate some large groups.
- There are good strategies to improve literacy.
- Assessment of students' progress is good.
- The single period is too short for effective practical work.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

70. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below national figures but very high in comparison with the results in similar schools. Boys did better than girls. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average in the A*-C grades and well below average in the higher A* and A grades. Boys were above the national average in A*-C grades. Boys did much better than girls. There has been a trend of improvement over the last four years.

Standards and achievement

71. By the end of Year 9, students' knowledge of science is average. This represents good achievement for many students in relation to their standards when they entered the school. Those with special educational needs also achieved well. Students show confidence when doing practical work and can accurately predict outcomes of experiments. Good strategies are employed so that students of all abilities show increasingly good literacy skills which support their understanding of science. This reflects the way the department has focused on the skill of scientific writing. By the end of Year 11, students' practical skills have improved considerably. They collate, tabulate and analyse results effectively and higher attaining students can identify anomalies and explain them. They are less precise in their evaluation of results. Coursework marks have improved as a result of the literacy strategy contributing to more effective writing. The average standards seen in Year 11 represent good achievement for many students in relation to their well below average standards when they entered the school.

Teaching and learning

72. Teaching is good across the department. Strong features of the most effective teaching are the planning and assessment of students' progress. Assessment informing students how to improve is very good and is a strength of the department. Students receive well focused feedback on their work that helps them to understand how to improve. Teachers continually check students' understanding in class with probing questions. The questions encourage the students to consider their answers more carefully and therefore develop their thinking skills. Planning is improved by the sharing of innovative ideas and good practice. This increases the range of teaching strategies and helps to raise standards.

Leadership and management

73. The department is well managed and there is a focus on raising standards. There is a shared understanding of what factors contribute to high standards and the head of department has welded together a strong team of teachers. The leadership places a high priority in helping to develop teachers' skills and sharing their good practice. All teachers have been trained in a variety of strands to support the National Science Strategy and this is having a strong effect on the improvement in practical work. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The laboratories are too small for the significant number of classes of 30 or more students and this leads to some practical work having to be demonstrated by the teacher. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The use of ICT has improved but there is insufficient data logging equipment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- Students make good progress in all years.
- Some non-specialist teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge to extend students' learning.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good

Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
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Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Commentary

Examination results

74. GCSE examination results for 2003 were well above the national average with about three quarters of those entered gaining grades A*-C. These results continue a rising trend. Boys tend to achieve higher standards than girls, but not significantly so. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average.

Standards and achievement

75. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above national expectations in Years 10 and 11 and in line with national expectations in Years 8 and 9. Standards in Year 7 are below expectations and reflect the low attainment of students on entry to the school. Some students produce very good examination coursework and have clearly made considerable efforts with their work. In Year 7, some students have yet to understand basic points of how to use a computer, such as how to save work and their progress is therefore limited.

76. Achievement is good overall and it is very good in coursework in Years 10 and 11. Standards on entry are well below average, but are only below average by the end of Year 9. Progress in Years 7 to 9 is therefore good. At Years 10 and 11, progress is very good because of the high standards achieved in examinations. All students in Years 10 and 11 work with interest and enthusiasm and are keen to produce high quality results.

Teaching and learning

77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and are good in Years 9, 10 and 11. An example of very good teaching was seen in a Year 10 lesson where very effective use was made of questions to check previous learning. In this lesson, effective use was made of the work of other students to encourage students to produce similar standards. A strength of the good teaching is the clear introductions and reviews of previous lessons. Classroom management is also good in Years 9 to 11. Non-specialist staff usually have sufficient subject knowledge to provide an appropriate level of support to students, but are not always able to extend students sufficiently. The majority of students work productively and with interest. In the work sample provided there was little evidence of day-to-day marking of work, especially in Years 7 to 9 and in consequence, students lack guidance on how to improve their work. Very good provision is made for extra-curricular sessions and these are used effectively by many students. Some effective arrangements are made through an after school session for adults with disabilities to use ICT resources. The adults who use these sessions are well supported by both students and teachers.

Leadership and management

78. Overall, leadership and management are good. There is a good scheme of work which provides good support to non-specialists, but which lacks detail as to how school policies are implemented in the subject. The development plan for the subject is very good with clear objectives to move the department forward. Good progress in management of the department has been made in the last three years. Training in the use of ICT for staff working in other subjects has been effective in developing the use of ICT across the curriculum but uptake is still patchy. It is very good in music, where very effective use is made of recently provided

excellent facilities and good in geography. New video conferencing facilities have recently been installed. There is effective use of ICT in assemblies, but ICT use is underdeveloped in other subjects and is currently unsatisfactory in modern languages and design and technology, although some plans to improve the situation are in hand.

79. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The ICT curriculum is now much improved, with the specialist lessons in Years 7 to 9 giving much greater continuity. The requirements of the programme of study are now covered. The school now meets the legal requirement for all students in Years 10 and 11 to experience ICT. Provision of computer hardware is now much improved, although more is needed to ensure that other subjects can access equipment. The use of ICT in other subjects is better, but more remains to be done.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Students have a large number of opportunities to use ICT in extra-curricular activities. ICT is also effectively used in assemblies.
81. Despite the significant improvements since the last inspection, there are still insufficient ICT facilities to allow further use of ICT across the curriculum. The school recognises this deficiency and has included its resolution in its development plan. Staff training has been effective in developing the use of ICT in other subjects although the take up of such opportunities has been inconsistent. ICT use is very good in music, good in geography and good for students with special educational needs. The use of ICT is underdeveloped in many subjects but particularly so in design and technology and modern foreign languages. Strategies for improving this situation are in place. There are also some effective arrangements made for adults with disabilities to use ICT with the support of teachers and students.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students learn successfully because teachers plan lessons thoroughly.
- Good behaviour and attitudes result from teachers' insistence on high standards.
- Inconsistent marking does not inform all students regularly of how they can improve.
- Tasks provided for particular groups of students do not always match their needs closely.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

82. GCSE results in 2003 were below average for grades A*-C and above average for grades A*-G. Students' coursework had weaknesses revealed by a new examination structure; however, results were close to, but lower than those predicted by teachers. Apart from 2003, the trend of results has been rising.

Standards and achievement

83. Students know how to question evidence about geographical issues, such as the effects of acid rain on trees and they handle statistics confidently. Higher attaining students in Years 10 and 11 produce good coursework investigations on coastal management. Lower attaining students show less independence in questioning geographical evidence, although they have satisfactory knowledge. Students have well below average standards when they begin in Year 7, but they improve their knowledge and understanding of geography very well and acquire many new skills in Years 7 to 9. They maintain good progress in their learning by the end of Year 11. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students, especially when supported by support assistants who help them to learn independently.

Teaching and learning

84. Teachers plan lessons well so that students know what they will learn at the start. A good variety of resources and tasks, including the use of ICT, engages the interest of the majority of students. Assessment tasks provide students with information on their levels and grades in relation to national standards. However, not all students receive clear guidance on how to improve because the marking of work done in class and at home is inconsistent. Good attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to high achievement. Talented geography students do not always receive work that will extend them. Students with special needs occasionally do not have tasks that match their needs, in order to develop self-esteem through independent learning.

Leadership and management

85. The head of geography has clear vision of the subject's development. Very good access to ICT hardware allows for its use in specific units of work, but the subject scheme of work does not give detail of its contribution. Good fieldwork opportunities support students' understanding and enjoyment of geography. Since the last inspection, the subject has made good progress: good teaching (occasionally very good) has continued and the trend in examination results has been rising, apart from in 2003.

History

The overall quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average in Year 11 and GCSE results in 2003 were well above average. Students achieve very well from Year 7 to Year 11.
- Teaching is very good because lessons are well planned and promote a high quality of learning through the effective use of resources and an excellent range of learning activities.
- The department is very well managed and led and has a clear focus on raising attainment.
- Computers are used well for coursework but they are not available in classrooms.
- Students are not yet sufficiently independent in their learning in lessons.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

86. Standards are well below average when students arrive in Year 7. By Year 9 standards are average although weaknesses in literacy affect the overall quality of written work. The trend at GCSE at grades A*-C has been above the national average but it was well above average in 2003 and more students were awarded the two highest grades. Boys achieve as well as girls and the presentation of some of their work is impressive; they did particularly well at GCSE in 2003. Students achieve very well because of their own very good attitudes and because of the quality of teaching and learning. Planning is focused on the need to improve standards in literacy and to promote skills and understanding as well as knowledge. This is promoting very good achievement by Year 9. Computers are used when appropriate but are not available for use in the classroom and this limits opportunities for independent learning.

Standards and achievement

87. In Year 9 students talk enthusiastically about the topics that they are studying and the majority show a good understanding of the complex causes of war in 1914 because lessons are exceptionally well planned. Students benefit from trips to the battlefield sites and to the Imperial War Museum and from the very wide range of classroom activities planned for them. They learn because lessons are really enjoyable, well paced and active, with students participating in role-play, teamwork and games to help them remember key events. In Years 7 and 8 students progress very well because of the very clear focus on the development of history skills, especially the use of different sources of evidence about the past. In Year 9 students produce individual work on life in the trenches and some show unusual perception and maturity as well as good research skills.
88. The quality of coursework produced by Year 11 reflects students' very good attitudes and the value of a well-planned local study and students' very real interest in the history of Ireland. All students have a sound knowledge of the development of medicine and average students can talk with confidence about key figures like Galen and Lister. The highest attaining students can answer GCSE questions very well indeed. Topics covered at GCSE are matched to students' attainment with higher attaining students benefiting from the challenge of studying the complex history of Germany between the two world wars. Higher attaining Year 10 students show an impressive knowledge of events in Germany after 1918. Average and lower attaining students understand how the attitudes and way of life of white settlers in the USA brought conflict with the native people of the plains. Both groups benefit from excellent revision programmes and course guides. Students' achievement is very good. Their attainment is average in Year 9 and above average in Year 11.

Teaching and learning

89. Teaching and learning are very good. All lessons during the inspection were at least good and all had very good or excellent features. Three lessons were judged to be excellent. Work is carefully marked and assessment at GCSE is very good. Homework extends and develops class work and is rigorously checked by teachers. Students are given the opportunity to work

in pairs and groups and to evaluate and review their work at the end of lessons. Students with special educational needs achieve very well because of the quality of support provided for them. Tasks and resources match the needs of all students and teachers have consistently high expectations of work and behaviour. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent and this promotes a high quality of learning.

Leadership and management

90. Management and leadership are very good particularly in the development of quality resources, monitoring and planning. There is a clear emphasis on promoting progression, continuity and an appreciation of history in a variety of high quality learning experiences. Teamwork is a very strong feature of the department. The head of faculty has identified the need to refine assessment procedures in Year 9 in order to give full recognition to what students know and understand. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in raising standards and improving teaching. This is a very successful department.

Religious education

The overall quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of the good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9, students achieve well.
- The very good leadership and good management of the department produce effective teaching.
- The integral assessment tasks testing knowledge and understanding and providing information on how students can improve their work.
- There is a lack of challenge for the most able.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- The time allocation, groupings and the carousel in Years 10 and 11 hinder achievement.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

91. The results of the last GCSE short course examination were significantly below the national average and against the rising trend of the previous two years for grades A*-C but they were close to the national level for grades A*-G.

Standards and achievement

92. Achievement when compared to prior attainment is good at Year 9. It is only satisfactory at Year 11 because in Years 10 and 11 the time allocation is short and the carousel and split groups make continuity difficult. Students learn to use specialist vocabulary. In discussion with a partner or in small groups they test ideas before they write and this helps students of all abilities to succeed. The use of music and video clips and the overhead projector all help

student motivation. Students read aloud regularly with varying degrees of fluency and expression, but members of the class respect their efforts. The tasks set allow all to achieve and are differentiated by outcome. Students are aware of what they need to show to gain a level but the most able do not always show what they are capable of. The most able are not identified and are not sufficiently challenged.

Teaching and learning

93. The good achievement at Year 9 is largely due to the very clear scheme of work and lesson outlines prepared for members of the department. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare and plan very well often using imaginative ideas of their own such as playing Buddhist music to start a lesson on happiness. Clear student management techniques establish a culture for learning. Relationships are very good. The study of aspects of major world religions helps students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment is integrated into each unit of work and provides useful information on learning and helps students to know what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

94. The teacher in charge of the subject provides a clear vision. His room is separated from the department and he does not have performance management responsibility for the department making his task difficult. However, the support given to the department is very good and a common approach is consistently applied.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and with high expectations, students are motivated to succeed and achieve well.
- Leadership gives a clear direction to the subject and the team is strong.
- Graphical skills are poor.
- There is no computer-aided design/manufacture, which is a legal requirement.
- The use of National Curriculum levels is underdeveloped in Years 7 to 9 and therefore students do not know how to improve.
- There is no technician for food technology, causing an inefficient use of the teachers' time.
- There is a lack of support for students with special educational needs. This hinders their progress.
- The workshops are in need of refurbishment.

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

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

Commentary

Examination results

95. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were in line with national averages overall. The food technology and textiles results were high and had improved, while the electronics and resistant materials results were low, although they too had improved.

Standards and achievement

96. Students enter the school with standards that are well below national expectations, because they have had an incomplete experience of the subject in the primary phase. They make rapid gains in most skills and understanding in Year 7 to reach standards that are below national expectations by the end of Year 9, but which match the standards reached in 2003. At the end of Year 11, standards overall are below national expectations. Standards seen in resistant materials and electronics have improved and now match national expectations, while standards in food technology and textiles have declined and are just below expected standards nationally. Students' making skills are satisfactory, but standards are lower in the design element. Graphical skills are poor. There is no specialist graphics teacher and the scheme of work is in need of revision, as it does not lead to high standards. Support is not provided where it is needed, which results in students making unsatisfactory progress.

Teaching and learning

97. The good achievement is the result of very high expectations in all subjects other than graphics. Great demands are put on students to quickly learn new skills and use them with confidence, which they do from early in Year 7. With good planning, a rapid pace to the lesson, clear demonstrations and based on good subject knowledge, much is covered and therefore learnt. Questioning is probing, to make students think and therefore learn. As a result of the sense of urgency in the lessons, students concentrate and work hard. Although students know their National Curriculum levels at the end of each unit, they are unaware of how to improve. Assessment is good in Years 10 and 11 and students know how marks are awarded. Of value are the individual sessions with students, when their attainment is discussed.

Leadership and management

98. The head of department has a very clear idea of the strengths of the department and the team work very well together. The school does not have the equipment to deliver computer aided manufacture/design, which is a legal requirement of the National Curriculum and which adds to students' learning. Food technology and textiles does not have a technician, the lack of which eats into the teachers' time. Visits are not integral to the schemes of work. These are important to give students an understanding of the subject outside the school. The old workshops are in need of refurbishment and the wood and metal facilities would benefit from being combined.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and therefore students are motivated to succeed and achieve very well.
- Standards are very high.
- Leadership and management are very good and give a clear direction to the subject.

- In Years 7 to 9, students do not know how to improve on their National Curriculum levels.
- Reference material is inadequate and of poor quality, which hinders students' research.
- Visits to extend the students' understanding of the subject are not organised.

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

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

Commentary

Examination results

99. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were very high and results have been consistently very high and rising in recent years.

Standards and achievement

100. During the inspection, standards matched the above average standards of the Year 9 teacher assessments and the very high GCSE results. When students enter the school, they have little experience of the subject and very low standards. Students make enormous leaps in attainment in Year 7 as they learn basic skills, such as those gained in observational drawing and in painting and colour mixing. This gives them the confidence to develop their individuality and creativity, which contributes to the very high standards.

Teaching and learning

101. Students' very good achievement is due to the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, which transmits to the students and, with good relationships, students strive to succeed. Students' self-confidence grows rapidly with the encouragement of the teachers and this is an important factor in the development of the very high standards as was seen, for example, in an outstanding Year 11 lesson. Students question and even argue with teachers over the development of their ideas. Questioning is probing, which makes students think and therefore learn. All lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, so that much is covered. Students are highly motivated and work hard. Marking is detailed and assessment ensures that students in Years 7 to 9 know their National Curriculum levels, but students are unsure of targets to enable them to improve. Assessment is good in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management

102. The comprehensive scheme of work ensures that students have a wide range of experiences, which gives them the confidence to excel in their preferred media. The head of department has supported the non-specialist teachers very effectively and has a clear vision of the development of the department. The reference books are dilapidated and there is not the range of good quality art books to fully extend students' understanding. Visits to widen students' experiences are not included in the schemes of work.

Music

The overall quality of provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have improved subject focus, accommodation and resources and provide many very good opportunities for students to perform in school, within the community and with professional organisations.
- Students' achievement is good because of consistently good teaching and learning.
- Students' learning is beginning to benefit significantly from outstanding new ICT resources.
- Students participate enthusiastically in a wide range of enrichment activities.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

103. Teachers' assessments in 2003 show the number of students in Year 9 with National Curriculum Level 5 or above to be average. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average, although numbers were quite small. The trend in GCSE results is upward.

Standards and achievement

104. Attainment for the majority of students on entry is below average, although that of a significant minority is well below average. By Year 9 students have developed a good range of performing and composing skills, good knowledge and understanding of signs and symbols, technical language, notation, musical history, instruments and repertoire. This supports the increasing numbers of students choosing to continue music in Years 10 and 11. Most students in Years 10 and 11 play an instrument well and have good performing experience. Their developing skills in the use of ICT music programs means that their composing is becoming more ambitious and refined. They are learning to be more self-sufficient by accessing information on musicians and musical contexts. Overall students' achievement is good. Their attainment is average in Year 9 and above average in Year 11.

105. In all years students with special needs achieve as well as others. This is because tasks are carefully adapted by outcome for their capabilities and teachers, teaching assistants and fellow students support them well. However, talented and higher attaining students are not always sufficiently stretched or supported, in order to achieve their full potential, particularly where they are in classes of 30 or more students.

Teaching and learning

106. Consistently good teaching and learning are major factors in students' good achievement. The best features of teaching promote students' learning by providing a well planned, progressive and varied range of activities in which students develop practical skills, analytical listening and supporting knowledge. Teachers manage behaviour securely so that all students can work equally well within a clearly understood subject code of conduct and work practice which

values and encourages students' views and efforts. Students listen to, respect and appreciate each other. Learning would be even better if students were stretched more, by rigorous questioning and problem solving and had more opportunities to evaluate each other's work.

107. A large number of students benefit from a wide range of instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities. The quality of teaching and coaching is high and students' responses are enthusiastic and committed. Overall music contributes greatly to the moral, social and cultural aspects of students' development and particularly to their awareness, understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures.

Leadership and management

108. Leadership is dynamic and management is energetic. In the relatively short time since the previous inspection, provision has improved through a revised scheme of work, more instrumental tuition and better and more varied resources, including a splendid subject specific ICT suite. The accommodation has been reorganised to support the expanding level of musical activities. The focus of the subject is now high in the school and the impact its students make through musical activities with other schools, in the community and with professional organisations, contributes significantly to its reputation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership is good and provides a clear vision for the subject.
- Assessment is used effectively to motivate students and set challenging targets.
- Good teaching and students' positive attitudes to learning contribute to the improving standards.
- Students' evaluative skills in Years 7 to 9 are not well developed.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

109. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were just below average but are on a rising trend. Boys performed better than girls did overall. Most students achieved as well as in their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

110. Students in Year 9 have average skills in gymnastics, although standards of the current Year 7 students are above average for their age. They create complex, exciting sequences of movement with precision and good timing. In basketball they have a good grasp of the basic skills and are able to apply tactics in games. By Year 11 their skills become more refined and precise. They are able to effectively coach each other using technical vocabulary. This is

undoubtedly driven by the students who are currently following the GCSE course who have above average skills of analysis. The improving trend of rising standards at GCSE continues. The majority are above average in their practical performance though the girls are below average. Lower attaining students do not have a good grasp of key facts and show some confusion in their writing. Students with special educational needs in all years achieve as well as others and are often able sports players.

Teaching and learning

111. The improved quality of teaching since the last inspection has led to a far more positive approach to learning by the students. They are now happy to practise skills and this leads to good achievement. Teachers' subject knowledge is used well to set challenging tasks that build logically to the final activity. Greater consolidation could be achieved by the students making their own evaluations of each other's performance and then using them to improve in Years 7 to 9. The use of video to record their performance is now helping students to observe. Numeracy skills are not so well supported. Improved assessment procedures inform students of the level they have reached and what it is they need to do to improve further. The students enjoy this involvement and the responsibility that is extended to them. There is an overriding ethos within the department that leads to positive self-esteem and a celebration of achievement.
112. There is good participation in the very good extra-curricular programme and the students enjoy success at a local level in sports such as football and badminton. Older students help to coach younger students and also work with local primary schools. A wide variety of multi-cultural dances are explored and performed in school productions.

Leadership and management

113. The head of department manages the department well; she provides clear vision and direction. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards are higher and the quality of teaching is much improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

The quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in citizenship is enhanced by contributions made by other subjects and by the extensive enrichment of the extra-curricular programme.
- The schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 cover the statutory requirements effectively.
- Citizenship in Years 10 and 11 lacks aspects of coverage which are only satisfactorily covered in subjects elsewhere.
- The school development plan includes plans to introduce more citizenship in Years 10 and 11 from September 2004 and possibly a short course GCSE in September 2005.

	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Commentary

Standards and achievement

114. Students respond well to opportunities to engage in discussions. They enjoy talking about difficult issues and are willing to express their views fearlessly. In Years 7 to 9 students understand environmental issues, religious sensibilities, cultural diversity and aspects of anti-discriminatory strategies. Their knowledge about the British system of government both at a national and a local level is less secure although it is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 students' understanding is significantly improved. All students receive opportunities to exercise their civic skills through the school council, charity work, community links, involvement in the Youth Parliament elections of which the winning representative came from the school and through many other activities. All students make good progress and achieve well.

Teaching and learning

115. Teaching and learning are good. Students have many opportunities to engage in debates and to express their views. Lessons are well planned especially in Years 7 and 9 where there is a specific focus on citizenship. In Years 10 and 11 much of what takes place is through subjects and this process is effectively audited with clear guidelines on what should be covered. Students respond well to opportunities for role play and for working collaboratively. They enjoy presenting their findings after group deliberations. Students particularly welcome the opportunities for enhancing their civic understanding through a very rich enrichment programme. A few teachers feel ill equipped to teach citizenship through the tutorial programme and they need further staff development to enhance their practice.

Leadership and management

116. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has carried out a comprehensive audit which has resulted in enhancing the provision in Years 7 to 9 this year and in producing clear plans for a short GCSE course for all from the next academic year. He has also produced an effective continuous audit system with a requirement by each subject to indicate where citizenship takes place which is consistently done. Assessment strategies are in place and largely, though not consistently, effectively used. There is little formal monitoring of teaching and learning although the subject leader knows where the strengths and weaknesses are through informal links.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	4
Students' achievement	2

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well students learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for students	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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