

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE WINDSOR BOYS' SCHOOL**

Windsor

LEA area: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 110056

Headteacher: Mr J B Dawkins

Lead inspector: Mrs J Greenfield

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 259310

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:	13 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Male
Number on roll:	967
School address:	1 Maidenhead Road Windsor
Postcode:	SL4 5EH
Telephone number:	(01753) 716 060
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E-mail address:	windsor.boys@rbwm.org.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Alison Thomson
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Windsor Boys' School is a Specialist Arts College and has gained Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark awards. With 967 pupils on roll, of whom 290 are in the sixth form, it caters for boys aged 13 - 18. It is a popular and oversubscribed school, and has grown in size since the last inspection. It has a high reputation for its sporting successes and there is considerable use of the school's facilities by the community. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, which are mostly favourable, and their attainment on entry is broadly average. Very few pupils leave or enter the school other than at the times of normal transfer. About a fifth of the pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic heritages, predominantly Indian and Pakistani, and very few are in the early stage of learning English as an additional language. One hundred and eighty two pupils, which as a proportion of the school population is broadly average, have special educational needs and of these 25 pupils have a statement. The range of special needs includes emotional and behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairments, and other medical conditions.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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20709	Mr D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English
30553	Mr R Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
20380	Mr N Pinkney	Team inspector	Science Chemistry (Sixth form)
19043	Dr D Lewis	Team inspector	Physics (Sixth form)
31688	Mr B McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design
11240	Mr P Shallcross	Team inspector	Design and technology
19530	Ms J Bray	Team inspector	Geography
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	History
5733	Mr T Dillon	Team inspector	History (Sixth form)
19032	Mrs I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
4617	Mrs R Fox	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
15150	Ms S Wilkinson	Team inspector	Music Theatre studies (Sixth form) English as an additional language
4647	Mrs J Evans	Team inspector	Physical education
4372	Mr R Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education
15181	Mr W Robson	Team inspector	Special educational needs English (Sixth form)
16042	Mrs P Haes	Team inspector	Business studies

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** Standards are rising, although not consistently in all subjects, and are above average by Year 11 and Year 13. Teaching and learning are good overall and most pupils are achieving well. The very strong leadership of the headteacher ensures an ethos in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to do their best. As a result, they respond well to the school's high expectations. Arts College status is beginning to have a positive impact on aspects of the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the very good leadership of the headteacher, which sets a clear direction and focus to the school's work;
- the positive ethos and inclusive approach, which contribute considerably to pupils' high levels of confidence and self-esteem and helps them to become mature and responsible;
- standards overall are above average by the end of Year 11 and Year 13, although not in all subjects, and the majority of pupils are achieving well;
- the very good range and quality of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities, which are excellent for sport, and the very good links established with the local community;
- the very good provision made for pupils' social and moral development, although the school is less successful in developing their spiritual and multicultural awareness;
- the overall good quality of teaching, although there is too much unsatisfactory teaching, especially in Year 9; and
- the provision for art and design, citizenship and personal and social education, including careers education, is unsatisfactory.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 1998. Standards have improved, although not consistently from year to year or in all subjects. The overall quality of teaching has been maintained, and has improved in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use a wider variety of teaching approaches and managers monitor teaching more systematically, although this is not consistent across all subjects. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved greatly and standards are now much higher but ICT is not used enough to support subject teaching. The school meets statutory requirements in the provision for religious education.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

- **Pupils' achievement is good overall.** Standards of the current Year 9 pupils are average overall and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average in English, and above average in mathematics and science, matching the results in the 2002 and 2003 national tests. Standards are above average in design and technology and history but are below average in art and design and citizenship.
- Standards in Year 11 are above average, reflecting the improved GCSE results in 2003. The results in 2002, which were close to the average, were very low when compared with similar schools, indicating that pupils did not do as well as expected. In 2003, the results show a considerable improvement. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well and do particularly well in ICT and drama. They underachieve in art and design, where standards are below average.
- Standards are above average in Year 13, indicating continuing improvement at this level. Most students achieve well and do particularly well in mathematics and ICT. Weaknesses remain in art and design.
- Pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve well, in line with their peers. Gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs are achieving satisfactorily overall.
- **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	B	C	E*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	n/a	C	C	

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E\* - very low.

For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good**, which ensures that most pupils learn well, although there are several instances of unsatisfactory teaching, especially in Year 9. Assessment is not used consistently to plan work for some groups of pupils and marking in some subjects is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in many subject areas but weaknesses in art and design, citizenship and personal, social and health education, including careers. Extra-curricular activities are very good and excellent in sport. Pupils receive good advice and support from their teachers and there are good procedures for involving pupils in the school's work and development. Strong links have been established with other schools and particularly with the community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.** The headteacher's very good leadership provides clear vision and inspiration for both staff and pupils. The school's distinctive ethos and inclusive approach ensure that all pupils are valued and encouraged to do their best. There is a clear focus on improving standards and action has been taken to address areas where there are weaknesses. The leadership provided by other key staff is good. Governors support the school well but they do not ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not consistent or rigorous enough.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high regard for the school and have no significant concerns, although they would like more information about their child's progress in reports. Pupils overwhelmingly believe that it is a good school to be at and that they are expected to work hard and do their best.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management in art and design;
- strengthen the provision for citizenship, personal and social education and careers education;
- use assessment information more rigorously to support planning, teaching and learning and in setting targets for pupils, and improve the quality of reports to parents;
- ensure that senior and especially middle managers monitor and evaluate the work in their areas of responsibility consistently and regularly, and are more rigorous in challenging weaker practice; and
- extend the use of ICT to support subject teaching and learning.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils;
- ensure that the provision for citizenship and careers education meets requirements; and
- ensure that the Prospectus and the Annual Report to Parents contain all the required information.

## THE SIXTH FORM AT THE WINDSOR BOYS' SCHOOL

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective sixth form** that is cost-effective. Standards are rising as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and teachers' higher expectations. Teaching overall is good and most students are achieving well. The introduction of vocational courses has extended the opportunities available for a wider range of students to achieve well.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards overall are above average and most students are achieving well;
- relationships between students and with staff are very good, and the students' very positive attitudes and maturity provide strong role models for other pupils to emulate;
- teaching is good in a large number of subjects and students learn well as a result;
- attendance in the sixth form is not as high as it should be; and
- the timetabling arrangements for some courses mean that a number of students do not receive as much teaching as other groups, which affects their learning and progress.

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, modern foreign languages and communication	<b>Good in English.</b> Good teaching enables students to achieve well. <b>Satisfactory in French.</b> Standards are average and teaching and achievement are satisfactory. Work seen in <b>German</b> was <b>satisfactory</b> .
Mathematics	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are very high. Students achieve highly as a result of very well planned courses taught by knowledgeable teachers.
Science	<b>Good in chemistry and physics.</b> In both subjects, students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Teaching in biology is good and students are achieving well.
Information and communication technology	<b>Good in information and communication technology VCE.</b> The vocational courses, which meet the needs of lower attaining students well, are very well taught and result in high achievement.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory in geography.</b> Standards are average, showing an improvement over recent A-level results, and teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. <b>Good in history.</b> Students' achievement is good, the result of the good teaching in the department and their very positive attitudes to learning.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Satisfactory in design and technology.</b> Students are achieving well and the quality of teaching and learning are very good.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Unsatisfactory in art and design.</b> Teachers set tasks that are undemanding and fail to challenge students sufficiently and achievement is unsatisfactory. <b>Good in theatre studies.</b> Standards are above average and the teaching and students' achievement are good. Work seen in media studies was good. The teaching in music is good and students achieve well.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	<b>Good in sports studies.</b> Teachers' subject knowledge is good and students are highly motivated and achieve well. Extra-curricular sport is excellent.
Business	<b>Satisfactory in business studies,</b> where good teaching and the good attitudes of students result in satisfactory achievement. In economics, students' achievement and the quality of teaching are satisfactory.



General education

The small amount of teaching seen in general studies was good and students achieve well.

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*The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.*

## **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Students receive very good support, advice and guidance. Induction arrangements for entry into the sixth form are good. Procedures for involving students in the work of the school are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

**Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.** The strong links with Windsor Girls' School and the provision of joint courses are managed well. There are weaknesses in the timetabling arrangements, which mean that some students are not able to attend all the lessons in their chosen subjects. The provision for students re-taking GCSE examination courses in English and mathematics is not well planned or managed. There are good systems for tracking students' progress and for setting targets. Subject leadership and management are generally good, but the school's programme of monitoring and evaluating performance is not ensuring that standards and teaching and learning are equally good across all subjects.

## **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students express great satisfaction with the sixth form as a whole. They enjoy being at the school, and find their teachers accessible and helpful, and the teaching challenging. They value the good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities available to them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils achieve well by the end of Year 11 but there are undue variations across the subjects. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been above the national averages overall, with the results in mathematics and science consistently better than those in English. In the GCSE examinations, the results have consistently been above the national figures for the past few years. They were not as strong between 2000 and 2002, although they remained above average. The GCSE results in 2003 show a considerable improvement over the results of the previous year. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average in both key stages except in English in Year 9, which are average. Pupils from different minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented achieve satisfactorily, but do not achieve as well as other pupils because the planning of work and the teaching does not always take into account their needs sufficiently.

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

- The GCSE examination results, which have been above average over the past five years, have improved considerably in 2003;
- Pupils achieved highly in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 and the well above average results have been maintained in 2003;
- The achievements of pupils, mainly lower attainers, taking the vocational ICT course in Years 10 and 11 are very good;
- Pupils in Year 9 are achieving very well in mathematics and well in English and science and several other subjects;
- Standards in art and design and citizenship are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in both subjects; and
- Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils do not achieve as well as other groups of pupils as the teaching does not always take account of their specific needs.

#### **Commentary**

1. The National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 (the last year for which there are national data available) were well above average overall. They were well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. This picture has been maintained in 2003. The relative weakness in English is accounted for by the lower levels of literacy that pupils have on arrival in the school, although their attainment overall is broadly average, and by the fact that boys do less well than girls nationally. The school has implemented a number of strategies to improve standards in English, including a programme of booster classes. When compared with the national figures for boys, the English results have been consistently above average in recent years. Overall, pupils achieve highly when their performance in the national tests at the age of 11 is taken into account. The improvement in the school's results over the past five years has been in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.9 (35.2)	33.3 (33.0)
mathematics	37.7 (37.5)	34.7 (34.4)
science	36.9 (36.6)	33.3 (33.1)

*There were 226 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Since the last inspection, the GCSE examination results have been above the national averages and the averages for boys at five or more grades A\*-C, five or more grades A\*-G and for the average point score. However, there has been a decline in the results between 2000 and 2002 and the trend in the school's performance between 1998 and 2002 has been below the national trend. In 2002 (the last year for which there are national data available), the results were close to the national average. One of the reasons for the decline in performance in 2002 is accounted for by the influx of a group of lower attaining pupils from a local school that was closed. The overall results in 2003 have shown a substantial improvement over those in previous years, and the indications are that they could be well above average. Most subjects improved their performance and some, for example English language and literature, geography, history, graphics, electronics, music and business studies, made considerable improvement. However, the results in art and design, resistant materials and sports studies remain below average.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	57 (60)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	40.6 (n/a)	39.8 (n/a)

*There were 228 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.  
(National comparative data for 2003 are not yet available)*

3. Standards of work of pupils in Year 9, whose achievement is satisfactory overall, are broadly average. They are above average in mathematics and science, matching the school's results in the 2002 and 2003 tests, and also in design and technology and history. In the remaining subjects, including English, standards are average, but are below average in art and design and citizenship. In these two subjects, low expectations and some unchallenging teaching means that pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 9 are achieving satisfactorily in geography, French, German, music and religious education, are achieving well in English, science, design and technology, history, ICT and physical education, and very well in mathematics.

4. In Years 10 and 11, standards overall are above average and the majority of pupils are achieving well. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average, reflecting the GCSE results in 2002 and 2003. In English and science, pupils achieve well and achieve satisfactorily in mathematics when account is taken of their performance in the Year 9 tests. In the remaining subjects, standards are also above average in design and technology, geography, history, drama and ICT; they are average in French, German, music, physical education, religious education and citizenship. Pupils are achieving very well in ICT and drama; well in design and technology, geography, history, French and physical education, and satisfactorily in citizenship, German, music and religious education. Pupils' achievement in art and design is unsatisfactory and standards are below average. In spite of the additional support provided by external agencies and the monitoring of

performance by senior managers, standards in art and design have not improved since the last inspection.

5. There is little difference in the achievement of pupils across year groups. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are achieving satisfactorily overall. Where subjects plan specifically to meet their needs by providing more challenging work, as in modern foreign languages, physical education, mathematics in Years 10 and 11, and English, they achieve well. They are not sufficiently challenged in art and design, geography, ICT and design and technology. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by pupils from minority ethnic heritages and they achieve well, in line with their peers. These pupils are generally fluent in English and do not require additional support in lessons.

6. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They often do well in English, mathematics, science and physical education because teachers plan well to meet their needs. In ICT, they make very good progress because of the very good individual help provided by teachers and support assistants during lessons. However, they do not achieve as well as they should in art and design because their needs are rarely taken into account. The school has recently opened an achievement centre, which some pupils with special needs attend for help with literacy or social and behaviour difficulties. Last term, several pupils with behaviour difficulties were helped to return successfully to their mainstream classes. At present, however, pupils in the centre are not achieving as well as they should. Only one room is available and this is insufficient to meet their diverse needs. There are not enough teachers to support them and boys with behaviour difficulties disrupt the work of other pupils as a result. The school also provides an alternative curriculum for some pupils with more severe emotional and behaviour difficulties, through lessons at the Windsor Arts Centre and work experience opportunities. Many of these pupils make good progress, improve their social skills and behaviour and are able to remain on the school register.

7. Pupils' literacy skills are average in Year 9, showing an improvement from when they enter the school, and improve as they move through the school, becoming above average by the end of Year 11. Their skills are sufficient to enable them to use them successfully in other subjects. Most pupils are confident in the use of mathematics to support their learning in other subjects and there are good examples of departments where they are used successfully, for example in science, design and technology, history and geography. Pupils are generally competent in using ICT but because of the demands made on the ICT rooms for the vocational ICT courses, they are rarely able to use their skills during lessons to support their subject learning. Few departments are systematically planning for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

## **Sixth form**

8. The A-level results in 2002 were in line with the national average, showing an improvement over the results of the previous year. Although there are as yet no national data against which the 2003 results can be compared, the results in 2003 have continued to improve. There are considerable differences between the results in different subjects. The work seen during the inspection shows that standards are improving, mainly because of the use of a wider range of teaching approaches, changes in staff in some instances or in the examination course being followed, and through the better use of performance data and the setting of specific targets for students.

### **Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002**

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	95.5 (92)	94.8 (89.9)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	39.5 (34.2)	39.4 (35.6)
Average point score per pupil	230.4 (14.4)	263.3 (17.5)

*There were 96 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.  
(National comparative data for 2003 are not yet available).*

9. Standards of students' work are above average overall, although not consistently in all the subjects inspected. They are well above average in mathematics and physics; above average in chemistry, design and technology, history, ICT and theatre studies; average in English, geography, French, music, sports studies and business studies; but well below average in art and design. Work in other subjects was sampled but there is insufficient evidence to make clear judgements on standards in these subjects or on students' achievements.

10. Students achieve very well in mathematics. In ICT, the lower attaining students achieve particularly well when account is taken of their earlier attainment. Students achieve well in English, chemistry, physics, design and technology, history, sports studies and theatre studies. Elsewhere, their achievement is satisfactory, except in art and design where it is unsatisfactory.

11. Students with special educational needs achieve well, especially on intermediate level vocational courses. The school ensures that students receive the extra time and support for the completion of examinations to which they are entitled. Students from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as their peers.

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

Attendance is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection, although it is not as good in the sixth form. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships within the school are very positive. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their moral and social awareness are very strong but the school does not do enough to enhance their spiritual or multicultural awareness.

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

- The pupils' good attitudes make strong contributions to the standards they attain and their achievements;
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and self-confident, showing a keen desire to learn;
- The school's ethos and high expectations and the excellent range of sporting activities make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' moral and social development;
- Very good and constructive relationships enable all students to demonstrate confidence and self-esteem;
- Pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness;
- Not enough is done to enable pupils to appreciate the rich variety of cultures and traditions that exist in multicultural Britain; and
- Students' very good attitudes and behaviour.

#### **Commentary**

12. Attendance has improved during the last academic year. In 2001/02, attendance at 89.7 per cent was below the national figure but improved in 2002/3 to 92.6 per cent. Unauthorised absence in 2002/3 at 0.12 per cent was lower than in the previous year when it was 0.3 per cent. There has

been an improvement in the level of attendance since the last inspection. All attendance is properly recorded and procedures meet statutory requirements. The punctuality of pupils is generally good.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.35 (10.0)	School data	0.12 (0.3)
National data	n/a (7.8)	National data	n/a (1.2)

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.  
(National comparative data for 2003 are not yet available).*

13. Pupils have a strong work ethic and determination to succeed. They are highly motivated to take part in school activities. The number of pupils taking part in the wide range of enrichment activities provided, especially in sport, is high and their interest and involvement are very good. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages, and pupils with special educational needs, are fully integrated into the school community. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. One of the most striking characteristics of the school is the mutual respect evident between staff and pupils. Pupils are valued for their individuality and helped to do well in as many ways as possible. They respond positively to this and develop during their time at school into very confident young people. Pupils are happy to approach members of staff if they are experiencing difficulties with their academic work or having personal problems. There are many opportunities for collaborative or group work to further develop pupils' social skills and they willingly share and support each other in their learning

14. The school is a socially harmonious community and pupils' social awareness is very good. They are very good ambassadors for the school and make a significant contribution to school life. They are keen to be involved in a range of activities, especially in the sporting life of the school, and they relate very well to adults and their peers. Provision for pupils' social development is good and contributes well to their achievement. The school provides significant opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop social understanding. The school council provides some opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills and make important contributions to the life of the school. Most subjects contribute effectively towards developing pupils' social awareness. For example, pupils work well together and many opportunities are provided for them to express their views in pair work, group work and general discussion. Pupils are self-confident and are developing well as responsible members of the community.

15. The distinctive ethos of the school, which is a significant strength, encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their actions and treat everyone with respect. The opportunities for pupils to take the initiative and accept personal responsibility are good. Pupils' moral development is very good. They are well aware of right and wrong actions, have a good knowledge of what is expected of them and they respond well. The school's insistence on high standards of behaviour contributes well to these outcomes. Their knowledge and awareness are reflected well in their actions expressing concern for others in the community. The focus of the school on good and respectful relationships owes much to the pupils. In physical education, students demonstrate their attention to fair play and playing to rules. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, they are confident and articulate young people who are able to express their feelings and concerns in a logical manner.

16. Behaviour in lessons is rarely less than satisfactory, and on occasions excellent. Instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are directly related to the quality of the teaching. Pupils state that bullying is unacceptable within the school, and, although some concerns were expressed by pupils and parents about racial harassment, most were confident that such matters were dealt with promptly and effectively. The school does all it can to deal with disaffected pupils within the school, only excluding them when there is no alternative. In such cases, the school endeavours to ensure that they receive appropriate support, for example, through its arrangements with the Windsor Arts Centre.

17. The school is aware of the importance of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of its pupils and the impact it has on their progress, attitudes and achievement. These aspects are developed more effectively through the school's ethos, expectations and wider enrichment and extra-curricular provision, rather than through the formal curriculum. For example the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme does not provide enough opportunities for teaching these aspects of pupils' personal development. In addition, the recently introduced citizenship curriculum has not had sufficient time to make a contribution. The school lacks a coordinated approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in terms of a shared policy for planning, teaching, monitoring and evaluation of these aspects of the curriculum.

18. The school does not do enough to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and overall it is unsatisfactory. Although the religious education syllabus and its teaching provide good opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils, insufficient opportunities exist in other subjects. Where opportunities are provided for reflection and discussion of spiritual matters, pupils clearly respect the views of others and most are willing to share their thoughts and feelings.

19. Pupils' cultural awareness is satisfactory. Pupils are aware of their own cultural heritage and that of others. They have a clear understanding of the tradition of the school and demonstrate in their lessons a sound knowledge of other cultures. However, their cultural development does not extend sufficiently to develop an awareness and appreciation of the rich variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country. Departments do not do enough specific planning to ensure that they prepare pupils to live in an increasingly multicultural society.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	763	20	2
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	21	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	64	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	55	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	26	0	0

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

## Sixth form

20. Attendance in the sixth form is below that of the main school and overall is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, the attendance of students in Year 13 was higher than that of students in Year 12.

21. Students describe their life in the sixth form as enjoyable and rewarding. Their attitudes to work are very good and they behave sensibly and often enthusiastically in all lessons. They have a very mature attitude towards their studies and a clear and focused view about their own future.

22. Students react well to the many opportunities the school offers. In lessons, they take great pride in their work in order to achieve the best possible results. Their analytical and evaluative skills are well developed and these enable them to approach their work with confidence and maturity. Beyond lessons, they participate in a wide range of activities, especially sport, which widen their horizons and help them to become responsible citizens. Students have a very mature approach, both in lessons and around the school. They work in a productive manner, collaborate very well, and are respectful of the values, attitudes and beliefs of each other. They provide excellent role models for younger pupils. Students take their duties as senior students very seriously and they make a very good contribution to the calm atmosphere in the school as a whole.

23. Students form very constructive relationships with their teachers and with one another. They relate very strongly with those teachers whose teaching is effective and who show them respect. The quality of these relationships is a great strength of the sixth form. It enables open and honest dialogue to take place where students demonstrate their confidence in challenging the views, attitudes and beliefs of others. They develop good interpersonal skills and these qualities are reflected in their work. Students' social awareness is very good. They are very good ambassadors for the school and make a significant contribution to school life. The school provides many opportunities for students to take responsibility and develop social understanding, for example through the school council. Most subjects contribute effectively towards developing students' social awareness. Students are self-confident and are developing well as responsible members of the community.

24. Students are very aware of the impact that their actions can have on others. They have a good knowledge of what is expected of them and they respond well. The focus of the school on good and respectful relationships owes much to the students. They have a healthy respect for the views of other people. Good discussions in general studies show that students are careful not to dismiss the opinions of others even though they may disagree with them. They have highly developed viewpoints on many ethical issues and their skills in evaluation are demonstrated in their ability to form sound moral judgments. They are always open to new ideas. Students show initiative and a willingness to take responsibility for their own actions. In their relationships, they show sincere respect for each other, very good moral awareness and social responsibility. On many occasions, they are prepared to forego their own immediate interests for a common good. Overall, the attitudes, values and personal development displayed by students enhance their learning considerably.

25. As with the main school, not enough is done to promote students' spiritual or multicultural awareness. The general studies syllabus provides some opportunities for students to consider a range of spiritual issues, but planned opportunities in other subjects to enhance this feature of personal development are limited. Where opportunities exist for reflection and discussion of spiritual matters, students demonstrate a clear respect for the views of others and are most willing to share their thoughts and feelings. However, their cultural development does not extend sufficiently to develop an awareness and appreciation of the rich variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country. Departments do not do enough specific planning to ensure that they prepare students to live in an increasingly multicultural society.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Most of the teaching is good, which ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well, although there are several instances of unsatisfactory teaching. Not enough use is made of assessment information to identify the learning needs of groups of pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and the higher attainers, and provide them with more explicit guidance to help them improve their work. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily, with strengths in most subject areas but weaknesses in art and design, citizenship and personal, social and health education, including careers. Provision for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities is very good and excellent in sport. Pupils receive good advice and support from their teachers and are looked after well. Parents and pupils have considerable confidence in the school. Strong links have been established with other schools and particularly with the community.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and as a result, most pupils achieve well. The teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form than in Year 9. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall but the information is not used consistently in the main school to support teaching and learning. In the sixth form, students' work is assessed thoroughly and assessment information is used well in the setting of targets.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well in most lessons to plan suitable activities to challenge pupils;
- Teachers use a good range of teaching approaches to engage and motivate pupils and in many lessons, use questioning well to challenge them;
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and expect them to work hard;
- Teaching in art and design and citizenship is unsatisfactory and pupils do not achieve as well as they should;
- The good relationships between pupils and staff ensure a positive climate for learning in most lessons;
- Many subjects do not make enough use of ICT to support teaching and learning; and
- Assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be and pupils do not always have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.

### Commentary

26. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. The teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form and satisfactory in Year 9, where too high a proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 since the last inspection. Both parents and pupils are very positive about the teaching in the school.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 199 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7 (4%)	33 (16%)	85 (43%)	62 (31%)	12 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

27. There are examples of good teaching in all subjects other than art and design. In a few subjects, some of the teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. For example, some very good teaching occurs in English, history and geography in Year 9, and there is some excellent

teaching in science. In Years 10 and 11, there are examples of very good teaching in English, mathematics, science, citizenship, design and technology, ICT and French. At times, the teaching in design and technology, French and drama is excellent. In one particularly impressive Year 11 French lesson, the French teacher and the drama teacher worked very well together to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The teaching and learning in this lesson were outstanding.

**An outstanding example of two departments (French and drama) working closely together to develop the speaking and listening skills of an able group of Year 11 boys.**

*Je ne te crois pas* resounded across the classroom as each boy in this Year 11 fast-track group tried his hand at delivering a different message to his audience whilst enunciating the same sentence. Enthusiastically, forcefully, timidly and sarcastically, all approaches were used and evaluated both by the other members of the group and by the French and drama teachers taking the lesson. This was an extraordinary way of engaging the interest in the language of this fast-track group of 22 boys who, having gained high grades at GCSE when they took it a year early, are now embarking upon AS level modules. Having secured their interest and enthusiasm with this effective starter activity, teachers proceeded to encourage small groups of boys to interpret a series of excerpts from modern plays such as *Abigail's Party*, *Skyver* and *Blood Brothers*, in a similar way. Translated into French during the previous lesson, by the end of this one, it was remarkable to see how easily these pupils slipped into role, be it male or female, delivering their cameo in near perfect French.

28. There are some common strengths in teaching that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning. For example, most teachers expect pupils to behave well and the good quality of the relationships between staff and pupils means that learning takes place in a positive climate. As a result, pupils are engaged and concentrate well. All pupils are treated with respect and their contributions are valued and encouraged. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, which enables them to provide pupils with appropriately challenging and interesting work to help them make good progress. Most teachers plan effectively and identify clear learning intentions for lessons.

29. In the most effective lessons, very good questioning challenges pupils to think carefully, apply their knowledge and extend their understanding. This was seen to good effect in a Year 9 chemistry lesson, where the teacher's constant questioning of all pupils in the class enabled them to make a series of pertinent observations and draw conclusions about metals and their properties. In other lessons, a range of interesting and demanding activities and a structured approach involve pupils totally and help them to move forward very quickly. For example, in a Year 10 drama lesson, a well planned sequence of activities secured the pupils' total involvement and enabled them to achieve a high awareness of how to use physical habits to create a role and to develop their physical control and expression to a high level.

30. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching in a number of subjects. Not enough is being done through the regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching by senior and middle managers to improve weaker practice or to use the best examples of effective practice to raise the aspirations and performance of relatively weaker teachers.

31. Where teaching is relatively less effective, but satisfactory overall, the planning does not set out clearly enough what pupils should know, be able to do and understand by the end of the lesson. As a result, expectations are unclear and pupils do not readily engage in the lesson. In some lessons, this leads to a lack of concentration, application and productivity, and a decline in the normal good standards of behaviour found in most lessons. This is particularly so in Year 9 where some pupils have not yet understood the school's expectations in terms of their response and behaviour.

32. The teaching in art and design and in citizenship in Year 9 is unsatisfactory overall, although there are lessons where it is satisfactory. In these subjects, pupils are not given work that is sufficiently challenging and their learning is unsatisfactory. There is occasional unsatisfactory teaching in science and geography in Year 9, and in mathematics and ICT in Years 10 and 11. Much of the unsatisfactory teaching relates to lessons with lower attaining pupils, in which the work does not meet their needs well, is pitched at too low a level and fails to engage pupils sufficiently in their learning.

33. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers plan effectively to meet their needs and involve learning support assistants in their planning. However, in other lessons, assistants are unable to provide effective support. For example, in a science lesson, the assistant had not been shown a worksheet the teacher had prepared, so was unable to explain the difference between mass and weight to a pupil being supported. Boys with dyslexia learn well when a specialist literacy tutor teaches them individually in the achievement centre. However, despite the best efforts of two unqualified teachers, other boys' learning in the centre is unsatisfactory because of unsuitable accommodation and grouping arrangements. A small number of pupils who are not yet fluent in English have been identified in Year 9 and are receiving appropriate support. They are making appropriate progress.

34. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work undertaken in lessons and at home, although in several subjects, including mathematics, science, geography, religious education and art and design, they do not always give pupils sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 feel that their work is assessed helpfully. For example, in GCSE electronics, the teacher used homework very well to assess pupils' understanding. He shared the outcomes of marking with the class so that all pupils could benefit from them. Consequently, pupils understood the circuits they were building and how they could be modified to perform differently.

35. Some subjects, such as English, mathematics and science, use assessment well in Years 9 to 11 in planning lessons, but elsewhere it is used less effectively. In several subjects, pupils are not assessed accurately to determine their starting point when they enter Year 9. Individual education plans for pupils with a statement of special educational need do not have sharp targets by which to measure achievement. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment data on individuals and groups of pupils in planning lessons and activities to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate work. Apart from checking for mismatch between pupils' attainment levels and target levels or grades, senior managers do not do enough to ensure that all subjects use assessment data rigorously and consistently.

## **Sixth form**

36. Overall, the teaching is good in most subjects and it is very good in mathematics, design and technology and ICT. There are examples of very good teaching in English, theatre studies, biology, chemistry, physics and French, and occasionally some excellent teaching in mathematics, physics and French. The good quality of the teaching is a major contributory factor to the improving standards in the sixth form. There are weaknesses in the teaching of art and design, which is unsatisfactory overall, and there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics, geography and French. The unsatisfactory teaching stems from low-level unchallenging work, unclear objectives for the lesson, lengthy teacher exposition and insufficient student involvement. As a result, students in these lessons fail to make the expected progress and underachieve.

37. Lessons are well structured in the main, an outcome of good planning and the teachers' high levels of subject expertise. Most lessons include a variety of stimulating and challenging activities, which effectively engage and enthuse students. Occasionally, too much input by the teacher or whole-class discussion prevent less confident students from contributing to the lesson. Since the last inspection, teachers have successfully introduced a greater variety of teaching approaches and widened the range of resources they use.

38. Relationships between staff and students are very positive and purposeful and students' contributions are valued and respected. Most students are keen to do well and they value the very good support and guidance they receive from their teachers to help them improve. Most students work hard and contribute effectively in lessons. Occasionally, when explanations are unclear or when questions are not sharply focused, as in a Year 13 lesson in geography, students become passive and lethargic, lacking purpose and engagement.

39. Students maintain good levels of concentration in lessons, work conscientiously and respond well to skilful teaching. They develop good work habits and make good progress in developing their learning skills. Note-taking is systematic and much of their work, including course work assignments, is organised in a well-structured way to help them with their revision. This is particularly effective in mathematics. Some subjects, for example French and history, expect students to undertake further research and independent study outside lessons but this is not universal. For example, in English, art and design and geography, not enough emphasis is placed on requiring students to read more widely or undertake research to broaden their subject knowledge. The key skills of communication and application of number are taught satisfactorily in the main but not consistently in all subjects, as they are not explicitly planned for. The development of students' ICT skills through subject teaching is variable and overall is unsatisfactory. Good use of ICT is made in physics and business studies but in other subjects it is not used enough to support teaching and learning. This is mainly the result of difficulties in gaining access to computers but also reflects some weaknesses in planning in some subjects.

40. The teaching of students with special educational needs is good and enables them to learn well and make good progress, especially on intermediate level vocational courses. The higher attaining students receive appropriate work in the main and make satisfactory progress.

41. The marking and assessment of students' work is generally good. At its best, for example in science and ICT, students have a clear idea of the progress they are making towards meeting their targets and what they need to do to improve. In a few subjects, including geography, history and business studies, the marking is more variable and does not always give students sufficient guidance or set them short-term targets for improving their work. A number of subjects use assessment information well in the sixth form to inform the planning of lessons. For example, in a Year 12 physics lesson on the laws of motion, the teacher's knowledge of students' backgrounds and limitations in mathematics led to very clear planning in careful stages. A very patient approach, carefully ensuring all students understood the process, and going over areas of misunderstanding gave students confidence to be open about their weaknesses. This helped them to achieve very well. Not all heads of department use assessment information thoroughly enough to evaluate the progress and achievements of their students.

## **The curriculum**

Provision for the curriculum is satisfactory overall, with many areas of considerable strength and others that are unsatisfactory. Very good opportunities are provided for enrichment, especially the range and quality of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are broadly satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of GCSE, AS-level, A-level and innovative vocational courses cater for the diversity of pupils' needs;
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including excellent provision for sports;
- Provision for personal, social and health education, careers education and citizenship is unsatisfactory;
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in all subjects;
- Teaching and support staff meet the demands of the curriculum well; and
- Provision for the teaching of key skills in the sixth form is not monitored closely enough.

## **Commentary**

42. The school meets statutory requirements and offers a good range of additional courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum caters well for the diversity of the pupil population. Work experience is provided for all pupils in Year 10. Both dual and separate sciences are taught in Years 10 and 11. A group of fast track pupils are able to take GCSE French in Year 10, followed by AS

level in Year 11. Electronics has replaced the automotive engineering course and is helping to raise standards in design and technology. Specialist school initiatives, combined with timetable flexibility, have increased the range of vocational courses. A performing arts course is available as a twilight class and the Thomas Telford on-line ICT course has been introduced. These innovations, which are strong features of the curricular provision, have enabled more pupils to gain GCSE qualifications and so qualify for entry into the sixth form.

43. Other aspects of the curriculum are not as strong or as well established. The provision for citizenship, careers education and personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory in all year groups. Facilities for teaching ICT as a separate subject have improved considerably since the last inspection but the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects remains unsatisfactory. Pupils who take up German in Year 9 do not have access to the full curriculum in physical education. The single lesson for religious education is insufficient to cover the agreed syllabus and in Year 9, the alternating blocks of four lessons with ICT disrupt continuity of learning. Single lessons in Year 9 for some music and history classes also limit coverage of the syllabus. Curricular provision for art is unsatisfactory. There is no daily act of collective worship.

44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a suitable mix of support in lessons and opportunities for withdrawal to the school's achievement centre and the Windsor Arts Centre. However, the staffing, accommodation and resources for teaching in the achievement centre are insufficient to meet the needs of pupils, many of whom have a wide range of learning and behaviour difficulties. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the issues surrounding pupils whose mother tongue may not be English. Teachers have undertaken no training in this area.

45. The school provides a very good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Levels of participation in an impressive range of sports continue to be high and staff give generously of their time. Over 70 per cent of pupils of all ages train successfully for fixtures and competitions or for fitness and recreation. Rowing is a particular strength of the school. The range of activities in the performing arts has increased since the award of Specialist College status. Arts weeks, theatre visits, music and drama performances have already raised standards and the profile of the arts. A good range of visits supports individual subjects, such as the exchanges to France and Germany, field work and outdoor pursuits courses. Both parents and pupils express a very high level of satisfaction with the range and quality of these opportunities.

46. The accommodation and resources to support the curriculum are broadly satisfactory, although not uniformly so across the school. There is very good accommodation for physical education, drama and modern foreign languages. The latter subject benefits from a new and self-contained multi-media computing suite. Facilities for teaching design and technology have improved greatly since the last inspection. Accommodation for art and design remains unsatisfactory and the reduced library space is inadequate to meet pupils' research needs. The dedicated ICT rooms are now of a good standard but there are insufficient facilities to enable subjects to use ICT regularly to support teaching and learning. Ten per cent of all science lessons are still taught outside laboratories. Resources in most subjects are satisfactory but they are unsatisfactory in art and design. Teaching and support staff are well qualified and experienced and appropriately deployed in their specialist subjects. Careful attention is paid to their recruitment and retention.

## **Sixth form**

47. The school offers a good range of courses at both AS and A-level. Music technology, for example now complements the traditional A-level music course. A partnership with Windsor Girls' School, through joint timetabling arrangements, allows students to benefit from discussion in mixed groups in subjects such as sociology and media studies. They have also increased the viability of small groups such as AS level German. The retention rate between Years 12 and 13 on all these courses is high. All students are strongly encouraged to take general studies at AS level and the additional points gained have secured entry for some boys to higher education courses.

48. There are some weaknesses in the school's curricular provision. The teaching of the key skills of communication, the application of number and ICT is not closely monitored. Although some aspects of personal, social and health education are covered in the general studies course, students do not receive a coherent and well-planned course covering these important areas of their personal development. Timetable difficulties prevent some students from attending the full range of classes in many A-level subjects and disrupt continuity of study. The one-year intermediate ICT programme and the advanced GNVQ courses have widened access to the sixth form and reflect the award of Specialist School status. However, the arrangements for teaching students re-taking GCSE examinations in English and mathematics are unsatisfactory, both in the size and frequency of classes and in mathematics, in the content of the work.

49. As with the main school, there is very good provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities, and both parents and students see this as a great strength of the sixth form. The Sportsmark award reflects the very high level of participation in an exceptional range of sports. Students are able to develop leadership skills in training and coaching younger boys. The rugby team toured South Africa in 2003 and there are numerous outdoor pursuits courses, as well as skiing and water sports. Enrichment opportunities have increased in the performing arts since the award of specialist status and, for example, extend musical activities beyond those of individual instrumentalists.

50. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified to teach their specialist areas at A-level or on the vocational courses. Common room accommodation for the number of sixth form students is currently inadequate, and private study space has been reduced by the loss of half the library. The current building programme will address some of the weaknesses. Access to ICT facilities has improved since the last inspection. The quantity and quality of teaching resources are satisfactory in most subjects other than business where there are insufficient materials for background reading and research.

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

Standards of care, welfare, health and safety are good and there are well established procedures in place. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance from their teachers. There are good procedures for involving pupils in the school's work and development. In the sixth form, students receive very good support, advice and guidance, and the procedures for involving them in the work of the school are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and students readily relate to their teachers, with whom they have a good and trusting relationship;
- Subject teachers are good at seeking and acting on pupils' and students' observations about methods of study;
- The school is very good at providing support for pupils; however, bullying and the isolation of a few ethnic minority pupils are evident at the beginning of Year 9 but the school takes prompt action to deal with them;
- Form tutors are very aware of pupils' interests and achievements; they generally provide well-informed support and advice;
- The views of students have a significant impact on the ethos of the school, reflected in their involvement in the community, providing support for younger pupils and their participation in charitable events; and
- Some pupils do not feel that sufficient notice is taken of the views expressed through the school council.

## Commentary

51. Statutory requirements for health and safety are met in full. Subject leaders take responsibility for carrying out appropriate risk assessments and minimising hazards. The provision is effective because procedures to promote good behaviour are well established and pupils clearly understand the school's high expectations of self-discipline. The additional risks while building work is in progress are appropriately monitored. Child protection procedures meet requirements, are well known and followed. There are effective arrangements, including efficient filters, to ensure the safety of pupils when using the Internet. Internet policies are well understood by staff; the school also ensures that parents are informed.

52. A target-setting day is held each year. Discussions with pupils ensure that form tutors are conversant with pupils' academic assessments, their involvement in extra-curricular activities and a broad range of interests, with an emphasis on the arts. Tutors successfully draw on this information to provide appropriate support and guidance during the year. That this is a strength of the school is evident from the significant proportion of pupils who cite their form tutor as an adult with whom they have a good relationship.

53. There are very good induction arrangements for Year 9 pupils, in which Year 10 pupils play an important role, and for those transferring to the sixth form. Pupils are well advised by year tutors in making their choices of subjects to study for GCSE examinations, with parental involvement and arrangements made for one-to-one consultations between pupils and teachers. Provision for careers education is unsatisfactory because it is not planned as an integral part of the pupils' curriculum. However, in 2002, work experience was successfully provided for all pupils in Year 10 for the first time. In contrast to the inadequate provision of a careers education programme, pupils are well informed about future study opportunities.

54. The school provides very effective support, either in the achievement centre or in partnership with the Windsor Arts Centre, for pupils who have been, or are in danger of being, excluded from school. For example, drama therapy at the Windsor Arts Centre enabled a pupil to participate in a programme of anger management, with a realistic expectation that he would be re-admitted. The school takes prompt action to deal with any instances of bullying or racial harassment and ensures that appropriate support is provided for pupils.

55. The school meets the requirements for pupils with special educational needs, as outlined in their statements. It carries out annual reviews of these pupils' progress very efficiently. The assessment and monitoring of progress of other pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Targets in most individual education plans (IEPs) are not specific enough and few teachers use them to guide the planning of work for these pupils. Many pupils do not have IEPs. Pupils themselves are unaware of their targets. This is particularly unsatisfactory for boys with emotional and behaviour difficulties as they do not know what they need to do to improve.

56. The teacher responsible for special educational needs is also responsible for pupils learning English as a second language. Where necessary, the school seeks advice from the local education authority unit specialising in helping pupils who may have English as a second language in order to improve their fluency in English.

57. Pupils know that their views matter in shaping many aspects of their learning: in English, likes and dislikes are purposefully discussed in Year 9; in mathematics, preparation for the national tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations reflect pupils' preferred modes of study, and in GCSE design and technology, pupils benefit from regular exchange of ideas with their teachers. Pupils' views are acted upon in providing the very wide range of sport and other extra-curricular activities and, as a result, teachers who provide these opportunities have established trusting relationships with pupils. Pupils are appreciative of the ample opportunities they have for informal discussions with teachers, including the headteacher, but regret that issues important to them, such as pleasant toilet facilities, remain unaddressed. The school council is not perceived by a significant minority of pupils as a responsive channel of communication.

## **Sixth form**

58. The very good relations that students establish with teachers on entry to Year 12 are maintained throughout the sixth form. Students receive a good induction into their sixth form studies and appreciate the very well informed advice and guidance they receive for individual courses and for shaping their choice of higher education. The head of the sixth form provides up-to-date guidance on managing the demands of A-level courses, which has been modified in the light of dialogue with older students.

59. Through the prefect system, students have a strong voice in determining the focus of charitable events in which the school engages. The success of their Red-Nose Day events, which raised £4000 for charity this year, is indicative of the benefit of working in tandem with teachers. Students' views are taken seriously by the school and have influenced social facilities, including the planning of a new common room. Students played an important role in identifying the benefits of Arts College Status and the close liaison with the Windsor Arts Centre. These levels of involvement and support ensure that students are confident and self-assured.

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

Overall, there is a good partnership with parents, who hold the school in high regard. Links with the community are very good. A number of good educational links have been established with other schools.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of, and have considerable confidence in, the school;
- The school provides parents with helpful information about the curriculum and organisation through regular communications;
- Reports to parents are unsatisfactory and provide insufficient detailed information about pupils' progress and what they need to do to improve;
- Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in support programmes;
- Very good links with the community enrich the curriculum and the school has a good partnership with a wide range of businesses and industry; and
- Strong curricular links are well established with the middle schools and Windsor Girls' School.

## **Commentary**

60. The contribution of parents to the work of the school is good and has an effective impact on pupils' achievements. Large numbers of parents support the school's many sporting activities. The Friends of the Windsor Boys' School are active with very supportive parents who raise considerable additional funds for the school.

61. The school provides helpful information about the curriculum and organisation on a regular basis and parents appreciate the weekly newsletter. Many parents express concern about the limited amount of information they receive about their child's progress. Inspectors agree with their concerns and judge that the annual reports for the main school and the sixth form are unsatisfactory as they do not provide enough detailed information about their child's progress and what they need to do to improve. Although parents are informed about individual targets and choices following meetings between staff and pupils, only limited opportunity is provided for them to contribute.

62. Parents are kept informed of developments regarding the support and progress of pupils with a statement of special educational need. They are fully involved with the annual reviews of their child's statements.

63. Very good links with the community enrich the curriculum and the life of the school. The sports facilities and accommodation are in constant use by a large number of people from the local



community. As an Arts College, the school has a community development plan and works closely with the Windsor Arts Centre, who provide good learning opportunities for pupils, particularly in music and drama. Pupils and students in the sixth form benefit from the strong links with local businesses and industries, which support the school well with opportunities for work experience and sponsorship.

64. There are good and well managed links with other schools. The arrangement for shared provision and expertise with Windsor Girls' School is strong particularly for physical education, music and ICT. The school has established a good partnership with the middle schools and through regular meetings, joint courses and teacher exchanges ensures that pupils are well supported during their transfer to the secondary school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The very good leadership of the headteacher provides clear vision and inspiration for both staff and pupils. The leadership provided by other key staff is good. The governance of the school is good and governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weakness. Management is satisfactory. Well-qualified and dedicated staff are keen to raise standards further but budget constraints restrict spending on staff development and the improvement of provision for staff and pupils

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good leadership of the headteacher provides clarity of vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations;
- The headteacher and key staff give very good direction to the curriculum and teaching, particularly in developing vocational courses and the school's identity as an Arts College;
- The governing body makes an effective contribution to strategic development and school improvement but does not ensure that all statutory requirements are met;
- Regular and candid self-evaluation enables the school to raise standards and improve provision;
- Steps taken to improve teaching in some subject areas have not been effective; and
- Performance management and other systems for monitoring and evaluation do not involve subject leaders sufficiently.

### **Commentary**

65. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has clear vision, a dynamic sense of purpose and high aspirations. Other senior staff follow his example and contribute well to the school's development and direction. Strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ambitions well, for example in raising standards in English in Year 9. Through assemblies and in their presence around the school, the headteacher and senior staff are very good role models, motivating and influencing the teachers and pupils so that the school has a cheerful and positive ethos in which the interests of all pupils are taken into account and valued. This leads to a productive climate in which pupils are able to learn and develop effectively. The headteacher and his senior colleagues are very knowledgeable about curriculum issues and they encourage constructive innovations such as the vocational course in Years 10 and 11 and the improving provision for the performing arts. These curricular innovations are helping to raise standards and providing more appropriate courses for pupils, particularly for some of the lower attaining pupils. Although there are many effective subject departments, however, a small number of subject areas have not been sufficiently challenged to improve.

66. The governing body is effective in shaping the vision and direction of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's many strengths but are also aware of weaknesses in standards and provision. The headteacher and other key staff provide them with full and reliable information that enables them to play a strategic role in the school's development, for example in making a successful bid for Arts College status. In turn, they provide the headteacher and school management team with a good balance of support and challenge. In spite of these strong features,

governance is unsatisfactory as some statutory responsibilities have not been met, including the holding of a daily act of collective worship and the provision of some information in the Prospectus and the annual report to parents.

67. Most aspects of the school's work are managed in a satisfactory way. The school uses regular and candid self-evaluation to determine areas for improvement. Strategic planning is detailed but does not always have a clear time frame for action and review, which makes the monitoring of progress difficult. Performance data is well used to track students' progress in the sixth form, but, currently, information about the comparative attainment of different groups of pupils in GCSE examinations is incomplete and not helpful in planning appropriate action. Not enough is known about the language development needs of pupils whose mother tongue is not English to ensure that they receive the most appropriate support. Performance management has been well established and the participation of senior staff is clearly defined. Nevertheless, the school recognises that the role of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is not yet fully defined or established. A few subject areas, including art and design, history, religious education, citizenship and personal, social and health education, are unsatisfactory in this regard.

68. The management of special needs provision is satisfactory. The special needs co-ordinator has made very good progress during the last year with the development of the achievement centre and the Windsor Arts Centre provision for pupils with more severe special educational needs. However, much remains to be done to ensure that all pupils with special needs achieve as well as they can. Criteria for evaluating the success of the school's special needs policy and the progress of pupils with special needs are not yet established. The school's lack of clarity about funding arrangements for these pupils makes efficient planning impossible. Although appropriate priorities for development have been identified, they are not included in the school's development plan. These priorities include the need to improve accommodation, staffing and resources in the achievement centre.

69. Provision for staff development is adequate but current budgetary restrictions make the school dependent on cascading information rather than giving individual staff the opportunity to participate in specific training. In spite of a relatively high turnover in 2003, the school was effective in its recruitment and began the new school year with a complete and well-qualified staff. Most newly appointed staff say that they have been well inducted into the work of the school. With the agreement of the local education authority, the deficit in the school's budget at the end of the last financial year, which was the result of a reduction in pupil numbers, pay scale assimilation and the retention of an element of sixth form funding by the local education authority, is being reduced substantially this year. The principles of best value are applied appropriately in the purchasing of resources and services, and also in the comparisons made with the performance of similar schools both locally and nationally. In spite of the current negotiated budget deficit, financial and material resources are well managed and the school gives good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,041,586
Total expenditure	3,174,919
Expenditure per pupil	3283

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-22,372
Balance carried forward to the next	-133,333

### **Sixth form**

70. The sixth form is well led and well managed, sustaining and building upon the strong ethos that characterises the main school. The growing collaboration with Windsor Girls' School in shared classes contributes well to the quality of education and enables the sixth form to be cost-effective. The overall quality of subject leadership and management is good. There are well-established systems for tracking students' progress, and they are given good opportunities to take responsibility

as prefects. The students' voice is heard through the school council and informal contacts with the head of sixth form and the headteacher.

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

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

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

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Above average standards by the end of Year 11 show that pupils' achievement is good from their entry to the school in Year 9;
- Teachers' effective planning and management of lessons enable pupils to learn well;
- Positive relationships between teachers and pupils create a good climate for learning, and teachers' enthusiasm is infectious;
- Helpful marking and assessment show pupils how to improve;
- The department is well led and managed, although there is too little monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
- In a few lessons objectives are not shared with the pupils, and in some lessons there are no opportunities for independent learning; and
- There is limited access to ICT.

#### **Commentary**

71. The test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with the national average, and above those for schools with similar intakes. This reflects current standards in Year 9, which are average. Pupils enter the school with weaker literacy skills than usual and they achieve well by the end of Year 9. At the end of Year 11, standards in GCSE examinations were above average in English language and average in English literature, indicating continued good achievement. Similar results were attained by these pupils in GCSE examinations in mathematics and science. In 2003, there was an improvement in the English results, substantially so in English literature.

72. This picture of good achievement by Year 11 is reflected in lessons and work seen during the inspection. Pupils' maturity in spoken and written English grows considerably over time. They listen well to the teacher and increasingly well to each other. Their ability to show understanding and appreciation of literature increases in depth, perception and close reference to the text. This was well shown in a Year 11 lesson, where pupils were tracing the moral and social issues in J B Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*. Their written English for different purposes and audiences is accurate and fluent. The most capable pupils achieve high levels of literary criticism and write in a very entertaining way. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress because they are given effective support and appropriate tasks.

73. The overall quality of teaching is good. In most lessons, pupils are actively engaged in a well planned sequence of tasks that enable them to build on previous skills and knowledge. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils create a good climate for learning. Detailed marking and accurate assessment help pupils to improve. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious, their high expectations making pupils keen to succeed. Their good subject knowledge gives pupils confidence in them, and because time and learning are well managed, even those pupils who find written English difficult make good progress. In a small number of lessons, however, the purpose of what they are doing is not made clear and few opportunities are given for independent learning.

74. The department is well led and managed. Appropriate strategies for improvement in Year 9 have been identified and put into practice, and their impact is showing in lessons and work seen.

Some work remains to be done to complete the schemes of work, although teachers' planning for this term is detailed and incorporates the best features of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers have a shared commitment to improvement, and the four new staff have been very well inducted. There has been too little formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, but time has now been given for this.

75. The curriculum is broad and balanced, incorporating an appropriate attention to language skills in Year 9. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of challenging literature from different ages, cultures and traditions. Media studies and non-fiction texts are incorporated, and a good variety of writing is provided. Because of this, English makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' use of ICT to enhance their work is limited by access to computers except in the latter half of the summer term.

76. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have recently returned to their former level in GCSE examinations, and effective steps have been taken to raise standards in Year 9. The good quality of teaching and learning and subject leadership have been maintained. Strategic planning has been improved and a broader range of reading is now available.

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

77. Provision for developing the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in subjects other than English is satisfactory. Many classrooms have displays of key words, and the accurate use of subject vocabulary is encouraged well. The majority of departments mark and correct grammar and punctuation, and give pupils opportunities to speak and listen in pair work and class discussions. Reading aloud is encouraged in modern foreign languages and history. There is little expectation outside English that pupils will write extensively in essays or reports.

78. Standards in literacy are average in Year 9 and improve to above average by Year 11. Most pupils listen well to instructions and speak with confidence. They read with increasing accuracy and fluency. The less capable pupils show weaknesses in spelling and grammar and their written work is rarely extended. Most pupils, however, are able to meet the demands of the subjects they study.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Gifted and talented pupils achieve very well as a result of the fast track groups and some excellent teaching;
- Good liaison between the modern foreign languages and drama departments results in innovative teaching and high achievement in individual lessons;
- Boys' attitudes are good at both key stages;
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent because there is not enough evaluation of lessons or feedback about their effectiveness; and
- Assessment against National Curriculum levels is not used enough to inform subsequent learning.

### **Commentary**

79. The assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were lower than average because of inaccuracies in the assessment procedures. They were more accurate in 2003 and results were higher. This picture is reflected in current standards in French and German. All boys, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately. By the end of Year 9 many pupils studying French use present and past tenses, take part in dialogues involving a number of exchanges and read texts of several paragraphs. Listening skills are well developed. Lower ability pupils complete similar exercises with support. Higher attaining pupils make an appropriate start to

learning German as a second language. The GCSE examination results for 2002 were above average in French and average in German. They fell slightly in 2003 in French and were closer to the average and remained the same in German. These results are reflected in current standards, although standards in coursework are above average in French. The higher attaining pupils studying German achieve appropriately and the higher attainers who study French achieve well. A fast-track group of 22 gifted and talented pupils, who sat GCSE French a year early in 2003, achieve particularly well. Boys performed much better than boys nationally in French in both 2002 and 2003.

80. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. They expect high standards of behaviour. They provide many opportunities for pupils to consolidate new language through activities related to developing their skills in listening, reading, writing and speaking. In one Year 11 lesson, drama and modern foreign languages teachers collaborated very effectively. They used their varied expertise to good effect to show pupils how to speak French expressively when performing a series of excerpts from modern plays. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods, such as the running dictation exercise used with the Year 9 fast-track group that enabled pupils to use effectively the irregular present tense verbs they had been taught. Despite these examples of excellent teaching however, teaching and learning are only satisfactory overall because of the wide variation in its quality. There is good teaching at both key stages in both languages but in some lessons, expectations are too low, teachers do not use French or German enough and pupils follow mundane tasks that do not stretch them sufficiently. Literacy skills are well developed through the focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing but despite the existence of a numeracy policy, there is little overt attention paid to the development of numeracy skills. Every pupil uses computers in the multi-media room at least once a week, and their ICT skills are satisfactory.

81. The department is well led with clear aims for its future development. Teachers are beginning to work well together. Some aspects of management, such as the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency, are not yet fully in place. More work is needed to ensure that all teachers understand and follow National Curriculum guidance on assessing their pupils. Resources and accommodation are good and staffing is stable following a period of turbulence. There are no Foreign Language Assistants and pupils miss out on opportunities to practise their languages with young people from the countries where the languages are spoken. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Techniques are taught very well in Year 9 and consequently pupils achieve very well and attain well above average standards in the national tests at the end of the year;
- Discussion and challenging examples are not used enough to underpin pupils' understanding;
- The GCSE examination results are consistently above average, with a high proportion of grades A\* and A;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is planned well as an integral part of lessons; and
- The monitoring of pupils' attainment against targets and expected standards lack rigour.

### **Commentary**

82. The test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above average and showed some improvement in 2003. Current standards are above average. Pupils' achievement is very good, Pupils enter the school with close to average standards and are six months ahead by the end of Year 9. The results of the GCSE examination in 2002 were significantly above the national average and were broadly similar in 2003. Current standards are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory when account is taken of their performance in the Year 9 tests. High attaining pupils continue to progress well and a relatively large proportion gain the highest grades of A\* and A. In

addition, they benefit from the opportunity to extend their depth of knowledge by entering the GCSE statistics examination. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are virtually all successful in GCSE examinations and they respond well to a graduated assessment course. The proportion of these pupils attaining grade C and above is lower than might be expected because of shallow understanding. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages perform equally well as the majority.

83. Teaching is good overall, although variable between the two key stages. It is good in Year 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. As was the case at the last inspection, pupils' knowledge of techniques is developed very effectively, but approaches do not ensure sufficient challenge and discussion, which fully support understanding. This was exemplified by Year 9 pupils, who followed instructions accurately to calculate the mean of a set of data, but did not appreciate the significance of their answers. Teachers do not choose enough examples from contexts of relevance to pupils, in order to help their understanding. As a result, pupils who attained high standards at the end of Year 9 lack confidence and draw hesitantly upon their knowledge at the beginning of Year 10.

84. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of being in smaller classes, and benefit from support often given by sixth form students. With a Year 9 class, a teacher employed a range of activities about angle measurement; the successful learning for the entire small group was evident in a plenary, which reviewed terminology and techniques. Teachers are aware of individual needs, such as the lack of appreciation of humour by pupils with Asperger's Syndrome. All pupils are encouraged to participate in a weekly mathematics puzzle, and talented pupils are able to enter a national challenge.

85. Pupils typically demonstrate good attitudes towards study. Written work is presented with care and attention, reflective of teachers' example, resulting in good learning. In one Year 10 class, where the majority had not brought calculators, behaviour deteriorated and learning was unsatisfactory because the teacher did not suitably modify the work. Teachers mark much of the pupils' work but marks and comments do not inform pupils how they are progressing towards their targets or how to improve. This is particularly evident in the work of pupils of average capability in Years 10 and 11 and has an adverse impact on the proportion attaining grade C in the GCSE examination.

86. Leadership and management are good. The head of department provides strong direction to a dedicated team of teachers committed to improvement. Teachers share and discuss successful teaching techniques. Some analysis of trends in pupils' attainment has resulted in curriculum changes but there is not enough close monitoring of standards of individual pupils throughout Years 10 and 11. The strengths of the department have been maintained since the last inspection and satisfactory progress is being made in the provision of ICT in mathematics lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

87. Very few other departments have systematically planned the development of numeracy in their subjects. Response to staff training has been limited. There is good practice in science and in design and technology, where the use of numeracy skills is embedded in teaching. Emphasis on correct use of number, units and mental calculations is a feature of science lessons and numeracy skills are used well in technology designs. History teachers acknowledge the importance of graphs, which pupils use successfully, to illustrate trends and make comparisons. In geography, a common approach is adopted by teachers for illustrating data and consequently, pupils handle data well in their GCSE examination course work.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistently above average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11;
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, have high expectations and set high standards;
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well;
- The use of ICT is well integrated into teaching and learning;
- There is inconsistency in the identification of clear learning objectives for lessons, and in the use of plenary sessions to assess learning; and
- Teachers know their pupils well and closely monitor their progress against clear set targets.

### Commentary

88. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above the national average. Since the last inspection, standards have steadily improved and remained consistently above the national average. Standards in the work seen are above average. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards. In Year 9, they are achieving well. They respond well to the high expectations of teachers and draw from their previous knowledge to extend their understanding of topics, such as elements and the Periodic Table, different types of electrical circuits and how animals are adapted to their habitat. Lower attaining pupils are given good support, tasks are suitably modified and they also achieve well in relation to their potential.

89. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, approximately one in eight pupils took the three separate sciences. The results were above the national average in biology and chemistry but slightly below average in physics. The remainder of the pupils were entered for the double award sciences and the results were well above the national average. Unconfirmed results for 2003 show a further improvement in the results in all the GCSE science examinations, particularly in the separate sciences. In the work seen in all the science courses, standards overall are above average. Pupils have very good understanding of the topics covered, discuss their ideas well and are able to apply their knowledge to new situations, such as identifying where energy loss occurs in food chains, linking work on gas diffusion with osmosis, and in rapidly developing understanding of atomic structures and isotopes. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in performing calculations, and in presenting and processing experimental and other data in various graphical forms. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11 and generally reach standards at least in line with their target grade.

90. The quality of teaching overall is good and in one-quarter of lessons, the teaching was very good or excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, are very confident in their delivery and have high expectations of pupils. They plan lessons well, using a variety of activities designed to stimulate and challenge pupils, and lessons generally proceed at a good pace. However, teachers do not always identify clear learning outcomes for lessons or use the plenary session effectively to review learning. Practical work and demonstrations are very well planned and managed, and ICT is used imaginatively to extend learning both in the lessons and in setting homework exercises. Teachers use questions very well to engage all pupils and generate good discussion to reinforce learning. Pupils' written work is generally of a good standard, but the marking does not always indicate the quality or give clear guidance on how it may be improved.

91. The subject is well led. The science coordinator has clear vision, is committed to high standards and carefully monitors results over all the courses. Management within this large department is also good. The three subject leaders work well together, share a common vision, monitor and co-ordinate the teaching and assessment procedures in their own subject area and in the double award course. However, there are aspects of monitoring that lack a current clear overview, such as the sharing of best practice to develop teaching across all subjects. Pupils are set challenging targets and their progress is well monitored through regular assessment. Displays are used very well to generate a very positive ethos for learning in the science area.



Accommodation is overall satisfactory, although one lesson in ten currently has to be taught outside laboratories. Technical support for the teaching is very good and contributes significantly to the efficient running of the department. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of pupils taking the GNVQ course is very good;
- The quality of teaching as a whole is very good, with especially effective support to meet pupils' individual needs;
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good, promoting very good learning;
- The quality and reliability of equipment used in the ICT courses has improved considerably;
- There are too few opportunities to use ICT to improve learning in some subjects, especially art and design, history, physical education, citizenship and religious education; and
- The arrangements for the teaching and learning of students in Years 10 and 11 who do not study GNVQ ICT are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

92. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the national average and pupils' achievement is good. The wide variation of attainment on entry to the school arising out of inequality of opportunity in contributory middle schools is quickly addressed. Pupils have strong presentation skills but have not reinforced their data handling sufficiently to be able to apply it at the required levels later in the school.

93. Results in GNVQ examinations, taken only by lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11, were above the national average in 2002. Although a high proportion gained higher grades in 2003, the results were depressed by a very high proportion of pupils who were ungraded. The school has analysed and dealt with the problem, with the result that almost all work seen during the inspection is at a standard for at least a pass grade. Standards have, therefore, risen overall during the past year. Work seen during the inspection is above average in the GNVQ course. Pupils' strengths lie in the extent to which they plan their work so that, for example, they can state the requirements of their task and the steps they followed to implement it. They are less successful in the higher level thinking skills needed for analysis and evaluation. Although their level of literacy holds back this element of their work, the writing frames prepared for them ensure that they meet the course criteria. Because of the nature of the course, there are few opportunities in the ICT department for higher attainers to develop their skills.

94. The pupils' achievement is the result of very good teaching. In Year 9, teachers give clear guidelines while allowing pupils to work at their own level. Teachers of Years 10 and 11 have very good subject knowledge. They give very clear guidance, very well reinforced by the high quality of individual help offered on the basis of the close observation of pupils' work. Learning support assistants work well with teachers to help pupils with special educational needs. Lessons are well paced with high expectations of pupils' performance and work rate. Less successful teaching is the outcome of arrangements to provide ICT for pupils not taking the GNVQ examination. Teachers struggle to reconcile the needs of pupils taking a qualification in the same class as pupils who are usually higher attainers but have less incentive in the form of qualification and much less time to develop their expertise. The good organisation of teaching in the GNVQ classes, coupled with the attention given to individual needs, is the reason for the very good relationships that encourage pupils to learn. A high proportion of classes in the lower school are taught by non-specialists: however, they are very well informed by the specialists in the department.

95. Classrooms are well equipped with an up-to-date, reliable and well-maintained network. Pupils, therefore, learn well with the high proportion of computers to pupils. Whole-class learning is

made more effective by the use of data projectors, allowing shared discussion of demonstrations, including those of pupils' work.

96. Improvement in the provision of ICT has been good since the last inspection: there is a much higher ratio of computers to pupils in a wider range of classrooms; the number of specialist teachers has increased with the result that non-specialists are given good role models and teach successfully.

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

97. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in the standard of ICT used across the curriculum, and pupils' ability to use ICT in most subjects where it is used is satisfactory. They use it well in science, design and technology and music. All staff have been trained to use ICT to help pupils' learning (and in the number of subjects in which ICT is used.) They encourage pupils to use ICT independently for research and presentation of work. Improvement in training and equipment means that National Curriculum requirements are now being met in the use of data logging in science which was used to measure, graph and analyse physical changes. The very good range of equipment in music is used regularly to improve composing and performing. Teachers in French and German develop pupils' fluency by using appropriate software. Teachers in design and technology made very good use of ICT last year and are using some where they can. An increase in the number of taught GNVQ lessons means that subjects' access to computer rooms is still unsatisfactory: there are still some subjects where pupils rarely use ICT, for example in history, religious education, physical education and art and design.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 to 11 and, as a result, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards;
- Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes in all years are good;
- Assessment does not show pupils clearly what they have to do to improve;
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil progress are not rigorously monitored; and
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

98. The assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2003 showed that pupils' attainment was above average, slightly higher than pupils' current standards, which are average. Pupils are particularly successful at using map skills. They also understand the reason for the different quality of life in more and less developed countries. Their achievement is good in Years 10 and 11, reflecting the GCSE examination results in 2002, which were above average. There was an improvement in the results in 2003, with a higher proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades of A\* and A. Their coursework is good but they do not use ICT skills or Internet research often enough in other lessons.

99. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 9 but there is not enough extended writing or project work, although they listen well and are confident in discussions. Boys achieve well in Years 10 and 11 and have a good understanding of how political and planning decisions change the natural environment. Their written work is well illustrated with graphs, charts and appropriate statistics. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when they are provided with individual work or

given access to ICT facilities. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as others in the class. Gifted and talented pupils are not given work that is sufficiently challenging.

100. The major reasons for the good teaching in Years 10 and 11 are the interesting resources used and the pace and variety of activities. As a result, pupils have a secure knowledge of urban renewal and of life in the tenements of Glasgow in the nineteenth century. When teachers encourage paired and group work, pupils respond well, as for example to the challenge of developing coastal management strategies. Explanations of new topics are clear and concise, so that pupils know what is expected of them and concentrate well. Relationships in class are open, trusting and friendly so that standards of behaviour are consistently good. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 9 but pupils become quiet and passive when they are required to copy from the board for too long and do not practise techniques for themselves. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

101. Homework is used well to extend pupils' skills and to prepare them for the GCSE examinations. Oral feedback in class is good but written comments, while positive, are too general and do not tell pupils what they need to do to improve. There is a good range of assessments but they are not used to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. Clear targets are not set and monitored.

102. Leadership is satisfactory. The head of department is committed to the raising of standards, which have improved since the last inspection. The department is appropriately managed on a day-to-day basis. The quality of teaching and learning is not yet rigorously monitored so that strategic plans can be drawn up for improvement. Schemes of work do not include precise planning for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is good in both key stages and engages pupils' interest so they are motivated to learn and achieve well;
- Assessment information is underused for planning lessons so that the learning needs of individual pupils and particular groups are not always fully met;
- There is stability of leadership and management after frequent change; and
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their skills in ICT for learning history in lessons or enrich their understanding of history through visits.

## **Commentary**

103. Standards by the end Year 9 are above average, reflecting good achievement by pupils whose attainment is broadly in line with expectations when they enter Year 9. Standards are above average by the end of Year 11. Pupils achieve well because their motivation is high and they do their best. The GCSE examination results were significantly below average in 2002, and pupils did not achieve as well as expected. In the period leading to the GCSE examination, there was temporary management of the subject. In 2003, by contrast, the GCSE examination results were much better than those in 2002, and almost a third of pupils gained the highest grades of A\* and A.

104. In Year 9, teaching and learning are more effective when pupils' thinking is engaged about the cause and effect of past events. For example, in a very good lesson to explain the rise in Britain's population from 1750, the teacher explored with the class, advances in medicine. Pupils listed the improvements in modern surgery after watching a riveting role-play of a bloody 18<sup>th</sup> century operation. Pupils produced a list of improvements, such as vaccination and anaesthetics, in their answers to rapid questions from the teacher and then placed them on a time-chart. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs occasionally struggle in lessons where tasks are

presented in a common format for all. In lessons which involve a support assistant, these pupils achieve better because guidance is given individually.

105. Key features of some of the good teaching in Years 10 and 11 are the challenge of vigorous questions, and the participation of pupils in learning. In studying the 'Cold War', a teacher asked a Year 11 class, 'Why was Stalin and Russia vengeful after 1945?' Pupils explained the growth of mistrust between the Super Powers over a long period. Effective use is made of source materials to understand historical events from different perspectives. For example, a Year 10 class used photographs of Hitler in different circumstances to decide how his personality and beliefs led to his rise to power. Teachers use questions well to assess the level of understanding pupils have acquired. Much emphasis is given to improving pupils' literacy. Pupils use ICT, mostly at home, to word-process tasks. Few opportunities exist in lessons for analysing sources of evidence using ICT skills and techniques.

106. Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, there has been little monitoring of teaching and learning by the head of department. The effectiveness of the subject has returned to the same high level as at the time of the last inspection. Organised visits to places of historical interest have lapsed, but a history society, managed by sixth form students, will hold its first meeting this term. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The GCSE examination results have been well above average in the last three years;
- The limited amount of time given to statutory religious education in all years means that standards are not as high as they could be;
- Teachers manage pupils very well and this makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement;
- The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- The assessment of pupils' work and the setting of detailed targets against which pupils' progress can be identified are underdeveloped; and
- The monitoring of the work of the subject, especially with regard to teaching, is under developed.

### **Commentary**

107. Standards in Year 9 are average in relation to the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 10 and 11, standards in the work seen in the statutory general course are also average. Standards in the GCSE course were well above average in 2001 and 2002, and show an improvement in 2003, especially at the highest grades of A\* and A.

108. In Year 9, there are some good examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. Pupils make sense of what they study and can relate it to their experiences of life. They are able to link their knowledge of religion with their everyday experiences. The teacher's use of music to aid reflection allowed pupils to develop their understanding of the concept of 'personification'. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work enable pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. The use of a wide range of teaching styles enables pupils to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion. In some lessons, teachers do not enable pupils to reflect on their experiences and, as a result, pupils do not make much progress.

109. Teaching and learning are good at both key stages. In Years 10 and 11, the teachers' very good knowledge of the subject enables pupils to make good progress in the GCSE course. Good use of questioning, characterised by the teacher's awareness of the needs of the individual, allows

pupils to extend their understanding of how they can learn from religion and apply it in their lives. However, standards are being affected by the lower than average amount of time given to the subject in all years. This also prevents them from reflecting on their experiences: their ability to *learn from* religion is restricted. Homework is used well to allow pupils to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have clear expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed, and these approaches are very effective in contributing to pupils' achievement. The assessment of pupils' work is generally unsatisfactory. The procedures do not provide a sound basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. There are no detailed targets against which the department can assess pupils' progress. Consequently, pupils are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve.

110. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, with a clear sense of purpose and direction. The head of the department approaches the task with enthusiasm and commitment. Management is also satisfactory, although the monitoring of the work of teachers in the department is under-developed.

111. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils demonstrate a clear respect for the views, faiths and traditions of each other.

112. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave very well, are well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate very well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and pupils is excellent, and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Their behaviour makes a very good contribution to their achievement and progress.

113. Since the last inspection, standards have improved. Good improvements have been made in planning and in the schemes of work. The hard work of the curriculum leader has achieved great credibility for the subject. However, the limited amount of time given to the subject in all years continues to have a serious effect on the standards currently being achieved. Overall, the improvements since the last inspection have had a satisfactory impact on standards, pupils' achievement and progress.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good, enabling most pupils to achieve well;
- The use of assessment to support pupils' learning is good, although not enough use is made of performance data to monitor pupils' performance and set targets;
- The GCSE examination results in electronics and graphic products improved considerably in 2003, but the results in resistant materials were well below national standards; and
- There is insufficient access to ICT in lessons.

### **Commentary**

114. The provision is good because of the strengths in teaching and support for pupils. Examination results are improving because of new courses, effective use of assessment and target setting.

115. Teachers' assessments suggest that standards were above average by the end of Year 9 in 2003. This is broadly similar to pupils' current work, which is above average. Pupils arrive from a

variety of middle schools with a wide range of experiences and, despite co-operative meetings between schools, pupils' prior attainment is very mixed on entry.

116. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were significantly below the national average overall and below the school's expectations. The unconfirmed results for 2003 show a considerable improvement, especially in electronics and graphic products, although resistant material results remain below the national average. Although there are no national figures available for 2003, the school's results in electronics and graphics this year are well above the national figures for 2002.

117. Standards of work in Year 9 and in Year 11 are above average. Pupils' achievement is good in both key stages. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 produce GCSE style design folders with good graphic and creative designs. Lower attaining pupils complete design activities well, building on a wide range of valuable design and making skills. Design work is often good but is sometimes incomplete for GCSE examination assessment purposes. Standards achieved in GCSE examination design folios are high but are insufficiently targeted to examination criteria in resistant materials. The imbalance of time on parts of the course sometimes leaves sections of course work incomplete. Too much time is spent on large complex tasks rather than balancing course sections. Homework is set but not completed sufficiently well to contribute to the production of GCSE examination work portfolios.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages and has many very good features. However, it is variable and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. The most effective teaching closely links assessment and examination requirements. Satisfactory lessons are often not planned in sufficient detail to ensure that pupils' concentration is high enough. Teachers' expectations in both key stages are generally high. There is very effective use of ICT to support learning and achievement, although regular access to ICT in lessons is a weakness. The drafting and redrafting of work through the use of ICT, coupled with teachers' excellent marking, help pupils' progress. Pupils usually concentrate well due to the high pace of teaching in practical and theory sessions. Teaching, where lessons are split into short activities, often helps pupils in Years 9 and 10 to concentrate. Behaviour and attitudes are usually very good due to teachers' expectations and enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well: they make good gains in knowledge and skill over a short time. There are no great differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, but gifted and talented boys are not challenged sufficiently in some lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in small groups. A small number of learning support assistants help pupils make good gains in knowledge and skills, but more pupils need similar help.

119. The quality of leadership and management is good. There are very good day-to-day departmental procedures leading to effective well-supported lessons. Teamwork is very strong and resources are shared well. Many changes have taken place recently to secure improvements in teaching, learning and standards, including a change in examination courses. Good use of training has contributed to improvements in examination results, but more training is needed for the full range of examination courses on offer to update and ensure accurate marking. Not enough use is made of performance data to monitor pupils' performance and set targets. Standards and the quality and range of work have improved since the last inspection and progress has been good.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall and teachers regularly set tasks that do not challenge pupils enough;
- The management of pupils is poor and there is tolerance of too much idle chatter;

- Leadership and management are poor, which result in lack of clarity regarding assessment procedures and systems; and
- Standards of work produced by pupils in Year 9 and Year 11 are below average and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory.

## **Commentary**

120. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 9 is broadly average in art and design. By the end of Year 9 in 2002, however, teachers' assessments showed that attainment was above the national average. These assessments are over-generous as these pupils were producing work that was below the standard expected. Pupils' achievement overall, from entry through to the end of Year 9, is unsatisfactory. In the 2002 GCSE examination, the results were well below the national average. In 2003, there was a slight improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* - C but the results remain far too low. In 2002, pupils' performance was much better in all their other subjects than in art and design. Pupils in Year 10 are not achieving as well as they should and there is underachievement in Year 11.

121. Pupils in Year 9 experience some difficulty in settling to the tasks that are set by their teachers and in sustaining concentration throughout lessons. Their ability to make effective use of line and tone in their two-dimensional drawings is weak. They display very little enthusiasm for working in an organised manner to acquire new knowledge and develop appropriate technical skills. However, a number of pupils succeed in producing work of a standard that is close to the national average, with a small minority working above. The majority of these pupils are not familiar with the level at which they are working or with the National Curriculum descriptors.

122. Very few pupils in Year 10 have acquired the capacity for working independently. The majority are producing art and craftwork of a standard that is below expectations. In Year 11, the majority of pupils have not yet acquired the basic skills in drawing and painting that are necessary for them to communicate information and express ideas clearly. Their work lacks complexity and the skills used are basic, consisting mainly of cutting and pasting images taken from magazines. Overall, pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The average attaining and the lower attaining pupils are not producing drawings, paintings and craftwork of a standard that is comparable with national expectations at this level. Pupils with special educational needs are not making sufficient progress.

123. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Teachers demonstrate limited subject knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum levels in Year 9 and the GCSE examination specifications in Years 10 and 11. Many of the tasks that are set for pupils are undemanding, requiring low-level skills for the most part. In Year 11, pupils made simple boxes out of card into which they placed objects, drawings, photographs and other images that reflected their own personalities. Teachers' expectations are too low and in one Year 9 lesson, pupils were merely required to introduce shading into a simple line drawing of cylinders and cuboids. Many of the pupils found this task unstimulating and boring. Management of pupils is poor and there is a tolerance of too much idle chatter during lessons. In some lessons, objectives were unclear and, as a consequence, pupils did not know what they were expected to do. Assessment is not carried out systematically and little feedback is provided for pupils to enable them to know what must be done to improve the standard of their art and design work. There are few examples of any specific reference to the importance of the use of English language and literature in art and design, apart from oral exchanges in lessons and some written notes accompanying work in their visual diaries. During the inspection, there were no references to numeracy skills and their relevance to art, craft and design activities and no use of ICT to produce images that could be communicated to others.

124. Leadership and management are poor and there is a general lack of direction and sense of purpose in the department. Schemes of work are not directly cross-referenced to the National Curriculum levels in Year 9 or to the GCSE examination assessment objectives in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in Year 9 and Year 11 receive oral feedback about their grades and some information is provided on their reports, but few written records are kept. Assessment procedures are

unsatisfactory and pupils do not participate in the setting of targets for themselves based upon past performance.

125. Accommodation in the art department is very poor. The studios are dilapidated and badly in need of refurbishment. Tables and chairs are old, worn and unsuitable. Displays of work in the art rooms and throughout the rest of the school are weak and there are many examples of drawings and paintings that have been badly mounted on light card. There is little evidence of any design work that makes effective use of modern technology in the form of photography, computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers in a work-related, vocational context. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory and many of the issues that were raised at that time have not been resolved.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge;
- The GCSE examination results, which were well below average in 2002, have improved considerably in 2003;
- Teaching is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection;
- Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were too high;
- Teachers do not always provide resources to enable lower attaining pupils to make sufficient progress in practical tasks; and
- The large variety of musical and performing arts activities enriches the learning of pupils of all abilities.

## **Commentary**

126. According to assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9, standards in 2003 were well above average. This picture is not supported by inspection evidence of pupils' work. A scrutiny of their work shows that teachers are not applying the level descriptions accurately enough and are too generous in their interpretations. Standards of work of the majority of pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are in line with national expectations. In some classes, there is insufficient focus on providing regular practical tasks, including composing, linked to listening tasks. As a result, some lower attaining pupils encounter difficulties when using the keyboards. Teachers use key words well and these are helping to develop pupils' literacy skills. Overall, most pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

127. In the GCSE examination in 2002, the results at grades A\*-C were well below average, although the numbers taking the examination were small, but have improved considerably in 2003. Talented instrumentalists have helped to raise attainment in the GCSE examinations. In Year 11, standards are in line with expectations, although around a third of pupils with instrumental skills are attaining higher standards than this. Instrumental pupils in Year 11 compose effective group songs in popular style whilst lower attaining pupils work out their songs using music composing software. Achievement is satisfactory. A larger number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following a new GNVQ in performing arts that is shared with drama. The numbers attracted to this course are increasing. Most pupils following the course are achieving satisfactorily as they work through the units.

128. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory at both key stages. In a small number of lessons, the teaching is good. The teaching of listening skills is strong as pupils learn to understand music. In Year 9, a selection of excerpts from CDs, combined with the teacher's skill in highlighting particular points, help pupils to hear when chords change. Pupils' skills in performing rhythm chains are improving. In Year 10, there are two GCSE examination groups.



Pupils are given the opportunity to play steel drums and bass guitar in ensemble work, using ideas for the Blues, but some lower attaining pupils find difficulty in playing chords on the keyboards.

129. The quality of singing is good. Singing groups outside the classroom include a barber's shop group and a choir. There are instrumental lessons on brass, woodwind, drum-kit and guitar. The jazz ensemble is growing in popularity and performs regularly in school. An instrumental ensemble and a rock choir meet at the girls' school. The steel and junk bands have given opportunities to pupils of all abilities to perform. The junk band is popular at other schools in the area and in the community. Some teaching in other local schools is already developed. A visiting artist in residence works each week with groups of Year 9 pupils. The school's Arts College status is having a very good impact on the school and is providing enhanced enrichment opportunities for pupils. Music contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. They learn to work co-operatively and extend their cultural awareness through music.

130. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject knowledge of the music staff is very good. A visiting technician strengthens the expansion of ICT facilities in music, an improvement since the last inspection. When teachers undertake their assessments at the end of Year 9, insufficient attention is paid to pupils' achievement in the musical skills through the elements of music. Monitoring of the work of the department is carried out in line with the school's system although inconsistencies in assessment between teachers, for Year 9, have not been identified. Links with other middle and upper schools and with the community are strong.

## **Drama**

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 11; and
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to provide well-planned activities that enable all pupils to succeed.

## **Commentary**

131. Only a small number of lessons were seen in drama. In 2002, in the GCSE examination, results were well above average, although they have been variable in other years. In work seen during the inspection, standards were seen to rise from below average at the start of Year 9 to above average in the GCSE groups, indicating very good achievement by Year 11.

132. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high expectations and pupils take readily to the discipline of drama. Their very good subject knowledge enables them to provide good role models and provide the pupils with well planned experiences that enable them all to succeed, including those with special educational needs. Trusting relationships encourage pupils to take risks and develop their performance skills. In an excellent lesson, Year 10 pupils showed total involvement in a wide range of activities that built up to a well above average quality of performance based on their observation of mannerisms.

133. The drama studio is a very good facility, and the hall is a useful second space. Drama makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development because it expects and achieves high levels of co-operation and self-confidence. Drama clubs, productions and theatre visits enrich the cultural life of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good;
- Teaching and learning are good as a result of newly appointed staff committed to raising standards;
- Leadership and management are good;
- The very good specialist sporting facilities and resources enable students to have access to a wide range of activities;
- Extra-curricular provision for sport is excellent: high levels of participation and strong community partnerships have been recognised with a Sportsmark Award;
- Physical education makes a significant contribution to the moral and social development of pupils; and
- An emphasis on games limits the amount of time spent on other areas of activity and pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have opportunities to follow accredited vocational courses.

### **Commentary**

134. Standards by the end of Year 9 are average. These standards do not match the assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2003, which judged that standards are above average. This is the first year that the teachers are building upon levels from the middle schools and as a result the department will be able to monitor and assess pupils' achievements more accurately. By the end of Year 11, standards in the core programme are average, but they are below average in the GCSE examination groups. The GCSE examination results have declined significantly from achieving well above average in 2001 to below average in 2002. Although the results in 2003 were better than the previous year, they remain below average.

135. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry and make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the physical education curriculum and achieve well. In tennis, basketball and hockey, pupils perform a range of skills with increasing control and accuracy by the end of Year 9. They demonstrate a sound understanding of games play and recognise the importance of rules. The higher attaining pupils in basketball are able to anticipate moves, look before passing and change direction to outwit their opponents. By the end of Year 11 (in the core programme), pupils select and combine more advanced skills and perform consistently with increased control and accuracy. In the GCSE course, Year 11 pupils gather and pitch the ball accurately in softball and apply these skills and techniques with precision into a competitive game using planned tactics and strategies.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout. The specialist teachers are highly skilled and provide good role models. Demonstrations of high quality motivate and improve pupils' performance and good questioning consolidates and extends pupils learning effectively. Lessons are well planned, but, in a number of lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, teachers direct the activities too much, giving little opportunity for pupils to plan and evaluate their work.

137. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They respond well to the high expectations demanded of them and as a result, behaviour and participation are good. For example, in rowing in Year 9, pupils are highly motivated by this activity, are eager to learn and recognise the importance of safety. In games, pupils demonstrate good social and co-operative skills and in competitive team play, demonstrate fair play and good sporting behaviour.

138. Leadership and management are good. The head of department provides strong curriculum leadership and has established a shared vision. The department has made good progress as a result of a newly appointed specialist team, including a Director of Sport. They are committed to raising standards and have made significant improvements to the curriculum, the departmental handbook and schemes of work. However, the department is supported by a large number of staff who teach other subjects and have difficulty in attending team meetings. For the same reason, the monitoring of teaching and learning is increasingly difficult.

139. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities and specialist facilities and resources. Games dominate the curriculum, most units of work are only six weeks in length and little use is made of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Extra-curricular provision is excellent and a high proportion of pupils participate in competitive sport. The school is also successful in sporting fixtures and events and as a result, a number of pupils are regularly selected to compete regionally, nationally and internationally.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business education**

Only two lessons were sampled in business studies. In these lessons, teaching and learning were good. Most pupils are making good progress and achieving well.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

Provision for personal, social and health education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Insufficient time, a limited programme of study, and no personal, social and health education in Years 9 and 11 severely limit the formal opportunities for pupils' personal development;
- The teaching, which is good overall, allows pupils to reflect on their experiences and develop attitudes and values;
- Assessment is not used to enable pupils and teachers to measure their progress; and
- The work of the department is not monitored in order to ensure high standards.

### **Commentary**

140. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is seen as an important pastoral tool in enabling pupils to develop appropriate skills, attitudes, values and independence of thought, feelings and actions. The curriculum is organised to teach PSHE in Year 10 and citizenship in Years 9 and 11. The substance of the PSHE programme concentrates on drugs education and sex education only. Although these elements are well planned and taught, the time allocated to this area and the content of the curriculum do not provide enough personal and social opportunities for the programme to be fully effective. The school is also developing the citizenship programme, which is also in the early stages of development.

141. In Year 10, pupils are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence. Teachers approach the topics with great sensitivity, which enables pupils to feel confident in expressing their own views in an atmosphere of trust. Teachers use a range of skills that enable pupils to reflect upon the topics as well as learning about them. The teaching team is beginning to develop greater expertise. Their knowledge is secure and they approach topics with confidence. This enables pupils to feel secure in discussing personal issues. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally very good and there is a clear respect for each other. The assessment of pupils is recognised by the department to be an area for

development. At present, there are no procedures to provide evidence of the progress and achievement of pupils. The assessment of pupils' attitudes and values also requires investigation.

142. The new subject manager approaches the work with commitment, a clear vision and sense of purpose and direction. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' work are not yet undertaken on a formal basis in order to raise standards further. Since the last inspection, the programme has been severely restricted in the provision of time. Improvement, therefore, has been unsatisfactory.

## **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The programme of study is inadequate in developing pupils' skills of participation and responsible action;
- The teaching in Year 9, which is mostly unsatisfactory, does not allow pupils to make adequate progress;
- The limited and unplanned contribution made by other subjects to citizenship restricts the full development of the subject;
- The lack of a systematic assessment procedure does not enable teachers and pupils to know where they are in the subject; and
- The monitoring of the work of the department is under-developed.

## **Commentary**

143. The school is committed to the provision of citizenship education and sees it as an integral part of pupils' personal development. The programme was launched in the autumn term 2003 and is still in the early stages of development. However, initial steps have already been taken to plan the provision of this aspect of the curriculum. Careful thought and attention have been given to how to teach the citizenship aspect of pupils' personal development. Citizenship education is taught in Years 9 and 11, with a programme of personal, social and health education in Year 10. This arrangement seriously affects continuity of the curriculum provision. It is not, as yet, supported by related themes and topics covered in other subjects.

144. Standards in Year 9 are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory as too much of the work is undemanding. Although there are examples of satisfactory and good teaching, overall, the teaching is unsatisfactory. A main reason for the unsatisfactory teaching in Year 9 is that teachers tend to concentrate on the provision of information which restricts the opportunities for pupils to consider their own attitudes and to develop skills of enquiry. A significant number of pupils show a lack of interest in the subject as they are not involved sufficiently in the lessons.

145. Standards in Year 11 are broadly average and pupils are achieving as expected. The teaching is more successful with this year group and overall it is satisfactory. Teachers enable pupils to express their views through well-structured discussion and this allows pupils to make judgments and consider the opinions of others in an atmosphere of trust. In one lesson with a lower attaining group, the use of a wide range of teaching approaches by the teacher, coupled with a clear awareness of how pupils learn, enabled pupils to make progress in understanding racist issues.

146. The teaching of citizenship themes through other subjects is unplanned and is not monitored in a systematic way. Pupils have additional opportunities to develop an understanding of responsible citizenship and the democratic process through activities such as the school council. Citizenship themes such as law and economic and industrial understanding are underdeveloped. Overall, these activities require considerable development if citizenship is to feature effectively in the school's provision.

147. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory. There is a new curriculum leader who is committed to the development of the subject and approaches the task with enthusiasm. The review of where citizenship elements can be taught is part of future planning in terms of the contributions that other subjects can make. The teaching of citizenship is supported by a comprehensive scheme of work, but there are insufficient links between what is delivered in personal, social and health education and how other subjects contribute to the programme as a whole. There are plans to provide well-focused training, which will help to promote higher standards.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

### *Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	83.3	96.1	0.0	48.7	50.0	85.1
Biology	16	100.0	91.6	50.0	36.3	86.3	74.1
Business studies	8	100.0	96.4	12.5	32.8	75.0	76.5
Business studies (VCE)	5	100.0	87.1	0.0	16.5	52.0	60.1
Chemistry	17	94.1	94.0	41.2	45.9	80.0	81.1
Theatre Studies	6	100.0	98.1	33.3	41.5	80.0	82.9
Economics	7	100.0	96.2	14.3	45.8	68.6	83.1
English	34	100.0	98.5	52.9	43.7	90.0	84.3
Design and technology	14	100.0	95.3	14.3	35.5	67.1	76.5
French	3	100.0	96.2	0.0	46.1	66.7	83.0
Geography	8	75.0	97.1	0.0	40.5	52.5	80.9
Government and politics	8	100.0	94.3	50.0	38.9	87.5	77.7
History	16	100.0	97.1	68.8	41.0	91.3	81.2
German	1	100.0	96.3	100.0	44.3	120.0	82.1
Information technology VQ	39	89.7	84.3	35.9	24.5	72.8	64.3
Law	14	85.7	94.3	28.6	38.9	64.3	77.7
Mathematics	23	100.0	93.3	73.9	52.2	103.5	84.7
Music	5	100.0	97.7	60.0	41.8	100.0	82.2
Physics	17	82.4	92.8	29.4	42.8	67.1	78.6
Sports Studies	16	93.8	95.4	18.8	29.5	66.3	73.2

**Level 3 GCE AS level courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Chemistry	6	100.0	84.8	33.3	36.9	31.7	35.2
Economics	5	100.0	86.2	20.0	41.5	34.0	37.0
Mathematics	6	100.0	74.2	0.0	34.3	26.7	31.3
Physics	5	100.0	82.0	20.0	36.2	30.0	34.3
Government and politics and law	11	81.8	83.2	18.2	32.5	26.4	33.6

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on A-level and AS courses in English literature and French. Two lessons in German were also sampled. In these two lessons, students are becoming confident linguists and achieve appropriate standards although the very small numbers in the Year 13 group restrict opportunities for extended debate. Teaching and learning were satisfactory.

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students consistently reach standards that are in line with, and sometimes better than, the national average and achieve well;
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and ask challenging questions that enable students to learn well; and
- Teachers do not insist on students taking enough responsibility for their own learning.

### Commentary

148. The school has maintained the above average standards in English literature, reported at the time of the last inspection. Students have consistently gained results that are in line with, and sometimes above, the national average. In 2002, the A-level examination results were above the national average and students achieved better than they did in their other subjects. They fell slightly in 2003 but are still likely to be close to average.

149. Students in Year 13 have just begun their A-level courses. Few gained the highest grades in their previous AS level work, but current standards are average and all students are achieving well. Students show a very good understanding of the historical and social context of set texts and make good reference to the views of literary critics. They are less confident about putting forward their own ideas, although higher attaining students are beginning to do this more readily in their essays. All students structure their essays well. They show a good understanding of technical terms to help their analysis of texts but most still have difficulty in explaining the effects that writers achieve through their use of literary techniques.

150. In Year 12, students are also achieving well and making good progress from their earlier GCSE work. They display a good knowledge of social and historical influences on Shakespeare's plays. They are growing in confidence and are prepared to defend their own points of view during class discussions, making good reference to the text.

151. The quality of teaching is good and enables students to learn well. Students rate the subject highly and say that teachers make the work interesting and challenging. Once committed to the courses, nearly all students complete them. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of texts and the course requirements. As a result, they ask incisive questions that challenge students to justify their views. For example, Year 12 students revised their views about Shakespeare's representation of Desdemona in *Othello*, when the teacher asked them about the influences of Elizabethan patriarchal society. Teachers plan well and constantly remind students of assessment objectives, so that they know exactly what they need to achieve. They make good use of role play to help students bring texts to life. They prepare motivating resources and worksheets that help to focus students' discussion. However, too much whole-class discussion occasionally prevents less confident students from contributing as much as they might. Teachers do not insist enough on students taking responsibility for contributing to their own learning by, for example, asking them to read more widely, to carry out their own research or to present their own analysis of texts to other students.

152. Leadership and management are good. Teachers work well together as a team. The teacher in charge of sixth form English evaluates subject performance annually and has identified suitable areas for development. However, data are not used well enough to evaluate achievement and, although monitoring of teaching takes place, it is not sufficiently systematic or focussed on areas for improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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

153. The development of students' skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in subjects other than English is satisfactory, but it is not always planned for explicitly. The accurate use of subject vocabulary is encouraged well. The majority of departments mark and correct grammar and punctuation. Most students are articulate, speak well and are willing to participate in pair and group activities and to contribute to class discussions. Their skills are sufficient to meet the demands of the subjects they study.

### **French**

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent teaching in some lessons results in very high achievement, but a lack of challenge in other lessons results in some underachievement;
- Inadequate provision is made for the fast-track students now in Year 12; and
- Students have good attitudes towards the subject.

### **Commentary**

154. The A-level examination results in 2002 were below the national average, although the number of students entered was very small. The results were better in 2003 and reflect current standards, which are average. The numbers of students taking French have varied considerably in recent years but have historically been low, which is one of the reasons why the department has introduced the fast-track groups in Years 9 to 11 in the hope that these boys will continue with a language into the sixth form. In Year 12, students discuss issues to do with the rights and responsibilities of young people fluently and by the end of the year write coherently about the effects on health of taking cannabis. In Year 13, they take part in extended debates about issues such as traffic pollution and the pros and cons of using cars, and produce extended writing on subjects such as the establishment of a refugee centre at Sangatte. Their achievement is satisfactory.

155. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Students are motivated and interested, which helps them to do well. They respond well to opportunities for independent study, both in listening in the multi-media room and through work provided for study at home. Many students achieve appropriately, and occasionally, as in the case of the Year 13 lesson on racism, they achieve exceptionally well. Here, the teacher's well-planned lesson and very high expectations gave students the preparation and confidence to be able to support their debate effectively. Conversely, there are occasions when students are not achieving satisfactorily, as in a Year 12 class where revision of the perfect tense did not ensure progress and learning for such able students.

156. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The director of languages has a clear vision for future development, has produced an appropriate set of policies and has established a team that is working well together. As yet, however, there has been too little monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure that the excellent practice found in some lessons is replicated in all. Provision for the fast-track students now in Year 12 is inadequate, since they are unable to attend all lessons because of timetabling difficulties. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.



## MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered A-level and AS courses in mathematics and further mathematics, including pure mathematics and applications to statistics and mechanics. In addition, the GCSE course for those who did not gain grade C in Year 11 was sampled. Provision for this course is unsatisfactory. Poor timetabling, which was highlighted during the last inspection, continues, and prevents most students attending all the lessons. The teaching is at too low a level for those who have attained a GCSE grade D already. They are successful with simple questions involving percentages, but at the time of the inspection, topics required by those who are expected to gain a grade C, have not been introduced.

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have well-developed work habits which support rapid achievement leading to very high A-level results;
- Teaching is very good; fast pace and excellent planning of lessons ensure that A-level students learn very well;
- Excellent relationships between students and their teachers contribute to students' confidence and success throughout the course;
- The head of department provides very good leadership; and
- Timetabling clashes have an adverse impact on the achievement of some A-level students.

### Commentary

157. The mathematics department provides very well for its students. They have consistently gained A-level examination results that are well above the national average. Of particular note is a pass rate of 100 per cent, or very near, and the very high proportion of students gaining the highest grades of A and B in both mathematics and further mathematics. Students, including those from minority ethnic heritages, begin their A-level courses with very good GCSE results. They continue to achieve very well and typically do better in mathematics than in their other A-level subjects.

158. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' folders is well above average. Universally, students maintain immaculate files that are systematically ordered, with full attention paid to the working necessary to follow each example. These files provide a comprehensive source for reference and are fully supportive of revision. Students apply their well-developed mathematical knowledge appropriately to new situations: for example, knowledge of probability distributions for discrete variables enabled students to consider methods for analysing problems involving a continuous variable.

159. Teachers plan thoroughly to ensure that every new topic is well-rooted in students' prior knowledge. Year 12 students worked competently extending algebraic skills to polynomials, but opportunities to underpin learning further by discussion and extension to non-routine examples were not provided. In the course of lessons, teachers carefully provide very good exemplars, they explain various approaches and emphasise more elegant solutions. Very capable further mathematics students engaged in a stimulating review of integration, during which the teacher enabled them to compare and evaluate the methods they had proposed. Apart from the lack of use of computers, teachers draw on appropriate resources and explanations to introduce new topics. An excellent example involved the use of graphics calculators and overhead projector transparencies to relate vividly the graphical representation of simple harmonic motion to familiar contexts.

160. Teachers thoroughly mark students' work on a regular basis, giving attention to the best methods as well as supportive advice where there are errors. Although work is numerically assessed, standards in relation to A-level expectations are not provided. Regular testing and trial examinations are used very well to prepare students for examination success. Last year, this provision was enriched by the opportunity to spend a day with an experienced A-level examiner. By

Year 13, students have established an excellent rapport with their teachers; they recognise their in-depth knowledge and appreciate the many opportunities provided to discuss their work. In consequence, they are confident and many look forward to university courses, which involve mathematics.

161. The head of department provides very strong leadership, successfully focussed on students' achievement, and manages the subject well. She provides an inspiring role model for teachers and students, effectively monitoring students' attainment, maintaining the very high standards and popularity of A-level mathematics recorded at the last inspection. Because of timetabling difficulties, students following the further mathematics course are not able to attend all lessons, which affects their achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

162. The planned development of mathematical skills as an integral part of other subjects is unsatisfactory. However, students' ability to use mathematics to support learning in the subjects they are studying is very good. Students have the skills to handle data well for geography, show a good understanding of biomechanics in sports studies and use patterns successfully to analyse the structure of music. Mathematical skills are developed very effectively in science, where teaching embraces both scientific and mathematical principles.

## **SCIENCE**

The focus of the inspection was on A-level and AS courses in chemistry and physics, although two lessons in biology were sampled, one in each of Year 12 and 13. In both lessons, the quality of teaching was good. Students are achieving well and standards are above average.

### **Chemistry**

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and students achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment in their GCSE examinations;
- The quality of teaching is good: teachers have very good subject knowledge and have high expectations of students; and
- Teachers know their students very well and monitor their progress very well.

### **Commentary**

163. The results of the A-level examination in 2002 were above the national average and showed a marked improvement on the results of the previous year. Unconfirmed results for the 2003 examinations show a further sustained improvement. In the AS level examinations in 2003, almost all the students gained a pass grade and nearly half achieved the highest grades of A or B. Standards of work in Years 12 and 13 are above average. Students in Year 12 are very successfully making the transition to higher level work and developing good study techniques. Their notes are detailed and systematically set out. They handle numerical calculations well and good understanding of the structure and naming of organic molecules. Students in Year 13 have a mature and confident understanding of their subject. They have good practical skills and discuss their work with clarity and awareness of safety aspects. Students have good understanding of organic reaction mechanisms, energy changes in reactions, and of periodicity in the properties and reactions of elements.

164. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their teaching of the subject and set high standards. They develop a very good tutorial approach that fully engages all students in the learning. Students' notes are monitored well in the early stages to ensure accuracy and coverage, and regular

homework tasks are set to extend the learning in lessons. Pupils' work is marked well, and supportive comments made on its quality. Teachers discuss the work fully with students and encourage them to use supplementary CD-ROM's and Internet websites to access additional material to reinforce and extend learning. In this way, students with moderate GCSE science grades are assisted to achieve well, and higher attaining students are encouraged to strive for high standards.

165. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear leadership vision and a shared commitment by all teachers to setting and achieving high standards, and results are carefully analysed to inform future planning. Students are set challenging and appropriate targets. Regular assessments are well planned and used to monitor progress, and students are fully informed of their progress in relation to the targets that have been set for them. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good. The quality of teaching has improved and standards have been maintained at a high level. The AS level course recruits very well and many students proceed to the A-level course. Information and guidance on higher education opportunities are given on an individual basis and students are appreciative of the total support and encouragement they receive throughout their courses.

## **Physics**

Provision in physics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership and a consistent approach to the subject have resulted in big improvements over the past year;
- Teachers' enthusiasm and subject knowledge are excellent, and they use discussions of outstanding quality to support students, including those who are gifted and talented, at the highest level;
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall;
- Not all teachers make as much use as they should of learning objectives, and some students do not understand fully what they are trying to achieve in the lesson; and
- Not enough use is made of short-term targets to give students clear goals, and raise attainment.

### **Commentary**

166. When they come into the sixth form, students' attainment is typical, ranging from those with a GCSE grade A\* in physics to those with a grade B in double award science. After a period in which examination results have been below average, AS and A-level grades have improved steadily and in 2002, they were similar to the national average. The results in 2003 maintained this upward trend.

167. Work in lessons reflects the improvement seen in examinations. Standards are well above average and most students' achievement is good. The most able students gain a very good understanding of the ideas associated with the subject, so that they are able to evaluate unfamiliar situations perceptively, apply the appropriate ideas to the situation, and express their conclusions clearly, using correct scientific language. This was well illustrated in an excellent lesson in which students were invited to show that a variety of physical situations could be represented as simple harmonic motion. In a wide variety of situations, students show that they have understood how mathematical treatment illuminates laboratory observations. For these students, achievement is very good. Investigative work is rigorous and carefully performed, as for example in a very good Year 12 lesson on internal resistance.

168. Lower attaining students also make good progress. However, the scholarly approach of some teachers is less effective for them because they do not have a clear enough understanding of what they are trying to achieve in the lesson, and learning suffers as a result. For these students, overall achievement is satisfactory.

169. Teachers have an excellent understanding of their subject, and they use their understanding to challenge their students at the highest level leading to rapid progress. The quality of class discussions is often outstanding. In an excellent lesson on simple harmonic motion, for example, the teacher identified clearly what students were to achieve by the end of the lesson, and used excellent tasks to measure their success. In a very good Year 12 lesson on the laws of motion, the teacher showed considerable skill in explaining to non-mathematicians how mathematical ideas can illuminate common observations. In less effective, although satisfactory, lessons, the teacher did not clearly identify the purpose of the lesson to students. Students in these lessons tended to treat the activities prepared for them by the teacher as a list of things to do, rather than an experience designed to increase understanding. Learning suffered as a result.

170. The recently appointed head of department provides very good leadership. She has quickly gained the confidence of the members of her department, and set about implementing her very good vision for it with enthusiasm, resulting in a high level of consistency in approach. She has recognised the need to raise attainment, especially for those students who start the course with qualifications in double award science, rather than in physics. It is clear that her policies of celebrating success, and of regularly monitoring students' work and the work of her department, are leading to improved achievement. She is aware of the need for a better system of target-setting and for monitoring progress. Plans are already being developed which will identify students' short term needs more effectively, and use assessment to influence the teaching process. Her recently constructed schemes of work make good use of ICT. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The focus of the inspection was on the AVCE course in information and communication technology.

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in the AVCE examination are consistently above average, showing students' high achievement;
- Teaching is very good: teachers have very good knowledge of the course and expertise in the subject;
- Individual students receive strong support, especially through the teachers' commitment to providing advice outside school hours by means of the on-line communication system; and
- Outside taught lessons, students do not have good access to computers in school.

### **Commentary**

171. Standards in the AVCE course were above average in 2002 and were higher in 2003, with all students gaining at least a pass, and the majority attaining the highest grades of A or B. Students' achievement is very good in relation to their attainment on entry to the course. Standards are above average overall, although they vary widely in different units. Work is very good in website design and presentation units, where students meet the demands of the assessment requirements with a high level of technical expertise. They are confident in using a range of software that meets the demands of their well-planned designs. Students are least successful in units requiring a high level of numeracy, such as systems analysis. Students complete all sections, but when they describe, explain and evaluate their work, their ideas are not fluently expressed, nor do the majority explain in full the ideas underpinning their decisions. Nevertheless, teachers develop students' literacy skills effectively by providing clear frameworks to guide their writing. Lower attainers achieve as highly as others on the course in relation to their qualifications on entry to the course. Students with English as an additional language work at the same standard as others. Those who have no previous qualification in ICT struggle at first, but catch up quickly so that in the end they are as successful as their peers.

172. These above average standards are the result of very good teaching. The specialist team of teachers are well-qualified and give students freedom to work at a high level within the guidelines of the course. They assess work thoroughly, both informally in class and formally when draft units are submitted, so that students receive very helpful advice on areas for improvement. Students appreciate this support and use it well to ensure that they meet requirements. As a result, the vast majority of students work very hard, and have very good relationships with and respect for their teachers. As they know that they are succeeding, their motivation and self-esteem are very high. Students' only problem lies in the difficulty they experience during certain times with the availability of equipment for private study, but this has been offset to a great extent by their access to an on-line conference allowing them to pick up and develop their work at home. Through this new system, they can also seek and obtain advice from teachers during evenings, weekends and holidays, so that they work well within time limits.

173. The high standard of teaching arises in part from very good co-operation between colleagues who meet regularly to discuss the course, so that they remain focused on the objectives while adapting their tactics to meet the needs of the students. Leadership is very good and the subject is managed well. The course is well staffed and well resourced, including high quality on-line materials and a good range of appropriate software. Improvement in provision since the last inspection has been good. The vocational course meets the needs of the students in full, the number of well-qualified teachers has increased and the students have better access to modern equipment in their lessons.

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

174. Most students are competent in using ICT. However, opportunities to use ICT in school to support their learning are limited as they do not have sufficient access to computers. ICT is used well to support teaching and learning in physics and business studies, but in other subjects its use is unsatisfactory and not planned.

## **HUMANITIES**

The focus of the inspection was on A-level and AS courses in geography and history.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are average, showing an improvement over recent AS and A-level results which have been well below average;
- There is not enough use of ICT for independent research;
- Students are mature and collaborate well; and
- Assessment does not show students clearly what they have to do to improve.

### **Commentary**

175. Group sizes in geography have been below ten for the last three years and A-level results have fluctuated widely. In 2002, both AS and A2 examination results were well below average, but have shown some improvement in 2003. Standards of students' current work are broadly average. Students have a good understanding of basic processes in both physical and economic geography, but do not support this with rigorous case study analysis and extended essay work. Coursework is good and graphs and statistics are well used. For other topics, they do not research a wide enough range of resources on their own or use ICT sufficiently. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall but the higher attaining students are not sufficiently challenged. There is no difference in the achievement of different groups of boys.

176. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students respond with enthusiasm when they collaborate in presentations, as on the demographic transition model. Their oral work and contributions to discussions are good. They are perceptive when challenged to apply practical techniques, such as the impact of wave fetch and wind direction on coastal erosion in Norfolk. They are passive and lethargic when explanations are unclear, when questions are not sharply focused and when they have to copy from the board. The range of assessments prepares them well for examination techniques but does not tell them how to raise their grades.

177. The department is well led and managed and the range of resources is good. The quality of teaching and learning is not closely monitored and there are no specific plans for the improvement of sixth form provision. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and students' achievement is good;
- The quality of teaching is good;
- Students have very positive attitudes to history and learn effectively;
- The quality and regularity of the monitoring of teaching are unsatisfactory; and
- There are too few up-to-date books for supporting students' studies.

## **Commentary**

178. The A-level examination results have been above the national average for the last two years, with all students achieving at least a pass grade. Most students also performed well in history when their results are compared with their other subjects. The trend over the last three years has been uneven. Results in 2001 were below the national average; in 2002 they were well above average, while in 2003 they are likely to be just above average.

179. Current standards are above average and students achieve well. They have good essay writing skills and make good use of historical sources. A particular strength is the quality of discussion in lessons. Students argue logically and analytically. Students in Year 12 have adjusted to AS level work well, a result of their very good relationships with their teachers and one another, though they do not yet structure their notes skilfully.

180. The good and, on occasions, very good quality teaching helps pupils achieve well. Teachers are knowledgeable, well organised and plan well. They use a good range of teaching approaches, which encourage students to contribute effectively to class discussions and have the confidence to carry out their own research. Teachers are highly committed to the subject and have high expectations of the students. As a result, students have a very positive attitude to their studies. Teachers mark essays thoroughly, and have good systems for helping students to see how to improve their work, compensating to some extent for the lack of suitable books. Although there are systems for setting long-term targets for students, teachers do not use short-term targets sufficiently. Where teaching is only satisfactory, formal lesson planning is weak, with a consequent drop in the pace of learning.

181. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department has come through a period during which teachers moved in and out and there was little consistency in leadership or management. The recently appointed head of department has made a sound start to improving the infrastructure; he has engendered a good team spirit and supportive ethos amongst the staff. Currently, his timetable does not give him time to monitor the work of other staff or the performance of the department. Staff know students well, however, and provide extra guidance, which is appreciated by the students and which is helping them achieve good standards. The department

has very good accommodation. Display supports students' learning and provides helpful guidance on the characteristics of good essay writing.

182. The department has made sound progress since the last inspection. The pass rate at A-level has improved, the quality of teaching is better, and the leadership of the department more settled. There are still insufficient books to support students' learning adequately.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

The focus was on A-level and AS courses in design and technology.

### **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good;
- Very detailed and thorough assessment helps students to improve their work;
- Learning develops at a good pace;
- A-level examination results have been below average but standards are now improving and are above average; and
- Students have insufficient access to ICT in lessons.

### **Commentary**

183. In 2002, all students gained grades A - E in the A-level examination, but the results overall were below the national average. In 2003, the unconfirmed results are lower than those in 2002 and no pupils gained the highest grades of A or B. However, the AS examination results in 2003 were very high in the theory paper but weak in the case study, although showing an improvement overall. Standards in the current Year 12 have improved. In the work seen, standards are above average, with numerous examples of accurate, exciting and creative work. Students' achievement is good. Project-work homework is an area of weakness and students do not always complete it fully, which prevents them from reaching the higher grades. Pupils are achieving well in freehand sketching and rendering and in the use of ICT for research and presentation. The annotation, including marking, of students' work is often a weakness as it is limited and insufficiently analytical. Some of the work includes some innovative projects, such as a practice golf putter with an electronic accuracy sensor.

184. The quality of teaching is very good and is matched by very good learning. Theory and practical work are taught very effectively. The teaching is gradually being tuned to the new syllabi, leading to more effective practice. Some students often lack finish in completing coursework projects, which brings down their final marks. Teachers and students have established very good trusting relationships, which result in very good learning. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is very good and includes detailed and thorough feedback on coursework progress; this helps students improve their work. The use of ICT to support effective teaching and learning is very good in design and manufacturing work. There have been improvements in the quality and range of ICT used to support learning. Much of this improvement is due to the use of students' own computers at home, as there is insufficient access to equipment in lessons. Currently CAD/CAM operations are limited in size and scope to support full-size modelling; this is hindering students' attainment.

185. The quality of leadership and management is good. There are very good day-to-day departmental procedures leading to effective, well-supported lessons. Teamwork is very strong and there is a very good sharing of resources. Many changes have taken place recently to secure improvements in teaching, learning and standards. Good use of in-service training has contributed to improvements in examination results, although more training is needed for the full range of examination course modules to update and ensure accurate marking.

186. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The many changes that have occurred recently in examinations and in the content of courses need to be embedded more effectively to improve results further.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The focus was on A-level and AS level courses in theatre studies and on the AS level course in art and design. A small number of lessons were sampled in music, music technology and media studies. In music, teachers' subject knowledge is very good. Students take part in a broad range of enrichment opportunities. A visiting music technology professional is assisting with teaching the music technology course. The lack of focused planning between those teaching this course is a weakness. In the two media studies lessons, the teaching and learning were good and students achieve well.

### **Art and Design**

Provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Standards are too low as students make slow progress and underachieve;
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because teachers have low expectations of students and set tasks that do not challenge them sufficiently;
- Teaching fails to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for the subject; and
- The majority of students display little understanding of how to develop their ideas.

### **Commentary**

187. The A-level examination results in 2001 were below the national average and declined considerably in 2002, when they were very low. No students gained the highest grades of A or B in 2002. In 2003, all of the small number of students gained grades A - E and two-thirds gained the highest grades of A and B. There are no students currently studying art and design in Year 13 as all those students who completed their AS Level examination last year decided not to continue with their study of art into Year 13. Retention rates are not good, therefore.

188. Current standards are below average, much lower than the A-level results in 2003 would indicate. Students in Year 12 have very limited background knowledge and understanding of art and design processes. They have weak technical skills in drawing and painting and there is a general lack of purpose in their way of working. The tasks set by their teachers fail to challenge them sufficiently, for example copying from the paintings of famous artists using pencils and coloured pencils, which is undemanding work at this level. There is little evidence of any use of water-based paints, acrylics or oil paints in the studies in their visual diaries. The standard of work that these students are currently producing is below the expected level for AS level students. Students are not being stretched to their full potential and their achievement is unsatisfactory.

189. Teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of the AS and A-level specifications and their relevance to assignment writing and assessment. Many of the tasks that are set are undemanding, require low-level skills and lack challenge for the students. The majority of students are making unsatisfactory progress and are underachieving. Teachers' expectations are too low which results in students setting targets for themselves that are also too low. Students display a general lack of purpose and enthusiasm for the subject and insufficient in-depth research work is carried out. There are too many examples of isolated and unfinished drawings, none of which has been developed into a final piece of work.

190. Leadership and management are poor and there is a general lack of direction in the art department. There is some confusion about the writing of schemes of work that can be easily



cross-referenced to the AS/A-level course specifications. Assessment procedures are poor and, although students are given oral feedback at the end of each assignment, few written records are kept. Little use is made of objective data to enable informed and specific targets to be set for students. Students themselves are not involved in this process of setting targets.

191. Accommodation is very poor. There are two main studios but Year 12 students have exclusive access to an annex off one of these. Space is very limited however, and this imposes severe restrictions on the scale of objects that can be produced. Tables and chairs are old and worn and the environment is not conducive to the production of exciting and stimulating pieces of artwork. Displays of students' work, both in the art studios and throughout the school, are unsatisfactory although they could be greatly improved if more care were taken with the mounting and presentation of the individual paintings and drawings. There was no evidence during the inspection of any students making use of modern technology, photography, computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers as means of generating images. For the most part, students work within a highly conventional, narrow model of the curriculum that places undue emphasis on traditional drawing, painting and craft skills to the exclusion of design work employing modern technology. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory as many of the issues raised then have not been addressed and resolved.

### **Theatre studies**

Provision in theatre studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and students' achievement is good;
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good;
- Teaching is good and some very good teaching occurred in Year 12;
- Students' skill in evaluating their practical work through academic, written tasks is not as well developed as their practical work; and
- Performing arts activities enrich the lives of students of all levels of attainment.

### **Commentary**

192. The A-level examination results in 2002 were in line with the national average and the unconfirmed results for 2003 are broadly similar. The number of students taking the examination course has risen over the past three years. Standards of practical work for the majority of students in Year 13 are above average because of the number of talented and experienced dramatists. Their achievement is good. Communication skills are highly developed through performance. Students are able to improvise using their own ideas in order to explore methodologies. However, their ability to record their evaluations and describe the processes through which they go to refine their practical work are not as strong and are areas for further development.

193. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. This is shown through their historical knowledge of playwrights and their genres. The pace of teaching and learning is good. Demonstration of speech patterns in Shakespeare helps students in Year 12 to develop vocal skills and to follow the rise and fall of the phrases. Discussion of Brecht's methodology with Year 13 is clear and enables students to develop critical understanding. Students learn to explore contradictory ideas and perform with great skill and emotion. Students' literacy skills are developed through the good use of key words in lessons and in improving their extended writing. They use ICT appropriately for word processing and research.

194. Some students take part in the national Arts Leadership Award and train their peers in dramatic skills. This is cascading their knowledge to others and building a wealth of talent in lower year groups. Most sixth form students have taken part in highly-acclaimed school productions such as *Lord of the Flies*. Theatre visits are well established. Drama makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

195. Leadership and management of the subject are good. A new head of department has recently been appointed and is carrying forward the good practice already established in the school. Teachers' assessment and students' self evaluation are thorough. Monitoring of teachers' work is carried out following the school system and is effective.

196. Being awarded Arts College status has energised and expanded the range of activities offered by the school. Links with other schools and with the community are strong. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

The focus of the inspection was on A-level and AS courses in sports studies.

### **Sports studies**

Provision in sports studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of AS and A-level sports studies is good and as a result, students are highly motivated and make good progress;
- Courses are well planned, managed and organised and sound use is made of the very good specialist sporting facilities and resources, although the use of ICT is underdeveloped;
- Assessment is used effectively to respond to individual needs;
- Extra-curricular sporting opportunities are excellent, with a high percentage of students playing competitive sport; and
- Standards in A-level examination results are below average but are improving as a result of newly developed schemes of work.

### **Commentary**

197. The A-level examination results declined significantly from above average in 2001 to well below average in 2002. In the 2003 examination, students' performance improved but remained below average. However, students are now taught by a team of specialist teachers after a period of staffing difficulties. Schemes of work have been reviewed and students are achieving well. Standards of students' current work, are broadly average, indicating an improvement over the A-level results in 2003.

198. The teaching is good. Teachers establish positive relationships with students, valuing and respecting their contributions to the lessons. Good planning, command of the subject and a range of teaching methods, motivate students and maintain high levels of interest. As a result, students are enthusiastic and respond well to the high expectations demanded of them. Good use of challenging questioning and extended discussion improves students' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 13 biomechanics lesson, following practical experiments, students demonstrated a good command of technical language, describing the way in which the human body moves and how it applies forces to itself and other objects.

199. The department is well led and managed. The new head of department has a clear vision and commitment to improving standards. Assessment is now being used effectively to respond to individual needs. The curriculum enables students to study examinations in physical education and

to continue to be fully involved in a range of sporting activities. Currently, there are no opportunities to study accredited vocational courses. A high percentage of students in the sixth form participate in a rich and extensive extra-curricular programme and represent the school in a range of competitive sports. Many students compete regionally, nationally and internationally. Rowing and rugby continue to be a strength. The senior football and rugby teams have a range of advanced skills and techniques, and show high standards of precision, control and fluency.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus of the inspection was on the AS, A-level and AVCE courses in business studies. In addition, one lesson in economics was sampled. The teaching and students' achievement in this lesson were satisfactory.

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some good teaching develops students' understanding of concepts and their analytical and evaluative skills well;
- The planning of lessons and courses is insufficiently detailed to ensure that topics are covered in enough breadth and depth to enable students, especially the higher attainers, to attain the highest possible grades;
- There is ample opportunity for the use and development of numeracy skills and ICT;
- Students do not show enough ambition and rigour in their private study; and
- In lessons, students are well motivated and interested, and apply themselves well.

### **Commentary**

200. In 2002, the A-level and AS level examination results were in line with the national average. In 2003, the results, which are as yet unconfirmed, improved further. Most students gained higher grades than predicted on the basis of their GCSE examination results. However, there were no results at grade A at A-level and generally students do not do as well in business studies as in their other subjects. Results in the AVCE examinations in 2002 were below the national average and in 2003, the papers are being remarked. Results in the 2003 GNVQ Part One examination were above average. The numbers studying business studies have increased this year to reach the former high levels, and nearly all students complete their courses. Most continue to study the subject in higher education.

201. Standards of students' current work are broadly average. Because teachers test and develop students' knowledge and evaluative skills by probing question and answer sessions, students display a firm grasp of basic concepts and an ability to defend their judgements in an articulate way, for example in discussing the problems of starting up a business. Students use their numeracy skills to analyse data and present their statistical analyses clearly in charts, graphs and spreadsheets, sometimes with the aid of ICT. They make notes independently and they co-operate well in group work, sharing their ideas naturally with each other. However, they do not always make full notes in order to record, for later re-use, the sophisticated points made in the classroom. Although extensive use is made of the Internet during private study, this research is not always recorded or incorporated into written work, which is sometimes incomplete. Although achievement in the classroom is satisfactory, the breadth and depth of study over the longer term and the practice in examination techniques are not always sufficient to ensure that the more able students gain the highest grades.

202. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers establish very good relationships in the lessons so that students are confident and enquiring. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, which they constantly update. They spice their lucid explanations with humour and examples from the contemporary business world to engage and motivate students.

For example, in a lesson on patents in Year 12, both teacher and students suggested ideas suitable for patenting such as the air bubbles in Maltesers and the personal image of the England football captain. In lessons, teachers attend to individual needs very carefully, and students acknowledge how well supported they feel. However, teachers could supervise more closely the private study of students, and structure lessons and homework more carefully, to ensure that time is used effectively. The assessment of written work is variable, with some work marked very well and other work more superficially, so that students are not always aware how well they are doing.

203. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Courses are kept under constant review and adapted to meet the needs of students. There are sufficient textbooks, but the resources for background reading and research are insufficient. Business studies is taught in classrooms which are too cramped and the level of equipment does not in any way approach that of the business environment. The department does not make full use of the local business community and students do not always seize those opportunities which do exist for direct experience of the world of work. Business studies was not inspected separately at the last inspection. However, the quality of teaching and standards appear to have been maintained. There is now more frequent use of ICT.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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