

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Willingdon Community School**

Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114592

Headteacher: Mr Ian Jungius

Lead inspector: Mrs Susan Chamberlain

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 258854

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 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	933
School address:	Broad Road Lower Willingdon Eastbourne East Sussex
Postcode:	BN20 9QX
Telephone number:	01323 485254
Fax number:	01323 487779
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John White
Date of previous inspection:	28 September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Willingdon Community School is an average sized, mixed comprehensive school with 933 pupils (461 boys, 472 girls) on roll. Many pupils come from favourable backgrounds but others from a wide variety of circumstances. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment, overall. The school gained 'Artsmark Gold' in 2004 and 'Sportsmark' in 2003. It is in the process of bidding for Media and Visual Arts Status.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 6.1 per cent, is below the national average. There are very few pupils, 0.9 per cent, for whom English is an additional language. Most pupils are White British. There are currently 76 pupils on the register of special educational needs. Of this number, 29 have Statements of Special Educational Need. Overall, these numbers are below average, but the number of pupils with statements is above the national average. This reflects the school's growing reputation for special educational needs provision. Nine pupils with statements have hearing impairment. Approximately the same number of pupils joined the school as left it over the last year

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7661	Susan Chamberlain	Lead inspector	Citizenship
32670	Graham Saltmarsh	Lay inspector	
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	English
30597	Robina Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics
18453	Colin Lower	Team inspector	Science
31765	Ian Hume	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Design and technology
11300	Barry Smith	Team inspector	Geography
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	History
4749	Martin Ash	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
12475	Stuart Johnson	Team inspector	Music
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education, citizenship
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International  
 Upperton House  
 The Avenue  
 Eastbourne  
 East Sussex  
 BN21 3YB

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. It has a very inclusive approach and cares for all pupils equally well. It maintains high expectations of pupils, both academically and pastorally. The very favourable ethos enables pupils to learn in a happy, fruitful environment. The school provides **very good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and encourage and engage pupils well.
- The clarity of vision and sense of purpose exhibited by both the headteacher and the chair of governors are excellent.
- Pastoral care is especially strong; pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour result from the very good ethos the school promotes.
- The needs of all pupils are acted upon; particular strengths are the hearing impaired facility and the provision for special educational needs.
- Provision is very good in art, English, geography, history and physical education.
- In religious education, statutory requirements are not met in Years 10 and 11.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation for design and technology and music and poor accommodation for physical education adversely affects standards.
- Roles and responsibilities for the rapidly expanding area concerning vocational education are unclear.

Since the previous inspection, the school has made good improvement. Teaching has improved. The school is now oversubscribed. Accommodation has improved in English, drama and information and communication technology (ICT) but there are still deficiencies in other areas. The key issues from the previous inspection have been well addressed. There is too little time allocated to religious education in Years 10 and 11. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties has improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 11 results

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

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

The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who are either gifted or talented, is **very good** in Years 7 to 9 and **good** in Years 10 and 11. The achievement of pupils whose first language is not English is **very good** across all years. Achievement is best in English and art across all years and in history and geography in Years 7 to 9. The work seen indicated that standards are **above average**. They are highest in English, history and art in Years 7 to 9, high in English and very high in art in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' competency in English language and literacy is very good. In mathematics, it is good and in ICT it is satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, standards in recent statutory tests and teacher assessments were **in line** with national averages. In 2003, GCSE results are **above average** for 5 A\* to C grades when compared with all schools and above **average** when compared with schools with similar previous attainment.

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Attitudes and behaviour across the entire school are **very good**. Courtesy and consideration for others give the school a very good, cohesive ethos and strong sense of community. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, cultural, and social development, are **very good**, overall but spiritual issues are not catered for sufficiently in Years 10 and 11.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Teaching and learning are **good**. They are best in Years 8 and 9, where nearly a third of teaching is very good or, as seen on two occasions, excellent. Teaching is weakest in Year 7, where pupils need considerable settling and have weak learning skills. Excellent lessons occurred in science, where challenging, well directed tasks produced excellent learning at brisk pace, and in history, where pupils appreciated the horror of the Nazi persecution. Unsatisfactory lessons are very rare. Assessment is generally **good**. The quality of the curriculum is **good**. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The pupils' personal development programme is good. The school is not meeting statutory requirements in religious education in Years 10 and 11, or for collective worship. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare and health are **very good**. Overall, health and safety arrangements are **very good**. Students have very deep confidence and trust in the school and the staff. Links and dialogue with parents are **very strong**, consistent and informative. The school is a significant contributor to the wider community and links with other schools are **very good**.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are **very good**. Leadership by the headteacher, chair of governors and key staff is **very good**. They all share a common sense of direction and are committed to raising standards of teaching and learning. Management is **very good**. Governance is **very good**. Financial control is **good**.

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

Most of the parents appreciate the good teaching their children receive. They like the wealth of communications from the school and appreciate the accessibility of the school and staff. They believe that the school expects pupils to work hard. There is some dissatisfaction with homework arrangements. The majority of pupils enjoy school and understand what is expected of them. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive; pupils feel well supported.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Clarify roles and responsibilities in managing the rapidly expanding range of vocational courses.
- Improve accommodation for design and technology, physical education and music.

and, to meet statutory requirements

- In religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- In the provision of a daily collective act of worship for all pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

During the inspection, the achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and whose first language is not English, was at least **good**, and best in Years 8 and 9. Standards were **above average**. By the end of Year 9 standards, in statutory tests and teacher assessments, are **in line** with national averages. By the end of Year 11, GCSE results are **above average** for 5 A\* to C grades.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve very well in English and art.
- Pupils' attainment is well above average in Years 7 to 9 when compared with schools with similar previous attainment.
- Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy allow them to access the curriculum effectively.

#### Commentary

1. Attainment on entry is about average. By the end of Year 9 in 2003, pupils attain standards in line with national averages. Results in statutory tests indicate that standards are well above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. When compared with their previous attainment, pupils attain at a well above average level. Their achievement indicates very good progress when compared with all schools and with schools with similar prior attainment. Girls perform better than boys.

#### Key Stage 3

2. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point score in 2003

Standards in	School results		National results	
English	36.2	(34.2)	33.4	(33.3)
Mathematics	34.2	(35.0)	35.4	(34.7)
Science	33.6	(33.0)	33.6	(33.3)

*There were 186 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is very good in English, where there are particular strengths in speaking and listening; in history, where pupils are confident in investigatory skills; in art, where skills in drawing and painting improve rapidly and in geography where research skills are strong. It is good in all other subjects, except information and communication technology (ICT), where it is satisfactory. In the work seen, standards are well above average in English, history and art. They are above average in mathematics, music and physical education. In design and technology, standards are below average. In all other subjects, work is in line with national averages.

4. The proportions of pupils who gain 5 A\* to C or 5 A\* to G grades at GCSE are above average. Pupils make satisfactory gains from the end of Year 9 until the end of Year 11. Their performance at this level is above average for those gaining 5 A\* to C grades, average for those gaining 5 A\* to G grades and well above average for those gaining 1 or more A\* to G grades when compared with school having similar previous attainment.



## Key Stage 4

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ at the end of Year 11 – average point score in 2003

Standards in	School results		National results	
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* - C grades	59	(53)	52	(50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* - G grades	92	(90)	91	(91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A* - G grades	99	(98)	96	(96)
Average point score per pupil (best 8 subjects)	37.3	(35.0)	34.7	(34.8)

*There were 179 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Pupils' achievement, in Years 10 and 11, is very good in English, where pupils have high quality analytical skills, and in art, where handmade work books show very high levels of inventiveness and imagination; it is good in all other subjects, except ICT, where it is satisfactory. In the work seen, standards were excellent in art and well above expectations in English. In most other subjects, standards were above national expectations, except in science, ICT and design and technology, where they were in line with expectations.

6. Many pupils join the school in Year 7 with literacy standards that are already good for their age. This assists their rapid acquisition of skills in a wide range of subjects. However, there is no complacency, so the school continues to build on the high standard of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, as pupils move up through the school.

7. Pupils' skills in number allow them to enhance their learning in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. Their use of numeracy in other subjects supports their work in mathematics lessons. In science, pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively to collect and interpret data, to take measurements and to make various calculations. Pupils use their data handling skills equally well in geography, history and in design and technology, where they apply and develop measurement skills.

8. Pupils with special educational needs and hearing impairment achieve as well as their peers. In the majority of subject areas they achieve well and in art they achieve very well. Careful note is taken of examination success and a record is kept of leavers' achievements. Of the 9 pupils in the hearing impaired unit, all but two are attaining below the national average, but they achieve well relative to their National Curriculum levels.

9. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well in all subject areas, except in art and design and English where they achieve very well. In common with their peers they achieve better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Their performance is monitored in subject areas and in the school as a whole, but current analysis of results is insufficient to evaluate the impact of the gifted and talented programme.

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

10. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, cultural, and social development, are **very good**, overall, although there are deficiencies in the provision of religious education and collective worship.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Courtesy and consideration to others gives the school a very good, cohesive ethos.
- Pupils are very positive about the school.
- Pupils' personal qualities are well developed.

## Commentary

11. Attitudes and behaviour across the school are very good. Pupils are very positive about the school, enjoy attending and are absorbed in their tasks. This remains consistent throughout the school day. Pupils with special educational needs such as those in the hearing support facility all have very positive attitudes and a willingness to work hard. Those pupils who receive additional specialist help cope very well with the one-to-one teaching support. Many of the pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer to them. These include after school clubs run by the art, physical education, ICT and drama departments and musical activities.
12. There is a complete absence of any signs of bullying in the school. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that any form of bullying is not tolerated and that any suggestion of any such behaviour is immediately addressed. Pupils are clearly mutually supportive in this school and display care and concern for each other. They feel confident in being able to draw any instance of inappropriate behaviour to the attention of staff if needs be. The school has an effective, straightforward policy in this regard and this is respected across the whole school.
13. The positive attitudes and behaviour of pupils are a significant strength of community life in the school. Consequently, lapses are comparatively few. However, such breakdowns in behaviour are promptly and effectively addressed by the school. The school goes to great lengths to investigate the causes and effects of inappropriate behaviour and approaches these issues with the pupil concerned. Most incidents are dealt with by dialogue and counselling, with an input from parents if it is deemed necessary. Behaviour management is a strength of the school, so pupils' individual needs are approached with skill, compassion and support. There have been no permanent exclusions from the school during the last academic year and the 26 fixed-term exclusions reflect the school's firm attitude towards inappropriate behaviour, as and when it occurs.
14. Pupils accept responsibility very well. There is an influential school council which has representatives from all year groups. The council members are highly regarded. They put forward the views of the whole school. They are consulted on all important policy issues, such as bullying and behaviour. Older pupils are invited to apply personally to become prefects.
15. Personal development is very good and there are some strong features of general social development and understanding of others. Personal, social and health education is both co-ordinated skilfully and woven into the caring ethos of the school. It is generally in evidence across the curriculum, especially in art and drama. Additional opportunities for personal, social, health and citizenship education are taken, to good effect, during form time and assemblies.
16. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss world issues, themes and thoughts in assemblies, as well as during form time and lessons. As a consequence, they are helped to develop into rounded people who are curious, open-minded and tolerant. The curriculum ensures a sound understanding of Christianity and other world religions. Art and drama are used as effective vehicles for exploring the complexities of today's society.
17. Pupils with learning difficulties show very positive attitudes. This is particularly true in small group situations, as seen in a number of Year 9 withdrawal lessons. In one, a profoundly deaf girl responded very positively to the teacher's support in reinforcing her understanding of the class novel. In another lesson a pupil withdrawn for literacy support showed great confidence and happiness in the work she was doing. Pupils work hard and are motivated. Behaviour is generally very good and good relationships exist in classrooms, as seen in a Year 10 geography lower set where pupils with a range of disabilities worked very well together.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.7
National data:	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	1.0
National data:	1.1

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background

No of pupils on roll
933

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
75	2
4	

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

18. **The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Teaching and learning are good with a third of lessons very good. Assessment is good. The quality of the curriculum is good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The pupils' personal development programme is good. The school is not meeting statutory requirements in religious education in Years 10 and 11, or for collective worship. Arrangements to ensure pupils care, welfare and health are very good. Links and dialogue with parents are very strong

### Teaching and learning

19. Teaching and learning are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high proportion (one third) of very good lessons.
- The school is successfully using strategies appropriate to the individual's particular learning preference.
- Teaching and learning are weakest in Year 7.
- In very good lessons, teachers enable high attaining pupils to achieve well
- Pupils' learning is aided by their high levels of articulacy.
- The structure of lessons is good.

### Commentary

20. Good teaching and learning are normal across the school. In Years 8 and 9, high proportions of lessons are very good. Unsatisfactory teaching is very rare. Teaching and learning are weakest in Year 7. Many pupils enter the school with poor learning skills, so their concentration is often inadequate. In this year in particular, teachers have to spend considerable time settling classes and instilling basic approaches to learning. Teaching and learning strategies are priorities for the school and feature heavily in development planning and staff training. The school is working

very hard to use strategies which are matched to each individual's particular learning preference. Such strategies address the emotional, as well as the intellectual and practical capabilities of pupils. When they enter the school, all pupils are asked which way they learn best. The responses are recorded so that staff can change tack if a particular pupil does not benefit from the current approach.

21. Excellent lessons occurred in science, where challenging, well directed tasks produced excellent learning at brisk pace, and in history, where pupils appreciated the horror of the Nazi persecution. In very good lessons, teachers enable high attaining pupils to achieve well. In English, for example, they develop their skills of textual analysis and in science, they argue both for and against smoking and drinking during pregnancy. In art, pupils encounter a very rich learning environment, which encourages them to work very well. Teachers offer very clear, strong and confident expositions, which guide pupils very securely through allotted tasks. In very good lessons, teachers include a substantial number of interconnected activities.

22. Pupils are very articulate. Very good learning is exemplified in the way high attaining pupils, in Year 8, can talk in depth about a range of books that they have read. Often, they can relate a book to the style of its author. In Year 9, lower attaining pupils are encouraged by praise and patience to produce good examples of creative writing. Lively questioning helps settle very challenging pupils.

23. In nearly all lessons, teachers have clear objectives, which they make known to their pupils. These are checked at the end of the lessons, enabling teachers to know if the lesson's aim has been accomplished. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects. They usually have high expectations. Pupils react by optimising the quality of their response. Lessons are well planned. Teachers often include activities that have a humorous edge. In mathematics for example, pupils plotted points relating to the height and age of cartoon characters. Each figure was named with a letter from 'A to G'. Some confusion occurred when a pupil plotted two points labelled 'B'. When questioned about this, he said the second 'B' was baby Gavin. Much laughter erupted. Teachers use group and pair work successfully in many subjects. Self motivating pupils enjoy interacting with others and producing joint conclusions. However, others use such opportunities to disengage their attention. Pupils are taught well to be good citizens. They explore, for example, the moral issues raised by crime and its effect upon society. They articulate their ideas well. They are not afraid to contribute to discussion, even if their views are controversial.

24. In less successful lessons, pupils lack inspiration and the pace of learning is slow. Productivity is reduced and insufficient consolidation of learning takes place. As lessons progress, teachers have to work harder to keep a few pupils, who are rather immature, on task.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 114 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (2%)	31 (27%)	60 (53%)	19 (17%)	1 (1%)	0	0

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

25. In withdrawal groups, teaching is good and sometimes very good. Work is well planned and matched to pupils' needs. Classroom teachers are conscientious in providing support for individuals in all subject areas. Pupils with hearing difficulties are catered for well. They usually have a support teacher to sign for them and consequently make good progress. Relationships are very good, leading to a rapid rate of work and growth in self-confidence. These benefits were observed in a Year 9 literacy support lesson and in lessons in the hearing impaired unit, where pupils were required to think for themselves and persevere in challenging activities. In art, pupils, on the SEN and HI registers, are included in the gifted and talented provision. In the SEN and HI

departments, good use is made of a variety of ICT programmes to improve literacy and understanding.

### Assessment

26. Assessment is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good whole school policy on marking, assessment, recording and reporting.
- Most departments have well organised assessment systems.
- The level of reporting is good and is appreciated by parents.
- Three departments do not use assessment sufficiently to respond to individual needs.
- In three subjects, pupils do not understand sufficiently how they can improve.

### Commentary

27. The system for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress is developing well. Good advice is given, which helps departments to organise their own systems. A copy of the policy is given to each teacher. There is a whole-school marking policy which offers helpful comments about written work. This gives clear guidance to teachers, and they in turn give advice to individual pupils. Pupils are involved in appraising their own and others work, which contributes much to their good attainment. Purposefully, departments assess pupils against National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria, throughout the year. Some departments also have examples of pupils' work at different levels. Some departments have better systems than others, but most are good.

28. The school organises a good level of reporting to parents. On one evening each year, parents discuss their child's progress with subject teachers. All parents receive two reports per year, with grades and targets. If there is a cause for concern, the school contacts parents. Good reports give details of academic and other progress, set targets for the pupils and give information that is generally good and helpful to parents. However, the academic targets set for pupils in music, design and technology and religious education are not sufficiently precise.

### The curriculum

29. **The quality of the curriculum is good.** Enrichment activities are **very good**. Resources are **satisfactory**. Accommodation is **unsatisfactory**. Staffing is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is making good improvement to its curriculum.
- The curriculum for pupils identified as having special educational needs, including hearing impairment, is very good.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- The pupils' personal development programme is good.
- The school is not meeting statutory requirements in religious education in Years 10 and 11, or for collective worship.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory in music and design and technology and poor in physical education.

### Commentary

30. There is a broad and balanced curriculum. Provision in religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and statutory requirements

for a daily act of collective worship are not met. The school is planning to address these shortcomings.

31. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is well established, as a result of extensive curriculum revision and relevant staff training, which has been effectively co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher/ Key Stage 3 strategy manager. The revision has resulted in improved teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy's effect in terms of improving standards and achievement is careful and ongoing.

32. The school has been successful in broadening the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to meet the needs of pupils for whom a wholly academic approach is unrealistic. The school is part of the Eastbourne Federation of Schools. As a result, an 'increased flexibility project' has begun; now pupils attend vocational courses at Sussex Downs College. The pupils enjoy and benefit from a choice of six accredited courses (NVQ level1), including electrical installation and hairdressing. These initiatives, resulting from systematic reviews of the curriculum, have helped the school to meet more successfully the needs of all pupils. Such courses offer a good preparation for adult life, the world of work and further education, as does work experience and the well-organised careers and guidance programme spanning Years 9 to 11. A minimal two vocational GCSE courses in leisure and tourism and business are open to other pupils in Years 10 and 11. Plans to introduce vocational GCSE art and ICT are in place. The school is aware of the need to continue to develop this area and is committed within its budget to providing a curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils.

33. There are many extra-curricular activities matching the wide range of pupils' interests. These include various music and sports clubs, play rehearsals, ICT club and many more. There is access to the library and computers before and at the end of the school day. Many departments offer extra support for each of the years after school and in the holidays. These activities extend pupils' horizons, as does the good personal, social and health education curriculum. This programme is well managed and planned, with careful regard to pupils' needs. It includes education in drug and alcohol abuse and sex education. Links with external specialists such as local businesses support pupils' personal development.

34. Currently, the school is focusing on improving the curriculum through staff training in 'assessment for learning' and in the 'development of pupils' thinking skills'. The school has applied for specialist status, which, if attained, will enable it to further improve provision.

35. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. The requirements of the Code of Practice are met and pupils have relevant individual education plans. These provide clear advice for teachers and assistants on how the curriculum, as well as teaching approaches, should be adapted to match the needs of the pupils. In English, mathematics and science the pupils are set according to ability and pupils with special needs are usually taught in smaller classes with good quality support by teaching assistants. Such adaptations provide good opportunities for building on the pupils' skills through individual and small group work, while allowing the pupils to join in all the school's activities. Curriculum provision for those in the unit for hearing impaired pupils is very good.

36. The identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is thorough and ongoing. There is very good liaison with primary feeder schools, so the needs of new pupils are well known before entry. Pupils with the lowest levels of attainment, or with particular disabilities, benefit from withdrawal teaching that does not interfere with their participation in the mainstream curriculum. In addition, pupils take advantage of lunchtime and after school clubs in the very pleasant environment provided by the special educational needs and hearing impaired units. Most pupil support is provided in mainstream classes; hearing impaired pupils are withdrawn in Years 9 and 10 only, in order to consolidate their progress. Support is effectively provided by three special needs teachers with ten teaching assistants and two teachers of the deaf with five teaching assistants. In history, physical education and music the very effective support provided by hearing impaired teaching assistants is remarked on by inspectors. In mainstream classes special needs teaching

assistants give very good support to their particular charges and to other pupils as well. The teaching assistants are experienced, well trained and well deployed. They fulfil an important role in liaising with departments and keeping careful records of pupils' progress. The work of special educational needs and hearing impaired teaching assistants is of a very high standard and results in special educational needs pupils achieving well.

37. Good Individual Education Plans support the work of teaching assistants and classroom teachers. They follow the local authority model and provide comprehensive information on needs and targets for each pupil. All the strands of curriculum support form a very good provision for pupils with a variety of needs. The school has been suitably modified to provide for wheelchair access to all areas and all special educational needs pupils have full access to all areas of the curriculum.

38. The school has made additional curriculum changes in Years 10 and 11, which meet the needs of the pupils with special educational needs more adequately. It offers a range of accredited courses in addition to or, as an alternative to GCSE. It successfully operates a pre-vocational course, which consist of personal skill development activities, 'taster' work placements at local businesses and short, link college courses.

39. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are well supported through the curriculum. A co-ordinator has been appointed to develop a special curriculum for these pupils and to monitor their progress, to ensure that they experience sufficient challenge. In subjects where there is setting, the pupils work at a faster speed on more demanding work. In addition to their usual lessons, the identified gifted and talented pupils are offered additional studies or activities such as newspaper production and a residential summer school. The school has plans to enhance the programme further.

40. Staffing is satisfactory and all substantive staff are well qualified in their areas of expertise. The school is recovering from a period of staff shortages, notably in mathematics, science, English, geography, modern foreign languages, and design and technology. Remarkably, standards of attainment have not been adversely affected to any great extent.

41. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Although the school has made some significant improvements since the last inspection, notably in English, drama and ICT; the accommodation for physical education is poor. In music and design and technology, it is unsatisfactory.

42. Resources in most subjects are sufficient to meet the basic needs of the curriculum and which satisfactorily allow teachers to create patterns of work that keep all pupils included. There are examples of good, graduated equipment for pupils with special educational needs in physical education. In other areas there are shortages, of tools in design and technology, for instance and of extension readers and magazines in modern foreign languages. ICT resources are developing well, and in most subjects there is sufficient hardware and software to assist learning and differentiation. In religious education, modern foreign languages, English and physical education, ICT resources are good. However, in music there is a lack of equipment for composition in Years 10 and 11. The stock of print materials in the learning resource centre complements basic textbooks and the welcoming atmosphere of the centre encourages intensive usage. There is a small number of computers here, which access all the learning resources of the college network.

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

43. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare and health are **very good**. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance to its pupils. It has very good systems in place to seek their views. Overall health and safety arrangements are very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A pro-active, caring pastoral team is a strong feature of the school.
- Pupils have confidence and trust in the school and the staff.
- Care for individual pupils with personal problems is strong and consistently monitored.
- Procedures for introducing new pupils to the school are very good.

## Commentary

44. The school provides a safe, secure and caring environment for pupils to learn and develop in. The pastoral team has promoted the very good ethos of a strong and very caring community.

45. Arrangements for the welfare of pupils are very good, as are the application of procedures for child protection. There are very strongly developed relationships with social services, police and the area health authority. First aid and health and safety arrangements are very good, due to dedicated members of staff who are fully aware of their practical and statutory responsibilities.

46. The work of the school's pastoral team is pro-active and very effective. Early referrals and intervention means that pupils with social or behaviour difficulties are counselled and cared for sensitively, with minimal disruption to their life in school. Pupils demonstrate a deep, trusting relationship with the staff at the school. They will actively seek care and support. Interviews with pupils revealed that a range of personal issues, originating from within and outside the school, had been handled and resolved confidentially and effectively. Subsequent monitoring with a light touch is appreciated both by pupils and parents.

47. A school nurse/health advisor attends the school every Monday for a confidential 'drop in session' for pupils. Working together with the pastoral team and heads of year, this service provides a starting point for pupils to confront and deal with emotional and other, health-related, personal problems.

48. Procedures for induction into the school are very good. Documentation sent to parents is comprehensive. Every aspect of the school is clearly and thoughtfully set out for them and their children. To aid their transition into the new school, new pupils are invited to spend at least a day in the school prior to transfer. During this time they take part in a range of sample lessons and activities. Pupils with special educational needs are invited to spend a longer period with the school prior to transfer. Pupils continue to benefit from very good academic advice and extra tuition in booster lessons and after-school clubs. Marking and targetting encourages pupils to achieve their full potential. The school provides very good advice and information about subject options and post-16 opportunities. It has very strong links with the ConneXions service.

49. Statutory requirements for provision, as outlined in statements of special educational needs are met. Reviews of statements and individual education plans are regular and thorough, with good contributions from teachers' and teacher assistants' notes. No pupils miss opportunities as a result of disability. All the pupils on the register receive very good guidance and support according to their needs and are closely involved in their own development.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

50. Links and dialogue with parents are **very good**, consistent and informative. The school is a significant contributor to the wider community and links with other schools are very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent information and reports are available to parents.
- School is a very good contributor to local community life.
- Very good links exist with other schools and colleges



- The Friends' and Parents' Association is very active.

## Commentary

51. Willingdon Community School works very closely with other schools, colleges and the community to enhance pupils' learning and personal development. Parents are especially positive about all aspects of the school, which enjoys a good reputation in the area. They particularly praise induction procedures, the school ethos and standards. They approve of the range of options and extra activities on offer. There are numerous avenues by which parents can approach the school or make their views heard. These included an annual questionnaire, curriculum and open evenings.

52. The school communicates very well with parents by a wide variety of means. These include a professionally produced prospectus, a highly informative and regular school magazine and comprehensive reports, written in plain language. Parents support the school well, by attending various meetings and events through the academic year and through the friends of the school association. The school actively seeks and acts upon the views of parents through regular surveys, the results of which are carefully analysed.

53. The school is partnered with three other specialist schools that support the development of work in sport, technology and the performing arts. Links with local primary schools are very good and very well established. The member of staff responsible for transition visits every Year 6 pupil transferring to the school, prior to them joining. Curriculum links have been developed in English, science, physical education and music.

54. The schools premises are well used by community groups, local clubs and associations. The community itself and local areas, including the surrounding countryside, are well used by the school to enhance appreciation and learning. Residential and day visits in this country and occasionally overseas contribute well to pupils' cultural and personal development.

55. Willingdon Community School is a member of a 'network learning community' of six secondary schools working on the development of Pupil Voice with pupils and staff. The school has a Year 11 pupil on the UK Youth Parliament and six pupils sit on the East Sussex Youth Cabinet, which advises national and local governments respectively on the views of young people. Work with local and national charities is an ongoing feature of school life. The school has been recently recognised by a national award for a pupil's work with the school's special needs pupils.

56. Parents have very good access to the school before their children join and are encouraged to maintain strong links. However, although the school makes every effort to be flexible and parents are given a variety of options, attendance is only about 80 per cent at reviews for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. The attendance at hearing impaired reviews is poor, as is the attendance rate of many hearing impaired pupils. There are very good links with a large range of outside agencies who provide good support. The hearing impaired teachers are part of the Services for Children with Sensory Needs agency, but are permanently based in the school, which promotes very good continuity. Strong links are maintained with local colleges, as well as with the partner primary schools.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

57. **Overall, leadership and management are very good.** Leadership by the headteacher and key staff is very good. Management is very good. Governance is very good. Financial control is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's excellent clarity of vision and sense of purpose permeates the school, inspiring staff and pupils alike.

- The commitment to inclusion by senior managers is very strong.
- The governing body is excellent in its contribution to and understanding of the direction in which the school is heading.
- The deployment of staff has proved problematic, the school having lost several key members.
- Financial control is secure.
- The management of pupils with learning difficulties is very good.

## Commentary

58. The headteacher is a very good leader with an excellent and clear vision for the school. He ensures that all staff focus on teaching and learning as a priority. He is very well supported in this aim by conscientious senior managers, all of whom share his vision. A concentration on different learning strategies as well as different teaching approaches has meant that teaching and learning have improved despite the difficulties in recruitment and the loss of a few key members of staff. Both the headteacher and the deputy head are very involved in the development of vocational courses across the region. This enables the school to be at the forefront of developments. The school is ripe for rapid expansion in this area. The roles and responsibilities of this key development are unclear although the workload is presently covered by the deputy head. Curriculum leaders and pastoral staff play their parts well. Most subject areas are led well. Art and mathematics have excellent leaders.

59. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and curriculum managers carry out rigorous and effective evaluation of the school's provision. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the performance management of all staff are key aspects of this process and both contribute very well to the raising of standards. 'Teachers as learners' is a culture that is strongly promoted within the school. This is supported by a strong commitment to staff development. The focus has been on whole staff training days, due to financial restraints resulting in some shortfall in courses for individual staff. An effective system of induction is in place, both for experienced staff and newly qualified teachers. The school's contribution to initial teacher training is very good.

60. The governing body is very well led by an experienced chair of governors, who is well versed in the roles and responsibilities expected of this group. Governors share a clear direction with the headteacher and senior staff. They actively participate in the creation of the school operational plan and in strategic decisions. They sustain senior managers in an excellent manner, by being both challenging and supportive. They act effectively as a critical friend, since they are all fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The lack of sufficient time allocation to religious education in Years 10 and 11 means that statutory requirements are not met. The governing body must ensure that this breach, which existed at the time of the previous inspection, is corrected.

61. Financial control is good. Clearly defined systems are in place. They are implemented effectively ensuring that best value is sought as well as approval being gained by governors and senior staff, especially where large spends are concerned. A licensed deficit exists. An arrangement for its repayment has been agreed by the school and the local education authority.

62. Two very experienced co-ordinators share the work of running the special educational needs department. They work very well together and have devised a very successful support programme to suit the needs of all pupils. They lead a very well organised team, the development and training of which is always in the forefront of planning. Development, recording and documentation are meticulous. Both units provide a very good environment for learning and coping. The management of the hearing impaired unit is also of a very high order and co-operation between both support areas is very impressive. A new, very interested parent governor has oversight of both units and is very supportive of the work being done. Both teams have the capacity, will and expertise to improve still further the very high quality provision seen during the inspection.

63. The gifted and talented initiative is very well managed. The co-ordinator is pro-active in establishing very good links with feeder schools, sixth form colleges and universities, which raise

pupils' aspirations from an early stage. Involvement with outside agencies has led to significant successes in regional media projects and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament elections.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,051,849	Balance from previous year	(94,511)
Total expenditure	3,026,829	Balance carried forward to the next	*(69,491)
Expenditure per pupil	3,247.67		

\*Standards fund under-spend carry forward into 2004/2005 of £19,852

64. Please note that the carry forward is the result of subtracting expenditure from income and then adding the carry-forward from the last year. This is what the school has left in its coffers!

### **What is the effectiveness of assessment of pupils with learning difficulties?**

65. The assessment of pupils with learning difficulties is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Tracking of progress is strong and effective in identifying problems.
- Individual education plans have comprehensive targets.

### **Commentary**

66. There is very good tracking of the progress of pupils' with learning difficulties throughout their time in the school. The co-ordinators have access to useful data, acquired by thorough testing of pupils' reading and spelling when they enter the school and from cognitive ability test results from Years 5 and 7. Documentation is very good and thorough. Pupils' speech and language therapy programmes are in place as are individual education plans with comprehensive targets. There is clear assessment of progress and overview of grades for all hearing impaired pupils. Pupils, in addition to individual education plans, have a record of progress that includes regular tests and indicates improvement in reading and spelling throughout the year. The very good assessment procedures of the special educational needs and hearing impaired units are supported by the good practice in subject areas.

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

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4.

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in response to very good teaching.
- Standards are well above average for pupils of all ages.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- The department uses assessment very well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Most pupils have very positive attitudes towards English, which contributes to very good learning.
- In a minority of lessons, able pupils do not achieve sufficiently, due to teachers not having challenging expectations.

#### Commentary

67. Results of tests in 2003 showed that standards gained by pupils in Year 9 were well above average, both nationally and in relation to similar schools, especially those at the higher levels. Girls in particular attained well above average levels. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, girls' results in both language and literature were significantly above the national average. Boys' results were close to the national average in language, and significantly above average in literature. The upward trend in results has been consistently good, with standards higher than in the other core subjects, science and mathematics. Current standards in Years 9 and 11 are well above average in all areas of English, although there are more high attainers among girls than boys. The majority of pupils read clearly, confidently and accurately. There are particular strengths in the quality of speaking and listening. Pupils of all ages are confident in discussion, with a good range of vocabulary, as seen for example in a Year 9 discussion about issues of racial discrimination in the novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry*. The quality of writing is also very good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 develop a good range of writing skills. They develop mature critical skills, as seen, for example, in Year 8 analyses of ballads and in Year 9 work on themes in *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*. The high quality of analysis in the work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is especially noteworthy. This includes sophisticated comparative studies of poetry by authors such as Blake and Tennyson.

68. Pupils join the school with average standards in English. Youngsters of all ages, particularly girls, achieve very well throughout their time in school. This is due to the very positive attitudes of most of them towards learning, and the good quality of teaching. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, share in this good achievement. However, only a relatively small proportion of pupils in Year 11 attain the highest A\* grade at GCSE.

69. Teaching in English is very good. Particularly significant is the high level of expectation of teachers, who set a range of challenging tasks and ensure that pupils are actively involved in their own learning. Consequently, they develop well as confident, independent learners. This is true, even when pupils are revising for examinations, as seen, for example, when Year 11 pupils worked in groups to discuss approaches to poetry evaluation. Pupils are given the confidence to question and debate. This was effective, for example, when Year 10 pupils made presentations on their chosen topics and evaluated each other's performance. Teachers question pupils very well, to assess their understanding. They also mark work thoroughly and constructively, so that pupils clearly understand their strengths, areas for development and specific targets. Although there is no

unsatisfactory teaching, pupils learn less effectively in the occasional lessons where teachers set undemanding tasks that restrict pupils' achievement. This happens, for example, when pupils carry out basic computer exercises or language reinforcement tasks, which do not meet the needs of the higher attainers.

70. Leadership and management are very good. The department evaluates its provision very thoroughly, and responds positively. For example, teachers have developed assessment procedures resulting in very good target setting and teaching strategies that meet the needs of the most able pupils. Schemes of work have been systematically revised. There is good monitoring of teaching and standards. Although ICT remains an area for further development, teachers use computers and interactive whiteboards well as teaching and learning aids. English benefits from having experienced staff and new, high-quality accommodation. The department has maintained strengths, such as high standards, identified in the previous inspection. Since then, there have been improvements in boys' standards and achievement, accommodation, the range of teaching and learning strategies and other aspects of provision. There has, therefore, been good improvement overall.

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

71. Pupils display a high level of language and literacy skills throughout the school. This has a positive effect upon pupils' standards and achievement in most subjects. Pupils are confident and able in speaking, responding well to opportunities for extended discussion in subjects like geography and mathematics, as well as in English. Year 11 pupils give confident presentations in science. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their project work in music. In a Year 8 tutor group, all pupils took part in a mature discussion on school rules and behaviour. Pupils show good awareness of appropriate technical vocabulary in their various subjects. They also write effectively, and subjects such as ICT give appropriate help to lower attainers to make their writing more analytical. Staff have been trained in approaches that promote good literacy; this training impacts positively on pupils' standards.

## **Drama**

72. Drama was sampled during the inspection. It was possible to observe only two lessons, one in Year 8 and one in Year 10. In both lessons, there was good teaching and learning. Pupils achieved well, for example, in preparing independently for their GCSE coursework assignments, thereby gaining in confidence. GCSE results in drama are good, and above the national average. The department benefits considerably from the new purpose-built drama studio, which helps to create a good atmosphere for learning. The department also provides a good range of theatre trips and its regular productions are popular with pupils. However, the achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is restricted by the long gaps between lessons, which disrupt the continuity of learning, and also by the size of groups, which are sometimes too large.

## **Modern foreign languages**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good; as a result, pupils achieve well.
- Leadership is good. A strong team is emerging.
- Teachers work well as a team, producing good materials for learning.
- Pupils do not check their written work carefully enough, to avoid basic errors.

## Commentary

73. When pupils enter the school they study French or German, and can continue with it to the end of Year 11. Some pupils choose to learn Spanish in Years 10 and 11.

74. In 2003, results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were in line with national standards, in both French and German. In comparison with national standards, French and German GCSE results were well above average in 2000, 2001 and 2002 but below in 2003. Staffing changes adversely affected GCSE standards in French and German in 2003. As a consequence, results were also lower than those in most other subjects in the school in 2003. However, evidence suggests that the 2004 GCSE results will be above national standards in both languages. GCSE results in Spanish have been well above average in recent years. Pupils' performance in the lessons seen showed them working at national standards in French and German in Year 9, and above expectations in Year 11. They achieve well.

75. In all languages, pupils are stronger in listening, reading and writing than in speaking. There is a generally satisfactory amount of written exercises and sustained writing in all languages. However, pupils make unnecessary errors in grammar and spelling, which prevents them from achieving higher standards.

76. The quality of teaching in French, German and Spanish is good overall, and has improved well since the last inspection. Teachers are proficient in all three foreign languages and have good accents. They use French, German and Spanish effectively for parts of the lesson, to develop pupils' listening skills. All use a little English to check understanding or explain grammatical points, but sometimes they use English too much. They plan a well organised sequence of activities, which involve the pupils in their own learning. They use pair work to practise listening and speaking, but many do not use this enough. Standards of discipline are good, but a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate sufficiently. Teachers manage classes well, and give pupils a variety of experiences in the classroom. They provide challenging tasks for the higher attainers, and give support to those with special educational needs. Most pupils are achieving well according to their ability and make good progress in lessons throughout the school.

77. The good quality of teaching ensures that the vast majority of pupils behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration, and develop good study skills. Many pupils show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well in pairs, and often benefit from using their initiative in creating role plays or working independently.

78. Leadership and management are good: the head of department has developed a strong team spirit in the teachers. Teachers take pupils on visits to France and Germany, so that pupils can use the languages practically. There has been good progress on the issues raised in the previous report.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the faculty is excellent.
- Teaching is good.
- Relations between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Short-term assessment procedures are not rigorous enough in lessons.
- There are no computers for pupils in the mathematics classrooms; consequently, pupils' use of ICT is insufficient.

## Commentary

79. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 showed that standards were below average. However, when compared with schools whose pupils were of a similar ability level when they started secondary education, the results were average. GCSE results in 2003 were above average. The proportion of girls gaining grades A\* to C was well above average while for boys, it was average.

80. Work seen in Years 7 to 9 is above average and shows the pupils' increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics. They achieve well. They extend their knowledge of number, algebra, and geometry and develop well the skills of handling data and investigation. In a lesson on circle geometry, pupils in Year 9 displayed advanced mathematical thinking skills. The faculty has good links with the local primary schools, so pupils progress well, without unnecessary repetition. Work in Year 7 builds on the pupils' earlier knowledge and understanding. As a result, the pupils make very good progress. In one higher-attaining Year 7 class, pupils displayed clear understanding of the relationship between equations and graphs at a level usually reached in Year 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 reach above expected standards. They achieve well. By the end of Year 11, pupils have covered all the topics of the GCSE syllabus and are sufficiently prepared for the examination. In one class, lower attaining pupils confidently converted fractions to decimals and percentages. In another, higher attainers enjoyed the challenge of demanding problem solving.

81. Teaching and learning are good and often very good. Most lessons begin with mental starters, which allow pupils to reinforce basic skills or focus on new skills. The setting arrangements ensure that the work pupils do is matched to their attainment level and that they are challenged appropriately. Where teaching is very good, teachers plan lessons with a variety of activities that help pupils to achieve clear learning objectives. They continuously assess the pupils' progress and adjust questions, explanations and activities to match the needs of individuals who need extra help or extra challenge. At the end of these lessons the teachers inform the pupils of the extent of their achievement of the lesson's learning objectives. They are generous with praise for effort, which encourages the pupils to work hard. The quality of teaching is good in Years 10 to 11 and results in pupils making good progress. Because teachers have high expectations of the pupils, the pupils experience challenge and display a mature attitude toward the examination course.

82. In all years, the teachers have established very good relationships with the pupils, who respond by working hard. Teachers do not consistently use the plenary sessions to their best advantage; to assess the extent of the pupils' achievement of the lessons' learning objectives; to reward pupils for their successes and efforts or; to assure those who have been less successful. The standard of marking is satisfactory but varies in quality. It does not inform the pupils of the levels of attainment they have achieved or advise them of what they should do to improve. In all years, teaching is of better quality than at the last inspection. Pupils are taught very effectively in ability groups and a teaching assistant ably supports the classes of lower attaining pupils. In Years 8 to 11, lower attaining, pupils are taught in smaller classes and receive more individual support. The lower attaining pupils in Year 7 do not have this advantage.

83. Mathematics lessons contribute to the pupils' literacy development, particularly their speaking and listening skills. To increase pupils' understanding, teachers encourage individuals to explain how they solve problems. They also explain key mathematical words and encourage group discussion. At present, mathematics lessons do not contribute much to the development of the pupils' ICT skills. Pupils do not often use computers to support their work in geometry, handling data or for word-processing. There are no computers in the classrooms and too rarely do classes work in the school's computer suites. Being excellent role models, the teachers contribute well to the pupils' social development. However, without being identified in their planning, opportunities to address the pupils' spiritual, moral or cultural development may be missed.

84. The new faculty leader is providing strong leadership. He has a clear vision of how the faculty should develop and has already established effective teamwork. The teachers share their leader's enthusiasm and determination to raise standards. The faculty leader's management of the department is very good. He has worked closely with the school's senior management team and

local education adviser to good effect. He has collated and analysed data carefully, using his findings as the basis for planning subject improvement. The plan identifies priority areas for development, including the improvement of short-term assessment and recording, timetabled monitoring, the introduction of team building and staff development activities. Its focus is on raising standards and in this key respect the plan is already proving to be effective.

## **Numeracy**

85. The mathematics faculty leader has recently produced a very good whole school numeracy policy. He has liaised with other subject leaders and has studied their subjects' schemes of work to identify areas where pupils will need to apply their mathematical skills. He provides advice on teaching methods to ensure a consistent approach and has produced a useful reference handbook to advise other subject leaders on preferred teaching methods. The recently updated numeracy policy is designed to ensure a consistent approach and enhance pupils' learning.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good, so pupils learn well.
- Very good leadership and management provide clear direction for raising standards.
- Pupils' progress is monitored well. Their knowledge of their own progress is good.
- Pupils' work very well both with each other and independently.
- Pupils' use of data logging is weak.

### **Commentary**

86. The 2003 national test results for Year 9 were in line with national standards. The results were slightly better than in the previous year and well above those for similar schools, based upon standards on entry to Year 7. Improvement over recent years has followed the national trend. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 were close to national standards and girls did better than boys. Results have generally remained the same in recent years although last year, results showed a slight improvement on the previous year.

87. The standard of work seen in Years 7 to 11 was average. By the end of Year 9, upper set pupils are able identify examples of continuous and discontinuous variation. They link these to heredity and the environment, although they are not fully conversant with genetic terms. Middle set pupils know what genes do but have a very limited knowledge of where they can be found. By the end of Year 11, upper set pupils present a range of examination topics to the class, competently and confidently. Relevant subjects include the calculation of electrical power and the nature and production of electrical charge. Middle set pupils know how static electricity can be produced by friction but have only limited understanding of electrical charge.

88. Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9, obtaining far higher levels than their standards on entry to the school would suggest. They continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11. Over the last three years, staff shortages have been particularly acute in science and have affected the progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

89. The quality of teaching is good and enables all pupils to learn and achieve well, including those with special educational needs and special gifts or talents. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Most of the teaching seen in Years 7 to 11 was good or better. The teaching was better for higher capability sets. An example of very good teaching was seen in Year 7 and an example of excellent teaching was seen in Year 11. Good teaching included the setting of high but realistic expectations, good use of time and resources and an emphasis on tasks that allowed the pupils to



learn independently and collaboratively. Teaching methodology was clearly influenced by the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Strategy. For example in a Year 7 lesson into the effects of harmful substances on the foetus during pregnancy, pupils were directed through a variety of learning activities. These included independent research, group work to exchange and consolidate ideas and a well organised debate. The teacher's expert timing, management and use of very good resources, together with an enthusiastic delivery, resulted in pupils communicating their acquired high level knowledge with confidence and competence. In less effective lessons, the work was challenging, but the nature of the tasks and resources did not match the pupils' learning styles. Consequently, the pupils often lacked motivation and did not achieve as much as they should have done. Literacy and numeracy is addressed well in lessons. Teachers use ICT effectively in their teaching but the pupils' use of computers for data logging is underdeveloped. Assessment is used effectively to inform pupils how to improve and to set challenging targets. Exercise books are marked up to date to a high standard and diagnostic comments are used well. Pupils' progress is monitored well over time and pupils' target sheets are used effectively. Homework is set on a regular basis.

90. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department has been in post for less than two years and has already contributed to raising pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11. He has a clear vision for raising standards, reflected in very well focused departmental plans. He is an excellent role model and sets the highest standards in teaching. Very good management is complemented by comprehensive schemes of work for all years and a concise departmental handbook. He is supported by a committed team of teachers, teaching support staff and laboratory technicians. The department has a good capacity for continuing development.

91. Since the previous inspection, teaching and learning have improved well, so pupils achieve well. Assessment is used well and the monitoring of pupils' progress is good. The department uses self-evaluation effectively and plans well for the future.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Key Stage 3 Strategy is now well established.
- The school satisfies statutory requirements throughout Years 7 to 11.
- Cross-curricular developments in Years 10 and 11 are not sufficiently monitored.
- Substantial improvement in resources has enabled teachers to use ICT more in class.

### **Commentary**

92. The school figures for the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 were very close to the national expectation. In recent tests, two thirds of pupils respectively attained grade 5 or better. No pupil was assessed as gaining a higher grade, which compares unfavourably with national figures. Results from the GCSE course in ICT have been much below average, with little more than one quarter gaining an A\* to C grade and just over four fifths gaining an A\* to G grade. However, work seen during the inspection indicated that current Years 10 and 11 pupils are likely to attain much higher standards

93. In work seen, pupils' standards are in line with nationally expected levels by the end of Year 9. Their progress in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. However, on occasions some pupils work at higher National Curriculum levels but are given infrequent opportunities to do this regularly. In Years 10 and 11, a few pupils take the GCSE course. In the work seen, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress. However, their work lacks the benefit of data collected by them.

94. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with the achievements of their peers. Because of good teaching by learning assistants, hearing impaired pupils make good progress.

95. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 much teaching has good features. In a Year 8 lesson, the teacher made a clear initial presentation, checking pupils' understanding and setting challenging objectives. In the subsequent practical work there was good pace and close attention to individual needs. As a result, pupils developed good skills of modelling, control and measurement. Teaching in the GCSE programme is broadly satisfactory and encourages constructive peer working. Adapted tasks that enable pupils of all abilities to develop their potential are planned into all work across Years 7 to 11. However, the planning of teaching and assessment opportunities in Years 7 to 11 does not enable higher attaining pupils to develop beyond National Curriculum level 5 on a regular basis. Accommodation and equipment have improved considerably since the last inspection. The better facilities and upgraded environment have made a positive impact on standards.

96. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department has a hardworking, conscientious leader, who has developed detailed assessment and recording schemes for work in Years 7 to 9. However, a similar scheme has not been introduced for Years 10 and 11. The departmental leader works well with the ICT manager and technician, who together provide a consistently good service to the needs of teachers and pupils. They provide a good range of development opportunities to teachers throughout the school. They work with other school colleagues, including the bursar, to monitor and develop ICT resources and processes in the school. However, the leader is also the sole specialist teacher of ICT, so there are restrictions on the development of his role within the school.

97. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There are now clearly written schemes of work for Years 7 to 9. Further development of teaching and assessment remains necessary in relation to Years 10 and 11, since the school has only recently begun to provide pupils with an adequate experience of ICT.

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

98. Standards across the curriculum are **satisfactory**. The school has begun to audit ICT standards across the curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The large majority of pupils develop and use their main ICT skills satisfactorily in subjects across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. In subjects such as English, physical education and religious education, the use of ICT is good. In design and technology and music, there are either shortages of staff, lack of experience or insufficient equipment, any of these impacting negatively on standards.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Provision in geography is **very good**.

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

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils' achievement is very good.
- Leadership is strong.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and contribute strongly to learning.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is very good.
- There are severe limitations on the amount of fieldwork possible.

## Commentary

99. At the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments indicate standards above expectations. Work seen, confirmed that current standards are above the national expectation. These standards represent very good achievement for pupils who, according to baseline testing and observation of work, enter the school with below average skills and knowledge in geography. The 2003 GCSE results were an improvement on the previous year and were well above average in terms of A\* to C grades. Girls outperform boys. Inspector evidence indicates that the standards of work in present Years 10 and 11 are above average and this represents good achievement. Predictions suggest that pupils taking geography this year may match the success of 2003. Lower attainers are able to reach their potential in RSA certificate courses. In 2003, of 18 pupils entered for the Initial Award in Travel and Tourism, 16 passed the exam, 5 with credit and 2 with distinction. Of 12 pupils entered for the Environmental Studies award, 11 passed, 2 with credit and 3 with distinction.

100. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 gain a good knowledge of basic geography and number skills. They measure time and angles, use co-ordinates and have a good grasp of mapping skills. Written skills develop well in a variety of styles. There are good examples of extended imaginative writing, including diaries, letter writing and enquiry work. Much of the work is improved by the use of ICT. From the beginning, pupils learn research techniques and build up knowledge of case studies, but this is limited by the existing constraints on fieldwork. Continuity between Years 9 and 10 is good and uptake is very high. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to develop a variety of skills. They are able to hypothesise, devise a methodology, gather and analyse data and reach accurate conclusions. The use of number develops well, so pupils' construction and interpretation of graphs, including demographic transition models, are strong. All these techniques were seen in very good GCSE coursework on Eastbourne's land use model and in RSA coursework on evaluating holidays for a family.

101. Pupils on the special educational needs register make as good progress as their peers, through the provision of appropriate materials. Higher attainers are challenged through provision of extension work. In most lessons boys and girls work equally well.

102. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are well-planned and delivered with pace, energy and humour. Lessons are enjoyable and instructive, with good relationships evident. The skills of the teachers ensure high levels of concentration and the positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils help them to stay on task. The teachers have high expectation of learning. They insist on pupils thinking for themselves and making decisions that they are able to defend. Much good work is done in pair and group work. Pupils' knowledge is constantly checked and reinforced through very good questioning and repetition. Understanding is checked in good plenary sessions. Literacy and numeracy are strongly promoted in all lessons. A wide range of activities stimulates interest and only very occasionally does a lesson lose momentum. Assessment is very good. Marking is regular and comments are constructive and useful. National Curriculum levelling is used accurately, allowing pupils to know how well they are doing. Suitable targets for further improvement are set, recorded and reviewed.

103. A new head of department is providing new ideas and thoughtful management, building on already strong foundations and with a clear vision on how to improve further. She is supported by an expert and enthusiastic team with the capacity to maintain and raise the present very high level of provision.

104. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in terms of teaching, standards and the use of ICT, but little improvement has taken place in the provision of fieldwork for each year group.

## HISTORY

Provision in history is **very good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well due to very good teaching and their positive attitude to learning.
- Excellent use of sources in teaching in Years 7 to 9 results in very good learning
- Very good leadership and excellent management are effective in improving standards.
- High quality curriculum planning and assessment for learning greatly aid pupils' progress
- Lack of availability of ICT, teaching equipment and fieldwork reduce learning opportunities.

### Commentary

105. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average. Girls performed better than boys with the difference greater than that found nationally. Pupils did better in history than in almost all their other GCSE subjects. Most pupils performed well against expectations based on prior learning.

106. Pupils enter in Year 7 with below average history skills. By the end of Year 9, pupils' standards are well above average. This indicates very good achievement during Years 7 to 9. This is the result of teaching that is mostly very good and directly geared to pupils' learning needs. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a very good grounding in historical skills. Most have a good understanding of the main events and people of the periods studied. Knowledge of chronology is good. There is excellent use of documentary and pictorial sources throughout Years 7 to 9. Most pupils are very competent in investigatory skills. There is good enquiry work, such as the Year 7 project on Medieval Willingdon. Literacy skills, particularly written work, are very good. Higher attaining pupils progress very well, but the gifted and talented are not always sufficiently stretched. SEN pupils, including the hearing impaired, make very good progress when provided with specialist support. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average, although not as high as in the 2003 GCSE examinations. Standards are higher in Year 10. Achievement over Years 10 and 11 is good. Most pupils work very conscientiously and well throughout Years 10 and 11, but the regular absences of a few depress their coursework results. By Year 11, pupils' interpretation of historical sources has improved markedly, but critical analyses need developing further. The best independent course work is of high standard, since most pupils are well motivated.

107. Teaching and learning are very good. They range from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils. Well-structured lessons, teachers' very good knowledge of topics taught and strong classroom management based on very good relationships account for the very good teaching. There is a relaxed yet purposeful air in lessons that is conducive to high quality learning. The best teaching is lively, challenging, stimulates effectively and has high expectations. A small minority of lessons are not thoroughly placed in the context of previous study and there is very limited use of visual aids to illustrate and re-enforce learning. Lesson aims are insufficiently precisely focused on what pupils should know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson.

108. The subject is very competently led and excellently managed. Competent staff work very well together as a team. Curriculum planning and assessment are of very high quality. The implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is especially good, as it focuses planning directly onto pupils' individual learning needs. Monitoring of teaching and learning is excellent. However, the lack of access to computers and of a coherent programme hampers progress in ICT. There are insufficient visits to local or regional historical sites in Years 7 to 9. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Apart from in the GCSE option group, statutory requirements are not being met for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The department is well led and staffed by specialist, hard-working teachers.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Lessons have strong content drawn from world religions.

### Commentary

109. No GCSE examinations were taken by pupils in 2003. The standards of attainment seen in the GCSE option group are above average. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of Hinduism, including their central beliefs and traditions. Pupils also have a good grasp of how the beliefs of Hinduism are worked out in everyday life. Their written work is well developed. They also have a good range of research skills. Achievement is good. However, the standards of attainment in the core religious education course are well below those indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Although there is a focus on spiritual and ethical development through discussion and analysis, insufficient time means that very little explicit religious education is being done during that allowed. Minimal written work has been completed. The achievement of these pupils is poor.

110. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are in line with the standards indicated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Often standards are higher than this. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of three world religions. These include holy books, the Christian calendar and pilgrimages. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the central beliefs of Islam and Hinduism, but are less developed in relation to Christianity. They have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the lives and teachings of religious leaders and founders. There are good examples of developed written work in their books. Pupils give intelligent verbal responses to the many issues brought up in lessons. Their achievement is good.

111. The progress of pupils who have English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs is good. Girls achieve better than boys. The provision of different levels of work enables the more and less able pupils to make good progress.

112. Teaching and learning are good. All lessons are well prepared. An imaginative range of activities are used to put across the learning. This engages the pupils' interest and so they work hard and maintain their concentration. The content of the learning drawn from world religions is strong. This is one of the significant aspects of the teaching. At times, teaching places insufficient emphasis on helping pupils to see the relevance of their learning to their own lives and experiences. The marking and assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent. Homework is set. The department actively uses ICT in its teaching. Both teaching and learning make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

113. The department is well led and managed. The staffing is very good. Progress since the last inspection is nevertheless poor, as the statutory issue raised then still remains in Years 10 and 11. There is less time now to teach religious education than there was then. The accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory.

## TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and areas for improvement

- Good leadership and management help the department to cope well with difficulties.
- Teaching is often good, and the pupils achieve well as a result.
- The provision of computer-related systems is now satisfactory, but is under used.
- The unique philosophy and approach of design and technology are not emphasised, so at times, pupils neither enjoy nor learn enough from the subject.

### Commentary

114. Just under half the pupils who entered GCSE in a design and technology subject in 2003 gained grade C or above, compared with just over half nationally. This result is satisfactory, representing a great improvement since the previous inspection, when design and technology was a low attaining subject. The subject now compares well with other subjects. However, girls do much better than boys.

115. Pupils enter the school with a below average grasp of the nature and processes of design and technology. By the end of Year 9, they are able to design and make products of a range of types in a range of materials with average or above average skills levels. However, most do not know why they do the things they do or why they do those things the way they do. Very few see design as problem-solving or as an exploratory process of improvement that applies in many aspects of their lives. Even so, their design and technology standards are closer to average now, showing the department has enabled pupils to achieve well.

116. Those who go on with design and technology in Years 10 and 11 also achieve well. GCSE results often show an unusual feature: many pupils do better on the written papers than they do in the skills-based coursework. The good levels of achievement apply generally as much to boys as to girls, despite the gap in standards at GCSE. They also apply to pupils with additional learning needs; however, the necessary support for these people is provided in most cases by the subject teachers, so the progress of the rest of the class can be impeded.

117. That most pupils work hard and learn well in design and technology, is a major result of the overall high quality of teaching. All the teachers seen had a very good grasp of their particular skills areas (though none appears to plan lessons specifically to meet the design and technology needs of every pupil). All make effective use of a wide range of resources, teaching methods and learning styles, and most lessons move at a good pace once started. One teacher is fast developing ways to build lessons round the effective and appropriate use of computers. Although the attitudes and behaviour of GCSE pupils are good, there was a surprising lack of determination in the Year 11 classes seen just before the written exams.

118. The department is still working on developing good assessment systems in all contexts. Most pupils have a reasonable knowledge of how well they are doing and how they can improve. However, there is insufficient ongoing assessment of all pupils in all classes to ensure that teachers are able to evaluate how well the pupils retain and understand what they learn.

119. Design and technology is well led. The head of department is patiently making great and caring efforts to produce a tightly-knit team of teachers and support staff who all share a clear vision for the future. The staffing situation was difficult during inspection week. Despite good leadership, therefore, the subject head was unable to share management tasks to any significant extent; even so, hard work ensured high quality management of systems, people and resources resulting in improvement in a number of aspects since the previous inspection. Improvements include the implementation of thorough teaching schemes for Years 7 to 9, good monitoring and evaluation

systems, the specialist use of computers, and some better accommodation. Even so, computers are not yet used sufficiently as tools for computer-aided design and making or to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Health and safety issues are insecure, most notably in at least two small rooms which are too cramped for safe practical work by large classes.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management are excellent.
- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- Pupils respond very well to teachers' very high expectations of their effort, commitment and behaviour.
- Facilities for ICT in the department are inadequate.

### **Commentary**

120. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above the national average, with all of the boys and nine out of ten girls getting the higher A\* to C grades. This matched the consistently very high results of previous years. Pupils attained, on average, around two grades higher than in their other subjects.

121. Pupils achieve very well across the whole age range. Standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are average. By Year 9, standards attained are well above average representing very good achievement over Years 7 to 9. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, achieve equally well through the teachers' close attention to the progress of individuals. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils develop very good skills with drawing and painting materials in Years 7 and 8. Their studies and experiments are constructed into small workbooks, with a clear emphasis on quality over quantity of work. These skills are then extended through print, collage and relief work based on Mehndi patterns and similar designs in Year 9. Pupils currently in Year 11 began their GCSE course with above average standards and are now achieving excellent results, showing further very good achievement. Very well made, sculptural pieces are richly decorated with patterns, colour and texture influenced by a broad range of artists and cultures. Hand-made workbooks, presented in elaborate hand-made bindings, show very high levels of inventiveness and imagination in their content and presentation. Pupils, at all levels, discuss their work confidently, using a good art vocabulary prompted by very good examples from their teachers.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is very good across all age groups. Teachers prepare lessons very well, to ensure that pupils fully understand the purpose of the activities. Pupils each receive copies of the lesson aims and write their own strategies for meeting those aims, before beginning their practical work. The early emphasis on teaching painting and drawing skills thoroughly forms a very secure base for pupils' creative explorations of mixed media work in Years 9 to 11. Very good assessment procedures involve pupils in evaluating their own and others' work on a regular basis. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are generally very good and often excellent. Pupils respond very well to teachers' very high expectations of their commitment and behaviour.

123. Leadership and management are excellent. The head of department sets a superb example of commitment for staff and pupils. The well-qualified staff work very well together and provide very good support for initial teacher training students. Outstanding management shows in the thoroughness of the regular self-evaluation of the department's performance, from annual variations in results to the performance of individual pupils. The recently reviewed curriculum has a simple

structure that balances the teaching and application of skills very effectively. There are, however, insufficient facilities in the department to teach and promote ICT as a creative medium.

124. Improvement since the last inspection is good. GCSE results have remained very high, while achievement and attainment have risen in the earlier years as a result of the improved curriculum. The previously unsatisfactory accommodation has been improved, but storage space is still inadequate for the ambitious work of the department.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the subject are very good.
- Pupils achieve well.
- GCSE results are well above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

### **Commentary**

125. The proportion of pupils attaining GCSE grades A\* to C in 2003 was well above average. This maintained the standards achieved over recent years. The number of pupils entered is usually too small for meaningful comparisons with national data, however. Currently, in Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards. They show a good understanding of technical vocabulary and use it well, when evaluating the music they listen to. In their compositions and performances there is a good grasp of musical idiom. For example, their blues compositions are fluent, with good rhythmic phrasing. There is effective exploration of texture and timbre by higher attaining pupils, illustrated well by a composition for voice, guitar and flute by a Year 11 pupil. In Years 7 to 9, pupils achieve well in relation to their standards on entry, attaining above average standards by the end of Year 9. When listening to music, they are perceptive of features of period and style and have good knowledge of the elements of music. They have a sound grasp of pitch notation and can identify notes on the staff and the keyboard. Most use effective fingering systems and perform simple melodies fluently. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and also achieve well. Literacy and numeracy standards are adequate for the requirements of the subject.

126. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Most of the lessons seen were at least good and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The pupils have very good attitudes and concentrate well. The teachers manage their classes very well. Behaviour is very good, which leads to productive working. Lessons are well planned and resources well used, so that pupils are engaged effectively. The teachers use their own subject knowledge and skills well to illustrate and demonstrate. There is a good level of individual attention, with practical work that is challenging but well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. This means that pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into all the activities and make good progress. Assessment is effectively organised and linked to National Curriculum levels at the end of each unit so pupils are well informed as to how well they are doing. Whilst pupils are given good verbal guidance on how to improve, there is insufficient ongoing marking. The department is lacking in ICT equipment and software. This results in insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' composition, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

127. Leadership is good. The head of department provides a good role model, has clear ideas for the direction of the department and has created an effective team in a short space of time. The



department is well managed. Performance data is analysed well and appropriate action is taken. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons, which are well co-ordinated. The take-up for instrumental lessons is above average. The accommodation for music is unsatisfactory. The main rooms are too small and this, combined with an inadequate number of spaces for small groups, makes practical work difficult to organise. The insufficient provision of ICT facilities further exacerbates this problem. The inadequacy of the accommodation also means that much of the instrumental teaching has to take place off the school's campus in a neighbouring church. This makes communication difficult and causes loss of pupils' time as they move to and fro.

128. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now more consistent. GCSE results have improved from below average to above average. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 has improved. However the accommodation has not improved and there has only been inadequate, marginal improvement in the ICT facilities.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- GCSE results have been above average for the last three years.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.
- The sports facilities are poor and hinder pupils' learning.
- One hour of physical education a week, in Years 10 and 11, is insufficient.
- A few boys lack concentration and do not complete set tasks.
- The number and range of extra-curricular activities are very good.

### **Commentary**

129. Pupils have different experiences before joining the school, but most reach average standards in games and below average standards in gymnastics and dance. By the end of Year 9, pupils attain standards above expectations and their achievement is good. Boys and girls build a secure knowledge of fitness and are able to warm up and stretch out effectively. Pupils gain this knowledge through teachers' insistence on thorough warm-up activities at the start of every lesson. Pupils improve their performance in games and movement activities. They begin to analyse their work and that of others. Pupils, in Years 10 and 11, attain above average standards in their core lessons. Co-operative and team building skills develop well in athletics. Pupils become confident, independent workers and their achievement is good. However, their fitness and progress are hindered by having only one hour of physical education each week. GCSE results, over the previous three years, have been consistently above the national average. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, taking the GCSE course, are attaining above average standards and achieving well. Their written work is thorough and well presented. They have very competent practical expertise. The department has identified talented pupils whose attainment is well above that found nationally. They and many other pupils benefit from the very good opportunities offered by their teachers, who provide clubs, practices, fixtures, revision classes and inter-form competitions. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of their peers.

130. Pupils' good achievement is directly attributable to mostly good and occasionally very good teaching. Planning is very thorough and pupils have the benefit of notebooks in which they record their progress and assessment levels in each activity. Relations with pupils are very good and this helps teachers manage the behaviour of some difficult boys effectively. Nevertheless, a few boys and girls do not regularly participate. Very good routines and procedures have been established, for example, in sharing objectives at the start of each lesson and consolidating pupils' understanding at the end. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with hearing

impairment. Teachers do not systematically plan sufficiently varied tasks to fully challenge the most able pupils in each group. In a few lessons there is an imbalance between developing pupils' performance and their evaluative skills.

131. The head of department leads and manages the department very well. Very good links with the community have been forged through local clubs offering, for example, rowing and water sports.

144. Assessment procedures are very good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good and the Sportsmark award has been won. All issues from the previous report have been met, except that the indoor accommodation remains inadequate. Outdoor facilities are of poor quality and the changing rooms are small and in need of refurbishment.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **VOCATIONAL COURSES**

132. Vocational courses comprise vocational GCSEs in leisure and tourism and applied business, RSA in travel and tourism, Young Enterprise and NVQs for selected pupils at the local further education college. These courses provide good links to pupils' future career aspirations and a firm base for further study. The development of these courses has, over the previous year, been restricted by staffing difficulties. For example, there is no business course in Year 10. However, changes already made are designed to extend and improve vocational courses next year.

133. Pupils in these groups have a wide range of ability but they are mostly working to at least average standards and their achievement is good. Pupils, in the Year 11 business group, are all expected to gain average grades in their final examination. Year 10 pupils are attaining average standards in VGCE leisure and tourism. A few pupils have attained a high standard of coursework for their first marketing assignment but several pupils are reluctant to produce their work. The design work produced by lower attaining pupils in travel and tourism shows standards that meet the course criteria.

134. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are aware of individual pupils' needs and give appropriate tasks ensuring that all pupils progress equally well. In travel and tourism, the teacher and two teaching assistants were tireless in their support of pupils with special educational needs. Much of the learning on all the courses is from first hand evidence. Visits to leisure centres and visits from practitioners are regularly arranged. Thus, pupils have first hand experiences on which to base their assignments. The majority of pupils enjoy learning independently and find the subject material in these vocationally linked courses motivating.

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

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**

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

- The school has worked hard to put citizenship in place as a subject.
- An audit of subject departments has identified where they can contribute to this provision.
- A significant amount of the citizenship content is taught very effectively through the personal, social and health education programme.
- A good range of procedures is in place for assessment.
- Citizenship is, too infrequently, not explicitly identified for the pupils when it is being taught.
- Work on aspects of government and economic awareness is insufficiently strong.

## Commentary

135. The standards of work seen were good. There are clearly defined contributions to citizenship in all years. The pupils have a good understanding of many aspects of rights and responsibilities. They are knowledgeable about the law and how it affects young people. They are also knowledgeable about crime and its consequences. Work on voluntary groups is covered in geography and drama. Work on resolving conflict fairly is part of the school's policy and practice and is also part of the pupils' own learning. Their knowledge and understanding of how the economy functions and some aspects of government are not secure. Pupils are developing their skills of participation and executing responsibilities through their learning in the life skills programme. Here, they are encouraged to consider the personal qualities needed, for example, to become a prefect or take on any other responsible position in the school. The skills of enquiry and communication are developed in many subjects in the school, such as in English and religious education. The personal, social and health education programme includes work on sex education and relationships, bullying, drugs and smoking. Overall, the personal, social and health education programme is good. It makes a very significant and valuable contribution to the provision in citizenship.

136. Teaching and learning are good. The various strands and components of citizenship are identified in the lesson plans, both in subject departments and in the personal, social, and health education components. These, however, are not always explicitly communicated to the pupils themselves and so their conscious learning in citizenship is not as strong as it could be. Otherwise, lessons are well planned. The subject matter is put across with clarity and confidence. A good pace, in most lessons, ensures that pupils learn a great deal in the time available. Their achievement is good. A wide range of activities are included in the lessons. This helps the pupils to take an interest in their work. It also helps them to maintain their concentration. A good range of assessment and evaluation procedures are in place which include citizenship certificates. Self-assessment procedures for pupils are in the process of development.

137. Leadership and management are good. They are also good in the personal, social and health education programme. The citizenship team has worked hard to implement the requirements. It is actively engaged in reviewing the provision to see how further developments can be made. The staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory for the present requirements.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

## EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

### Example of outstanding practice:

#### Science

This was the final week of formal lessons for a top set Year 11 group of pupils. From the outset the highest productivity and expectations of achievement were established. To facilitate this, the teacher organised the class into small groups, each given two key questions relating to key GCSE concepts. Groups were asked to prepare a presentation using the interactive white board and textbook resources. Pupils' research successfully improved their understanding of many of the concepts involved. Each presentation had to include two probing questions for the remainder of the group. The enthusiasm of the teacher inspired pupils, who were fully supported, encouraged and kept on task. Later, pupils fed back in turn to the rest of the group. Presentations were expertly delivered, showing very high levels of knowledge and understanding of concepts such as critical angle and the transformer principle and demonstrating high level communication skills and good use of ICT; they relentlessly questioned the audience. A 'statement matching exercise' evaluated the pupils' understanding of the topics presented, indicating that all had a full understanding. The lesson created the conditions that allowed pupils to work collaboratively and test each others' knowledge and understanding; it resulted in excellent achievement.

#### History

This model of excellent practice relates to a Year 9 lower set lesson on the Holocaust. The class comprised of 16 pupils, a few with profound hearing impairment. Innovatively, the teacher split the class into four groups. The teacher, two classroom assistants, one of whom was specially trained to deal with hearing impaired pupils, and a graduate trainee took a group each. The well prepared team quickly and skilfully engaged pupils in the lesson. The starter activity involved identifying and describing the excellently chosen picture card sources. It provoked very positive, impressive responses which successfully identified the focus of the lesson. This was splendidly re-enforced by the teacher on the interactive whiteboard. The teaching proceeded systematically so that all pupils understood well. Pupils were fully involved in their learning. All groups analysed the provided documentary and photographic sources exceptionally well thus effectively developing their interpretative skills. The group leaders' support produced excitement and strong interest. Productivity was high. The written work, particularly that of the hearing impaired pupils, was of a standard which is seldom surpassed. Pupils' presentations on the nature of the Nazi persecution showed that the lessons aims had been fully and very successfully met.