

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ARCHWAY SCHOOL

Stroud, Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115723

Headteacher: Vivien Warren

Lead inspector: Barbara O'Brien

Dates of inspection: 23–27 February 2004

Inspection number: 262644

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11–18  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 1132

School address: Paganhill  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire  
Postcode: GL5 4AX

Telephone number: 01453 763242  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Howe

Date of previous inspection: 9 November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Archway School is about the same size as other secondary schools and educates students between the ages of 11 and 18. The school is a non-selective school working alongside selective schools in the same town which select between one quarter and one third of the town's higher attaining students. There are 1132 students on roll with 135 students in the sixth form. Students are predominantly from White-British backgrounds, although there are a small number of students from other White, Caribbean, African, Chinese, Asian or Asian - British – Pakistani and mixed backgrounds. There is less than one per cent of students for whom English is not their first language.

The school is a specialist technology college and aims to raise standards in design and technology, mathematics, science and ICT, promoting a culture that is scientific, technological, enterprising and vocational. The school has been awarded *Investors in People* and *Sportsmark* status.

Archway School is one of four partners in the Stroud Post-16 Consortium. Students in any partner institution may access courses in another partner institution where the course is not provided in the home institution, and where a student's choice of programme cannot be accommodated in the home institution.

The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Needs, is below the national average. The school has a designated Special Educational Needs Unit for specific learning (dyslexia) needs. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Overall, standards of attainment on entry in Year 7 are below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13019	Barbara O'Brien	Lead inspector	
19338	Graham Ellis	Lay inspector	
1769	Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Special educational needs Psychology
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology Vocational education
20629	John Bryson	Team inspector	English
31958	Patrick O'Neill	Team inspector	Art and design
31836	Martyn Williams	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
8361	Malcolm Burley	Team inspector	Science; biology
19530	Jennifer Bray	Team inspector	Geography
18032	Isobel Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
31879	David Rhodes	Team inspector	Mathematics
8090	Frank Turns	Team inspector	Media studies
11968	Ian McGuff	Team inspector	Physical education
23499	Howard Seymour	Team inspector	Music
32122	Judith Straw	Team inspector	Religious education
30749	Heather Boyle	Team inspector	History PSHE; citizenship
12897	Maurice Mealing	Team inspector	Health and social care

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective and improving school** which provides a good quality of education for its students. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the senior management team and governors in the drive to improve standards. Teaching is good with some excellent features and all students, including those with special educational needs, subsequently achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of teaching is a strength of the school.
- A fully inclusive school that has care for students as individuals at the centre of its ethos.
- The vision, drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher.
- Very good links established with other schools and colleges.
- Standards in mathematics are high.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is very good.
- Effective continuing professional development arrangements for staff.
- Standards attained in some subjects are below the national average.
- Literacy skills are below national expectations.
- Use of performance data to support, monitor, evaluate and improve standards is not yet fully embedded in all subjects.

Since the last inspection in 1998, the school has made good improvement. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly in the main school and there has been a rising trend in the attainment of the higher grades at GCSE in line with those nationally. The quality of teaching has been maintained at a high level and the Governors now play a leading role in the development of the school as a result of the effectiveness of the committee structure. All the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	D	C	A
A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	E	D	

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Students achieve well** overall throughout the school. Standards of attainment are below the national average when students enter the school. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards are in line with the national averages. Standards in the sixth form have improved over the past three years although they are still below the national average. Literacy skills are below average in Years 7 to 11 which reflects the standard on entry to the school. Students' competency in mathematics is good and skills in the use of ICT are satisfactory.

**Students' personal development and their moral, social and cultural development are good. Their spiritual development is satisfactory.** Behaviour in the school is satisfactory. Students' attitudes to learning are good because their interest is stimulated by enthusiastic teachers. Attendance in the school continues to be at the national average

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**Teaching and learning are good** in all years with much that is very good and excellent. The use of assessment to raise standards is satisfactory overall. Teachers' good subject knowledge results in interesting and challenging lessons. Teaching assistants provide very good support for students.

The quality of the curriculum is good in the main school. In the sixth form, very good opportunities are provided for students to select from a broad range of subjects. The school has made good provision to enrich students' learning outside of lessons. The overall quality of accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources are adequate and used well.

Support systems work well. Students have access to good quality advice based on good monitoring, whilst preparation for sixth form courses and future pathways is limited. Parents show good commitment to their children's education. Links with other schools and the local community are very good and those with the local community good..

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The governors show strong commitment in their support of the school and overall governance is satisfactory. Although the requirement to teach religious education in Year 11 is not fully met, governors have addressed this issue for the next academic year. The governors have done all they can to ensure compliance with the requirements on collective worship. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by her senior staff. Together they ensure that the overall effectiveness of management throughout the school is good.

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

Parents are pleased with the work of the school overall, and are particularly pleased with the arrangements for settling their children into the school and the expectations that staff have of their children. Some parents raised concerns about the information they receive on how well their children are doing, and on the behaviour of students in the school. Students are equally positive, although a significant number in the main school feel that behaviour and bullying are problems. Sixth form students are very positive about the provision the school makes for them overall but do not feel sufficiently well informed on opportunities available after leaving school, and feel that there is an insufficient range of enrichment activities. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents and students and found no evidence to confirm the negative views of students about bullying. Inspectors found that behaviour was not a problem throughout the school but found small pockets of inappropriate behaviour in Year 9 in particular. Inspectors agree that students receive limited guidance on possibilities beyond school and agree that there are few enrichment activities in the sixth form.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise the standards of attainment in English Language, modern foreign languages, and design and technology at GCSE.
- Raise standards of attainment in the sixth form.
- Ensure consistent use of performance data to support, monitor, evaluate and improve standards across all subjects.
- Improve literacy skills of students across all years.
- Systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the sixth form Consortium arrangements on individual learning.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide religious education for all students in Year 11.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Address the health and safety issues regarding tripping hazards and handrails for steps.

## THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form, with 135 students, is smaller than average but offers a wider than usual range of opportunities through involvement in the Stroud Post-16 Consortium. Students therefore follow A level and vocational courses mainly in Archway school but also in Downfield Sixth Form and Stroud College.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**Provision in the sixth form is good** overall and its cost-effectiveness is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form subjects taught at Archway are more successful for the Archway students than those provided at other Consortium centres, but the availability of subjects elsewhere benefits students at Archway who wish to follow a broader curriculum. Problems of communication and monitoring across the Consortium have caused temporary difficulties that are now being addressed.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good quality teaching.
- Clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations of the head teacher and governors in relation to the development of the sixth form.
- The breadth of curriculum offered to students through the Consortium arrangements.
- Very inclusive sixth form with concern for the needs of individuals.
- Overall, standards in the sixth form are below the national average.
- Insufficient monitoring of progress and evaluation of the impact of the Consortium on individual students.
- Preparation for sixth form courses and future pathways has not made the full range of opportunities clear to students.

Since the last inspection in 1998, the sixth form has made good improvement. Standards have shown an upward trend in the past three years and students overall continue to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of teaching has remained at a high level and the Consortium arrangements are providing enhanced opportunities for students.

## 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	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is <b>good</b> . Teachers create a scholarly atmosphere and encourage all students to contribute to discussions. Standards are broadly in line with the national average. Achievement is good.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is <b>very good</b> . Very good teaching creates a learning environment in which students thrive leading to very good achievement. Standards currently attained are above the national average.
Biology	Provision in biology is <b>good</b> . Standards are in line with the national average. Very good teaching, excellent relationships and positive attitudes result in good achievement.
Information and communication technology	Provision in AVCE information technology is <b>good</b> . Good teaching prepares students well to meet the criteria for the coursework and examination, resulting in good achievement. Standards are below average in Year 12 and in line with the national average in Year 13
Humanities	Provision in geography is <b>good</b> . Standards overall are below the national average. Challenging teaching results in good achievement and very good coursework.
Psychology	Provision in psychology is <b>good</b> . Standards are in line with the national average. Strong subject knowledge and effective use of resources results in



interesting teaching. This results in good achievement.

Visual and performing arts and media

Provision in media studies is **good**. The quality of teaching is very good. Standards are in line with national average but students have above average skills in practical production.

Provision in art is **good** because of good teaching & planning. Standards are in line with the national average. Achievement is good. Numbers of students opting for art are rising.

Health and Social Care

Provision in AVCE health and social care is **satisfactory**. Student interest and enthusiasm contribute to satisfactory achievement. Standards attained are broadly in line with the national average

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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 are given good support through strong relationships with the heads of sixth form and their form tutors. Teachers give very good feedback that enables students to know how well they are doing and how to improve. They are regularly consulted on issues of importance to them, both formally and informally, with good monitoring of their views on the delivery of courses at Archway. Monitoring of attendance and progress in courses elsewhere across the Consortium is weaker as a result of a temporary breakdown in communications that has now been addressed by the implementation of new systems. The school is aware of the previous weakness in the quality of advice to students about choices of courses and career pathways, and has put in place procedures for its improvement.

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

**Leadership of the sixth form is good**, with clear vision for its development linked to the Downfield Sixth Form and Stroud College in the Stroud Post-16 Consortium. The head teacher has been very influential in the leadership of the Consortium, with strong support from governors. The recently appointed head and assistant head of the sixth form have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the ethos of the students. **Management of the sixth form is satisfactory**. Although good systems are in place for monitoring progress in subjects studied at Archway, these are less well implemented across school and college boundaries.

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

Students who returned questionnaires and were interviewed expressed very strong support for the school, for their sixth form tutors and for their teachers. A significant proportion expressed dissatisfaction with their advice on courses and careers. Inspectors agree with the students' positive views and support the views relating to insufficient advice on courses and careers beyond school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall, standards are in line with national averages by the end of Years 9 and 11, and below in Year 13. Students' English language and literacy skills are unsatisfactory by the end of Years 9 and 11 and satisfactory by the end of Year 13. Students' competence in mathematics is good, their skills in the use of ICT are satisfactory in Years 9 and 11, whilst those in Year 13 are good. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 and Years 12 to 13 is good and for students in Years 10 to 11 achievement is satisfactory. Girls generally do better than boys, but in mathematics both boys and girls achieve very well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' overall achievement in relation to prior attainment is good.
- Standards in mathematics are high.
- The school has been identified as one of the most improved specialist schools by the Specialist Schools Trust.
- Overall, standards in the sixth form are below the national average.
- Literacy skills are below national expectations.
- Standards in some subjects at GCSE are below the national average.
- Standards achieved by students with special educational needs are good.

#### Commentary

1. Between one quarter and one third of students in the school's catchment area are selected for places in the local grammar schools. As a result, the overall range of prior attainment on entry to Year 7 is below the national average for comprehensive schools. The attainment of boys on entry is below that of girls. These factors are reflected in the standards in English in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, which were below the national average. Standards in the national tests were in line with the national average in mathematics and science. The performance of boys in English is below that of girls whilst in mathematics and science it is similar. The standards attained overall in the three core subjects at the end of Year 9 show a rising trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.7 (31.8)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	35.7 (34.2)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.6 (31.9)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 205 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The percentage of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades in the examinations for 16-year olds in 2003 was in line with the national average. These results were well above those for students in similar schools, when taking account of their prior attainment. The proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to G grades is broadly in line with the national average. The overall trend in GCSE results is rising. The school has been recognised by the Specialist Schools Trust as one of the most improved specialist schools in terms of higher grade GCSE results between 2000 and 2003.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	54 (38)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	88 (93)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.4 (34.7)	31.2 (34.7)

*There were 193 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Work seen during the inspection week confirms the standards evidenced in the test and examination results with the exception of English and art, where the work seen demonstrates higher standards. In Years 7 to 9, standards overall are about average and students' achievement is good. Standards in mathematics are particularly good. The consistently very good teaching and learning and the very good leadership and management in the subject ensure that the achievement of students is very good. In science, the good standards result from high teacher expectations accompanied by the positive attitudes of students. These are reflected in the good achievement of students. In both mathematics and science boys generally achieve as well as girls whereas in English the achievement of girls is greater than that of boys. In English, both the standard of work seen and the achievement of students are satisfactory. Literacy skills are below national expectation when students join the school and remain so despite good teaching. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the strategies introduced to raise standards in the subject.
4. Amongst other subjects, by the end of Year 9, standards are in line with the national average in art and design, modern foreign languages, geography, history, religious education, and physical education. In all these subjects, students are achieving well because of the overall good teaching. In design and technology, below average standards overall and under-performance of boys result from the inappropriateness of topics selected which neither interest nor motivate boys sufficiently.
5. By the end of Year 11, very good teaching is fostering above national average standards in mathematics and very good achievement. Well-planned lessons and effective assessment by teachers in geography and art and design, ensure that students are achieving well and standards of work seen demonstrate standards above the national average. Standards in English are average and the achievement of students is satisfactory. There is insufficient evaluation to determine whether the approaches to teaching are having the desired impact on raising the below average standards of literacy. In all other subjects, with the exception of modern foreign languages, ICT and design and technology, students are achieving well overall, with standards that are in line with the national average in the work seen. In modern foreign languages, improvements in teaching have yet to have their full impact on courses in Years 10 and 11. Standards are below average, whilst achievement is satisfactory. In ICT and design and technology the standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory overall but in both subjects the structure and content of the courses offered do not provide consistent opportunities for all students. Achievement overall in these subjects is satisfactory.
6. In all years, the achievement of students with special educational needs is good, because teachers and learning support workers are responsive and sensitive to their needs. The standards achieved by students with special educational needs are very good in their specialist withdrawal groups and good in mainstream classes. Students in the Specific Learning Difficulties (dyslexia) Unit make very good progress against their targets. The small number of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and ethnic minority students achieve well throughout the school and their progress is tracked effectively. The

achievement of students with dyslexia in their specialist Unit is very good. The very good leadership and management of special educational needs provides the enthusiasm and drive to continuously improve students' achievement.

## Sixth Form

7. Examination results declined in 2002, and were below the national average for AS and A level students in 2002, but results at A level improved in 2003 and show an upward trend over the past three years. Students enter the sixth form with below average standards, as a relatively high proportion of students do not have 5 GCSE higher grade passes. Although there were relatively few higher grade passes at A level and AVCE in 2002, except in English literature and music, almost all students passed the examinations. This represents good achievement. A relatively low pass rate in AS in 2003 has resulted in low retention from Year 12 to Year 13.
8. Standards of both year groups in work seen were satisfactory, and above expectation in English literature, mathematics, geography, psychology and ICT. Good teaching, well suited to the needs of the sixth form students, is the driving force behind these standards. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the standards attained by students. The additional opportunities provided as a result of the Consortium arrangements have contributed to this improvement.

### **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	83.3	90.3
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	19.8	35.5
Average point score per pupil	157.4	254.5

*There were 51 pupils in the year group.*

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

The school successfully promotes good standards for students' behaviour and attitudes to work. Their moral, social and cultural moral development is promoted well. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students have good attitudes to work because the school successfully stimulates their interest in school life.
- The school sets high expectations for students' conduct.
- The school's provision for their social, moral and cultural development is good.
- Good procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- The inclusive ethos of the school.

### **Commentary**

9. The school sets high standards for conduct, which are conscientiously reinforced by staff. As a result a positive learning environment has been created. Students' behaviour overall is satisfactory. Behaviour in lessons is often good, but there is a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 9, who are inattentive and sometimes display inappropriate behaviour. No bullying or aggressive behaviour was observed. The school has good procedures to deal with incidents when they arise.

10. The overwhelming majority of students enjoy school, speaking of it with pride and commendation and are keen to present what they regard as its positive features. The staff's clear expectations and their enthusiastic teaching motivates students to learn. Students have a strong sense of commitment and are willing to undertake responsibilities and demonstrate initiative. Students organise a number of their own activities, for example in connection with Red Nose Day, the Year 11 Prom and the Sixth Form Summer Ball. Older students provide a mentoring function for younger students which is well regarded.
11. In lessons, students of all backgrounds are focused on their work, pay attention to their teachers and enthusiastically join in activities and discussions. The school promotes their sense of achievement with the celebration of personal as well as academic performance. As a result, they are keen to talk about their work and achievements, expressing themselves openly and with developing confidence. They are engaged in their learning and maintain good levels of concentration overall.
12. Students' personal development permeates all the school's activities and this is well developed during their school life. The school's ethos is inclusive and caring. Members of staff are good role models and their reinforcement of moral standards is reflected in students' good understanding and respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Moral and ethical issues are a constant element in subjects such as English, history, geography, religious education and science. The school has a strong sense of community and shared values. It prepares students for life in a diverse, multi-cultural society and provides opportunities for students to work and cooperate together. Cultural development is promoted well. The school has many international links; for example students visit the United Nations in Geneva, as well as Kenya and India. The school also has a deservedly good reputation for its dramatic and musical performances.
13. The school successfully promotes an open and uninhibited approach to which students respond well. They are encouraged to explore their own and others' feelings and concerns in an atmosphere that appreciates their opinions. Students feel valued by teachers and other adults and they reciprocate accordingly. The majority are polite, developing in maturity, and listen with patience and sensitivity to each other, for example in assemblies.
14. The attitudes of all students with special educational needs are good. Particularly noteworthy is the impact of the work of the Inclusion Unit which is very successful in generating positive attitudes amongst students who are at risk of exclusion from the school. Very effective behaviour targets combined with well-planned and effective support from staff ensure good behaviour and effective learning.
15. All students from ethnic minority backgrounds, with EAL and with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. They participate in lessons and other school activities. Their social development is considerably helped by the very strong relationships that exist between staff and students in the department. Their participation in the lunch-time clubs and the support lessons provided by the department has a significant impact on both their learning and their self-confidence.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)2002*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.8	School data	0.4
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

16. Attendance is about the national average and unauthorised absence is below average. Registration is efficient and timely, and students are usually punctual to lessons.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1102	133	7

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

17. Whilst there is a high level of fixed term exclusions this reflects the school's consistent and well understood approach to disciplinary issues.

## Sixth Form

18. The school's high standards for conduct and approach to work are well maintained in the sixth form. Students are treated with respect by staff and reciprocate with appropriate maturity and responsibility. There are very good relationships between students and between students and staff. Students are confident and articulate. For example a good presentation with a high level of group involvement was observed in a Sixth Form briefing. They willingly undertake responsibilities, for example organising the Summer Ball. A number provide a mentoring function for younger students and this is well regarded.
19. Attendance is recorded in classes, but because of the movement of students to and from Stroud College, the school does not always have accurate information on the numbers of students on site at any one time. Recently improved arrangements are now in place for communicating the rates of attendance across the consortium.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall, teaching is good, the curriculum provided is good and the positive ethos of the school ensures a good and inclusive place to learn. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in all years, with very good and excellent features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use good subject knowledge to plan interesting and challenging lessons.
- Teaching of students with special educational needs is very good.
- Support staff provide very good support for students and have a positive impact on the progress students make in lessons.
- High expectations of students' work and behaviour.
- Tracking individual pupil progress is not consistent across all departments.
- Students are not always clear about what they need to do to improve in some subjects.

## Commentary

20. The school has succeeded in maintaining the high quality of teaching and learning seen at the last inspection. There are examples of excellent practice, the majority is very good or good and only in a very small number of lessons is the teaching and learning unsatisfactory. The consistent strength of the teaching is a reflection of the school's drive to push up standards. Lessons are, in the main, characterised by a focus on well-structured planning, good pace, high expectations, wide range of activities, effective student management and appropriate levels of support that meet the needs of the majority of students. This results in students learning effectively and achieving well.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7(4%)	41(23.6 %)	70(40.2 %)	51(29.3 %)	4(2.3 %)	1(0.5 %)	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.*

21. In English, mathematics and physical education, teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. They are good in science, modern foreign languages, geography, history, music and religious education. In art, teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all years in design and technology.
22. In English, teachers have an expert knowledge of the curriculum and use it to promote excellent learning opportunities. In mathematics, all teachers have high expectations of students' work both in class and for homework. This consistent approach means that students come to lessons prepared to work hard. In science, as a result of high expectations and constant challenge, students are fully engaged and achieve well. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been successfully introduced and is instrumental in planning, structuring and refining activities suited to students' abilities.
23. In nearly all lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting and challenging work. Beginning with a focus on what students are expected to learn, lessons begin with clear introductions that set the scene for the learning to follow. As a result of teachers' effective use of diverse and interesting methods, probing questions and good use of resources, the interest and motivation of students of all backgrounds is high and their learning progresses well. However, there is insufficient planning of learning opportunities for gifted and talented students overall. Very good use of support staff in lessons has a significant impact on the students' learning.
24. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons seen, insufficient behaviour management affected the quality of learning of students.
25. The teaching of students with special educational needs is very good in the Learning Support Department and good throughout the school. The withdrawal groups benefit from well-planned, intensive sessions with effective use of computers to support their learning. The teaching in the Inclusion Unit is highly effective. Sensitive and well-presented lessons enable students to successfully review their behaviour and prepare them for re-entry into classes. The teaching of students with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) is of very good quality and reflects the specialist skills of the teaching staff.

26. Within main school lessons, students with special educational needs are well taught. Teachers display commitment to the needs of the students. This commitment is ably supported by a very effective group of Learning Support Workers. Detailed and effective assessment provides the structures which give direction to highly skilled and focused teaching in the SpLD (dyslexic) Unit.
27. The use of assessment information is satisfactory overall. The school has developed a range of assessment strategies for monitoring students' progress which are used to good effect in some subjects. In mathematics, geography and religious education, students' work is assessed thoroughly and they understand what they have to do to improve. Teachers use the information to set targets for improvement and to track students' progress. In the SpLD Unit the assessment of students' needs is a strength. Both staff and students are aware of their targets and have a realistic understanding of what needs to be done to improve. However, this practice is not consistent across all subjects.

## **Sixth Form**

The quality of teaching overall is good and results in students achieving well. Procedures for and use of assessment are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good in English Literature, mathematics, biology, and media studies.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subject.
- Insufficient opportunity exists for students to work independently.

### **Commentary**

28. Well-planned teaching and high expectations characterise the majority of lessons in the sixth form. Very good teaching and learning were seen in English Literature, mathematics, biology and media studies. In all other subjects inspected, teaching and learning are good. The high quality of the teaching and the students' positive attitude to learning enable students to achieve well.
29. Teachers know their subjects well and students have a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Lessons are carefully planned to cater for the different needs of young people in the sixth form and a wide range of teaching methods ensures that opportunities are provided for all students to succeed. Students are encouraged to work independently and develop their ideas in a number of subject areas, but this is not consistent across all courses.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides well for the needs of pupils. The Consortium arrangements in the sixth form allow a very wide range of options. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Personal, social, health education and citizenship are good. Pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. Accommodation overall is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and Weaknesses**

- The breadth of subjects available in the sixth form is very good.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is very good.
- Good opportunities for students' experiences to be enriched through a broad and varied programme of electives and extra-curricular activities.
- There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum.
- Provision for religious education in Year 11 does not meet statutory requirements.
- There is no daily act of collective worship that is wholly or mainly Christian.



## Commentary

30. There is a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and there is a good range of curricular opportunities in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum provided by the school is very inclusive and caters well for the wide range of needs of students from all backgrounds. However, the requirement for religious education in Year 11 is not met, and whilst the school provides a weekly act of collective worship for each year group, it is unable to provide a daily act of collective worship as staff are not willing to lead these.
31. There are effective, coherent programmes of personal, social, and health education and citizenship and careers education. The quality of these programmes benefit from the fact that they are delivered by small specialist teams, but the work of heads of year and subject departments also adds substantial value to them. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate initiative, for example, in organising their own work experience placements in Year 11. All students undertake work experience with mainly local employers during one week in Year 11 and most students find work placements for themselves. Students are well prepared for the experience in PHSE lessons and the majority of students are visited at the place of work by a tutor during the week. The tutor and employer provide reports. Subsequently, work experience is used as the focus of a formal speaking and listening assessment for GCSE English.
32. The school has made good progress in developing work-related learning and a broad vocational 14 to 19 programme which enhance provision and opportunities for individual needs and aspirations. There are good opportunities for extended work experience placements and a range of vocational options, some of which are provided in conjunction with Stroud College. Selected students take work-related courses at Stroud College as part of the local innovative Learning in Vocational Environments (LIVE) project in Years 10 and 11. Forty-three students are currently taking part. Part-time courses of one day a week duration are provided in building, care, catering, construction, decorating, media, motor vehicle repair, public services – (police, fire, ambulance and armed services) – plumbing at foundation level and level 1. The courses are popular with students and the retention rate is high. None of these new courses has yet been examined. The costs of the courses are partly covered by money provided from the Government's Increased Flexibility Programme.
33. The provision of electives in Key Stages 3 and 4 provides additional breadth for many pupils and in the majority of cases the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and often good. There is no evidence that the time allocated to electives is having a detrimental effect on students' achievement in core curriculum areas. Overall opportunities for enrichment in the school are good. There are good extra-curricular programmes in sport and the performing arts and a wide range of educational visits are undertaken both within the UK and overseas.
34. Students with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. The school demonstrates its commitment to their needs in a range of ways. Students with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) benefit from highly-skilled specialist teaching. Those in the Inclusion Unit are equally well supported. The provision of elective lessons in which students with special needs have the opportunity to receive support for their work is a significant factor in ensuring that the students achieve well. The provision of lunch-time clubs is an excellent feature. Exciting and varied activities, such as art, team games, being read to and the opportunities for discussion, are provided. They also provide a safe and supportive environment for students who can be at risk in a large school. It is noteworthy that this excellent provision is only made possible by the commitment of the support staff.
35. Technology college status has made it possible for the school to be equipped with enough computers for all subjects to have easy access to the school network. There has therefore been good progress in the use of ICT to assist learning in other subjects. The additional resources made available to the mathematics department as a result of the specialist status, together with the strategy of starter – main topic – plenary adopted in every lesson, have had a

major impact on the standards of numeracy attained by all students. The success of the mathematics department during Years 7 to 11 has had the effect of increasing take-up of mathematics in Year 12. Standards in science at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 have improved over the last three years, and students now use ICT naturally for research and for presentation of ideas, with considerable use of subject-specific software.

36. Specialist sports, drama and ICT facilities support curriculum breadth and a range of teaching strategies. However, the overall physical environment of the school does not contribute to a stimulating and positive ethos for learning and much of the accommodation is in a poor state of repair. The match of support staff and teachers to the curriculum is good. In general, departmental resources are satisfactory and those within the library are good. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. There is now more effective coverage of statutory requirements in information technology. School policies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced and the limitations which were placed upon the curriculum by timetabling constraints have been largely resolved.

### **Sixth Form**

37. Curriculum provision in the sixth form is very good. As a result of Consortium arrangements in conjunction with Stroud College and Downfield sixth form, students benefit from an extensive range of academic and vocational courses that meet the needs of a wide range of ability and interests.
38. Satisfactory provision is made for careers education in tutor periods but some students do not feel that they receive enough support about subject choices or education and employment routes Post-18. The provision of religious education in the sixth form does not meet statutory requirements. Accommodation overall in the sixth form is satisfactory and the provision of areas for private study has recently been improved.
39. Staffing is good overall and meets the needs of the curriculum well, especially when taking into account the Consortium arrangements. Resources are generally satisfactory and good in English, mathematics and science. Library provision is good and is well used as an additional study area by students. The quantity of available ICT equipment is good but students feel frustrated by the unreliability of some machines and the school's network overall.

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

The school has good procedures for care, welfare, health and safety. Students receive good support, advice and guidance for their personal development. Induction is good and the involvement of students in the school's work and development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides good standards of care, welfare, health and safety.
- Overall, students are provided with good support, advice and guidance.
- Students' views are actively sought and valued and they are actively involved in the work of the school.
- Induction arrangements are good. Information and guidance on careers and further study are satisfactory overall with both strengths and weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

40. There are good policies and procedures relating to health and welfare, first aid and child protection. There is good co-ordination with outside agencies so that further support may be provided in appropriate cases. The school receives regular professional support on health and safety from the local authority. The supervision of students is generally good. The site has a number of tripping hazards and some outside steps without handrails. There are also some

parts of the building, which would not be wholly accessible to disabled students. With these exceptions, the school's positive arrangements reflect its strong commitment to care and welfare.

41. The majority of students are happy in school. They feel part of a caring community, in which they are confident, trust the staff and are aware how they can obtain help. Teachers and other staff know them well. The school's system of pastoral care is based on tutor groups and while the standard of support varies, for students up to age 16 it generally provides a good basis for monitoring their progress and personal development. Staff can quickly recognise students' needs and thereby provide good standards of pastoral support and care. Staff act quickly to assist any student who is concerned or in need of support. The Inclusion Centre provides good support for potentially disaffected students and students with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) are given very good support in their preparation for examinations. Support, advice and guidance is therefore good overall and satisfactory for Post-16 students.
42. The school's overall arrangements for involving pupils of all backgrounds in the work and development of the school are good. There is an openness in which students' views are valued. They are encouraged to fully express themselves in lessons and contribute to the running of the school. Questionnaires are regularly used to consult students on many issues. Student panels are included in staff selection procedures and students prepare their own Improvement Plan. Consultation and involvement by Post-16 students is very good -for example they provide feedback on the teaching and learning in all subjects.
43. The School Council is an important part of this process with representatives from all year groups. Members gain valuable experience at the frequent meetings in organisation and representation, while all students are involved through communication in the tutor groups. The School Council has been involved in the site development plan for the school's redevelopment and their comments were incorporated into the architect's output specification.
44. The close working relationships with feeder primary schools ensures comprehensive induction arrangements involving Year 5 as well as Year 6 students. Year 7 students, as well as staff, visit the primary schools and the school works very hard to ease the transfer process. As a result, children settle in quickly to their new school.
45. The overall provision of guidance to students on further study and career opportunities is satisfactory. Those preparing for Key Stage 4 are provided with good advice and guidance enabling them to make considered choice for their options. Careers education for students in Years 9 – 11 is satisfactory.
46. The school has very effective arrangements that enable students of all backgrounds to settle quickly into the life of the school. Specific use is made of drama and role-play to give students confidence before they start in the school. The high quality of support for students with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) ensures that all have full access to the school curriculum. Assessment arrangements for students with special educational needs are extensive and of good quality. Students' learning and behaviour targets are precise and regularly reviewed. Students are aware of their targets and know what to do to improve. Teaching staff are provided with assessment data and learning strategies which have a positive impact on the students' learning.

## **Sixth Form**

47. Support, advice and guidance for Post-16 students is satisfactory overall. Students' perceptions are that arrangements are not always effective. Some of them require support to adjust to different teaching styles at other schools in the Post-16 Consortium. On the other hand, the school works hard to provide support in individual cases, for example organising a distance learning course for a particular student. However, their primary concern is their dissatisfaction with the provision of advice on courses. In particular, there is inadequate

guidance on the relationship between A level choices and career routes. Students felt that while the Post-16 Consortium provides them with a wider range of subjects, the detailed availability of courses had not always been made sufficiently clear and as a result there had been some missed opportunities. The school is aware of this and has revised its procedures to rectify the situation.

48. Consultation and involvement by Post-16 students is very good. The open and relaxed environment between staff and students is very conducive to encouraging and promoting their participation in the school's work. They are frequently and positively consulted on many issues and they respond with confidence and responsibility, for example providing structured feedback on teaching and learning in all subjects.

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

The school has good links with parents and the community, and very good links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in high regard and are appreciative of its achievements.
- The provision of information to parents is very good.
- The school has established very good links with other schools and colleges.

### **Commentary**

49. Parents hold the school in high regard and provide good general support. The school has the confidence of all communities and adopts an open-door policy in its relations with parents. This is successful in that parents feel the school is accessible, that they are welcomed and that members of staff are approachable.
50. The school communicates frequently with parents and as a result, the overwhelming majority are productively engaged with the school's educational direction and are better able to support their children, for example with homework. There are frequent and informative communications to parents. The school also provides parents with informative guides for each year group. The prospectus is produced in an attractive and readable style while the annual Governors' Report is well produced and informative. However, the sixth form prospectus, while attractively produced is in need of updating.
51. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress through the consultation meetings with staff, which are well supported. The school consults parents through surveys and has arranged an education support group to help parents to assist their children's learning. The Learning Support Department maintains close links with parents through regular telephone contact.
52. The students' annual reports are of a very good standard providing detailed and informative guidance for parents. For each subject, they provide a course synopsis with evaluations on general progress and subject skills. Comments on strengths and achievements clearly indicate students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Relevant targets are provided in each subject and there is internal consistency between subjects. Attainment assessments are based on National Curriculum levels, with assessments for Years 10-13 matched against target GCSE and A level grades. General tutor comments show good knowledge of individuals.

53. The school has established good links with the community. Local organisations are encouraged to base their activities on the school site and a significant number do so, for example dance, music and athletics clubs. The school-run Sports Centre is open to the community evenings and at weekends. There are good links with local employers, for example Renshaw Engineering, who are helping in the development of an Applied Engineering course. Through Education Business Partnership a key skills day is arranged in Key Stage 4. There are good links with all the local churches, all of whom regularly participate in assemblies. A significant number of international links are maintained; for example the school is establishing a video conferencing facility with a school in India.
54. The school maintains very good relationships with other schools and colleges. Through the Stroud Pyramid a number of valuable shared practice initiatives have been established between teachers in Years 6 and 7, which have significantly improved liaison between primary and secondary education to the benefit of students in areas such as behaviour, challenge and independence. A number of primary schools are involved in challenge competitions in ICT and design and technology, and in science focus workshops for Key Stage 2 students.

### **Sixth Form**

55. The school's very good relationships with other schools and colleges results in significant benefits for Post-16 students. The involvement through the Stroud Post-16 Consortium with Downfield schools and Stroud College enables students to access a greatly extended range of courses and thereby enhance their opportunities.
56. The very good provision of information to parents for students up to age 16 is not wholly maintained in the sixth form. Annual reports continue to be of a very good standard with assessments matched against target grades. However, the sixth form prospectus, while attractively produced is in need of updating. There is an up-to-date leaflet setting out the full course information, but it does not provide detailed information or guidance. The school recognises this and is in the process of updating the prospectus.
57. Overall links with the community are satisfactory in the sixth form with some good features, for example the Post-16 Challenge on communications, organised in association with BNFL Magnox. Members of the sixth form assist with an ICT class run at the school for the community.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall leadership and management of the school is good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

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

- The vision, drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher supported by a strong senior management team.
- The quality of leadership of special educational needs is very good.
- The continuing professional development arrangements for staff.
- The level of challenge and support exerted by the governing body.
- Use of performance data to support, monitor, evaluate and improve standards is not yet fully embedded in all subjects.
- Statutory requirements are not met for religious education in Year 11 and collective worship.

## Commentary

58. The leadership of the headteacher is a strength of the school. Her clear vision and high aspirations for the school are driven by a clear focus on the individual and the importance of teaching and learning in driving up standards. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has developed into one where successful inclusion is practised and self-evaluation is central to its improvement, creating a positive learning environment for students of all backgrounds. Members of the senior management team provide effective leadership and management support for the headteacher and demonstrate strong commitment to achieving the aims of the school. They provide good role models to other staff and students.
59. The Learning Support department is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has successfully developed a complex and effective department which plays a significant role in the life of the school. She has a clear vision for support in the school and has managed a range of procedures very effectively to ensure that all those students with special educational needs receive the best possible support. Support staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and their deployment is very effective.
60. The school places a high priority on the continuing professional development of staff and has invested significantly in this over the past few years. There are very good procedures in place for the induction of new staff, and the school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training. A professional development programme for all staff, based on individual, team and whole school needs, is organised annually. Collaborative professional development events are organised with other schools. In addition, staff workshops are organised on a regular basis which have a clear focus on strategies for improvement. A very positive outcome of a workshop that focused on sharing good practice was produced which demonstrated how progress is achieved during a lesson. All professional development activities are evaluated by staff who complete impact proformas. The impact is tracked throughout the school and feedback is presented to governors to ensure value for money.
61. The governing body, well informed by the senior managers, is highly supportive, but also asks critical questions and so holds the school to account. Its committee structure works well and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and any areas that need development. They have made a strong contribution to the development of the school. They have been fully involved in the school's decision to become a technology college and are active in reviewing the school's improvement plan. The governing body ensures that the performance management policy is in place and that all staff including the headteacher are annually appraised. Governors monitor expenditure closely, aligning it to the school improvement plan, which looks forward to identify key priorities. These are carefully costed by the school and presented to the governing body for scrutiny. This enables staff and governors to evaluate how effective those spending decisions have been. The school has a good understanding of the principles of best value. Statutory requirements to provide religious education in Year 11 are not met. Governors are aware of this and plans are in place to ensure requirements are met at the start of the school year in September. There is no provision for a daily act of collective worship as this is led by local church leaders who can only provide one act of worship for each year group each week. School staff are not willing to lead acts of collective worship.
62. Overall, the effectiveness of subject management is good. Management is very good in mathematics, science, geography and physical education, where innovative approaches to teaching and learning, effective use of assessment data and self-evaluation support an ethos for improvement in their subjects. In subjects where management is satisfactory, monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department is not yet fully embedded, much as a result of the appointment of new staff over the past six months.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,832,790
Total expenditure	3,635,956
Expenditure per pupil	3,320.50

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	184,231
Balance carried forward to the next	196,834

**Sixth form**

63. Leadership of the sixth form is good, with clear vision for its development linked to the Downfield Sixth form and Stroud College in the Stroud Sixth Form Consortium. The head teacher has been very influential in the leadership of the Consortium, thus making possible a still broadening range of learning opportunities for Archway students. In this she has been helped considerably by the strong support of governors. The recently appointed head and assistant head of sixth form have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the students and the ethos of the sixth form. They work very well together to improve this, for example by creating a physical environment in which the students know that they are expected to work hard. They are very good role models for the maintenance of very positive relationships between staff and students.
64. Management of the sixth form is satisfactory. There is a good analysis of issues leading to improvement, for example in dealing with communication problems across the Consortium. Well-planned systems for monitoring progress in subjects studied at Archway have been less well implemented across school and college boundaries. These issues are also apparent in the difficulties encountered over checking attendance rates away from Archway. Until recently there has been insufficient analysis of standards in the sixth form compared to students' prior attainment at the end of Year 11. The management of subjects taught in the sixth form is good, as is demonstrated by the results of the school's consultation with students over their experience in courses. This contributes to the students' good achievement. The sixth form is cost-effective, with effective arrangements for sharing costs throughout the Consortium.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good with some excellent features.
- Standards have fallen over time - Year 9 National Curriculum test and GCSE English language results are now below average.
- The work of the department needs to be formally monitored so that teachers and students receive guidance on how to improve.
- Work is not consistently marked and assessed to identify ways in which students could improve.

#### Commentary

65. The Year 9 national test results in 2003 were below average. The performance of students in English was weaker than their performance in mathematics and science. The performance of girls has been consistently better than that of boys and continues to improve at a faster rate. This is due, in part, to changing patterns of prior attainment on entry to the school. The department has introduced a range of strategies, such as quickening the pace of lessons and teacher directed seating arrangements, to address the underachievement of boys.
66. In 2003, GCSE English language results were below the national average. Two out of five students attained A\*-C grades. The performance of students in English language was weaker than their performance in other subjects. The performance of girls was better than that of boys. English literature results were average and rose significantly in 2003. Three out of five students achieved A\*-C grades. This significant improvement over the 2002 results was in part due to boys achieving their target and girls exceeding theirs.
67. Literacy skills are below national expectations when students join the school. Despite the very good teaching seen in most lessons, students' progress is too slow. Consequently, literacy skills remain below expectations.
68. For current students, standards are close to national expectations in Year 9 and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 11 standards also meet national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 9 pupils can speak formally and engage listeners. When reading, they understand ideas, themes and characters and can select essential points from a text. For example, one class identified ways in which Shakespeare portrays characters in *Macbeth* and went on to write a letter in role as Banquo. In Years 10 and 11, pupils contribute fluently to speaking and listening tasks. They are sensitive to others' views. The coursework of more able students includes some good discursive and analytical writing. Their response to literature is detailed and evaluative. The writing of many students does not demonstrate sufficient control of spelling or punctuation. It is neither organised nor clear.
69. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The substantial majority of lessons observed were good and very good. Several excellent and one unsatisfactory lesson were observed. Teachers have an expert knowledge of the curriculum, how to teach it and how students learn. However, there is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that this knowledge is used effectively throughout the department. Planning for the Key Stage 3 literacy framework is at an advanced stage and used to provide guided activities suited to students'



abilities. Homework is used effectively to support learning. For example, following a Year 11 speaking and listening exercise on desert survival, students were asked to use the Internet to find three useful pieces of information to include in a subsequent written article.

70. The marking of students' work needs to be monitored to ensure that school and departmental policies are implemented. Teachers are occasionally vague about what students need to do to reach the next National Curriculum level. Consequently, some students do not respond positively enough by redrafting work to improve its accuracy.
71. Leadership of the English department is good. Management is satisfactory. The dedicated head of department has a sense of purpose and high aspirations. Departmental policy documents are clear and well focused on raising students' attainment. However, there is very little formal monitoring of the work of the department. Consequently, the department does not generate data to evaluate the initiatives that it has introduced to raise standards.
72. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The collective strength of the team of teachers, under good leadership, gives grounds to believe that the English department's capacity for further improvement is very good.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **Expert knowledge of the curriculum and how to teach it to promote excellent learning opportunities.**

A teacher's planning for and management of an excellent Year 8 poetry lesson enabled all of the class to identify their preferred learning style and select appropriate learning activities. The structure of the lesson and the tasks involved stemmed from an expert knowledge of the curriculum and how to teach it. The class was warmed up with a rhyming game in which they had to produce quick-fire responses to a stimulus word. This fast-paced starter encouraged all students to contribute and set the standard for subsequent phases of the lesson. The second phase required each student to analyse a set of learning style descriptors and select one that matched their learning behaviour. In the final phase, each student selected an appropriate writing task and was able to draft a response. All students made excellent progress.

### **Drama**

Each student in Years 7 to 9 has one lesson of drama a week, and it is a GCSE option. In 2003, three out of five students gained GCSE A\* to C grades. Students are very enthusiastic about the subject, and it makes a good contribution to their personal development. In two lessons seen, students learnt well because the teacher planned the time well, and her specialist subject knowledge enabled her to explain and challenge students effectively. Policy documents are explicit and purposeful.

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

73. The school has a strategy for teaching the basic skills of literacy. It is not sufficiently effective because it is applied inconsistently.
74. The literacy framework is in place in English classes. There are examples of good practice in many departments. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed in drama. There are planned opportunities for pupils to acquire and use technical language in history, mathematics, religious education and science. In French, teachers highlight the application of correct grammatical structures.
75. Writing frames help pupils to construct appropriate responses in geography and history. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to produce extended written work. Writing skills have rightly been identified as a priority for further development. Inspection evidence confirms that there is a need for greater consistency between teachers in developing pupils' writing.

76. Overall, the level of competence is below expectations throughout the school.

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

Overall, the provision in Modern Foreign Languages is **satisfactory**.

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

- The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory by the time they leave school. Achievement is now good in Years 7-9 because revised approaches in teaching and learning are bearing fruit.
- Younger pupils speak with increasing confidence, which leads towards competence in all language skills. Older pupils rarely take the initiative in speaking and do not communicate well outside structured situations.
- Teaching and learning are predominantly good because good leadership is reinforcing what works well and introducing further effective methods.
- Major revisions of the curriculum and assessment are helping standards rise.

#### **Commentary**

77. In both French and German in 2003 most pupils obtained a recognisable grade at GCSE so statistics show a broadly typical average points score. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A\*-C however is below average. Boys do worse than girls, the gap being wider than in England as a whole. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because their overall attainment on entry to the school is also below average.
78. By Year 9 pupils meet the national expectations for modern languages and all groups of pupils achieve well. The gap between boys and girls is closing fast and their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing are now developing in a more balanced way. This is because teachers expect pupils to use the foreign languages for all purposes. As a result pupils in Year 7 already keep up at least two or three exchanges in conversation. Their growing confidence testifies to rising standards.
79. The revised approach to teaching and learning has not been in place long enough for its effects to work through the school. In consequence by Year 11 standards remain below average, but pupils' achievement is still satisfactory relative to their ability. They have a more mechanical use of language, which suffices in structured situations but does not enable them to use French or German creatively for real purposes or to deal well with unpredictable situations. This means that they do not readily reach higher GCSE grades. There are still fewer boys in top sets but within the sets boys and girls achieve as well as each other.
80. Teaching and learning are good overall. Recent training in dynamic teaching styles promotes brisker learning where grammar is taught in the context of purposeful communication. The effects are as yet more apparent in Years 7-9 than in Years 10 and 11. New materials introduced since September include tasks for all abilities and appeal to both boys and girls. Good relationships reduce pupils' self-consciousness in speaking the languages. New assessment systems and clear reporting complement feedback in lessons so that pupils generally know what they need to do next. The quality of constructive comments and targets varies unduly in day to day marking, making assessment satisfactory overall.
81. The newly-appointed head of department brings good leadership through a clear vision which has invigorated the languages team. Management is currently satisfactory because improvements, for example in curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, have not yet had time to bring the vision fully into action.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching from a strong team of well-qualified teachers.
- The flexible and imaginative scheme of work means that students enjoy their mathematics and are enabled to work at or in many cases above the level they should be.
- The strategy of starters in every lesson and “little and often” homework provides effective reinforcement and ensures progression.
- Teachers use ICT very effectively for the delivery of lessons, but students would benefit even more from greater individual opportunities to use ICT.
- The very good leadership and management ensure very good teaching leading to well-motivated students who achieve very well.
- Assessment is very helpful to pupils – they understand exactly what they have to do to improve and their performance is carefully tracked.

### **Commentary**

82. In 2003, test results at the end of Year 9 in respect of the percentage of students gaining level 5 or better were in line with national expectations when compared with all schools and with similar schools, whilst the percentage of students gaining level 6 and above was above national expectations. Generally, boys achieve as well as girls and have done so for the past four years. Students' performance in mathematics is better than in English and ICT and is broadly similar to that in science.
83. In 2003, 61% of students gained A\* to C grades in GCSE examinations which is above the national average by over twelve per cent, and compares very favourably with similar schools. Students' attainment in mathematics is consistently better than in most other subjects. The cumulative effect of consistently very good teaching, pupils' hard work and attitudes lead to very good achievement in all Years 7 to 11.
84. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are above national expectations and given the below average standards of attainment on entry to the school this represents very good achievement. From an early stage, students are given starter activities in all lessons, which effectively reinforce previous work thus ensuring that students' skills in basic numeracy are consolidated. Students use investigative techniques well and are able to form and revise hypotheses about observed patterns and begin to form generalisations.
85. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are above average and there are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls. There are no numeracy targets in the Individual Educational Plans of those students with special educational needs, but those with literacy and/or behavioural difficulties perform as well as the other students in mathematics lessons. One group of low attaining students were very successful in using their mathematical skills to investigate the relative merits of various mobile phone tariffs.
86. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. In all the lessons observed, teaching was at least good, and in the majority was very good. All teachers share common high expectations of pupils' work in class and for homework, and of their behaviour. Classroom routines are well established and no time is wasted. This consistency of approach is important as it results in pupils coming to lessons prepared to work hard. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They take pride in their work, as is shown in their exercise books, and tackle the difficult concepts with confidence.

87. The leadership and management of the specialist team of teachers are very good. High expectations for all areas of the department's work are explicit. Teachers are all competent in the use of ICT for delivery and use the resources well. There is a data projector and whiteboard in every teaching room and appropriate teaching software is used to very good effect in all lessons. Students make some use of ICT themselves. For example in an application of number class in Year 11, students were using the internet to research train timetables while planning a trip to the natural history museum.
88. Students' work is assessed thoroughly and formatively, and they understand exactly what they have to do to improve. Their performance is carefully tracked and the available data is used to very good effect in planning students' work schedules.
89. Standards have improved since the last inspection and all issues raised in the last report have been addressed. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

90. Students' competence in mathematics is good. The mathematics department has addressed the issue of poor numeracy raised at the last inspection, and successfully achieved a commonality of approach. The strategy of introducing every lesson with a starter for reinforcement has had a positive impact on the students' acquisition of numeracy skills to the extent that numeracy is no longer a barrier to learning in any other subject. Students routinely use bar charts and other graphical representations for statistics in geography and are at ease with work on scales of maps. Their numeracy skills are sufficient to allow appropriate use of measurement and quantities in design technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' knowledge of their subject is very good. Lessons are well prepared and delivered with a high level of expectation.
- Teaching and support staff work together under the very good leadership of the head of department and are committed to raising standards.
- Students learn well because of their enthusiasm and the quality of teaching.
- Assessment information is used very well to monitor pupil progress but marking does not always tell students what they need to do to improve.
- Insufficient use is made of material which assists those with special needs and higher attainers.

### **Commentary**

91. Results in the Year 9 tests in 2003 were in line with the national average and were much better than those of the previous two years. They were below average when compared to similar schools. Results were better than those in English and similar to those in mathematics. There was little difference in the performance of boys and girls. In the 2003 examination (double award) the proportion of candidates obtaining grades A\* to C was in line with the national average and was much higher than that in the two previous years. The performance of girls was better than that of boys. Results were higher than those in English but lower than those in mathematics.
92. Standards in the current Year 9 are average. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are below the national average but examination of students' written work shows that good progress is made during Years 8 and 9. Achievement is good. Middle and high attaining students in Year 8 have, for example, a sound understanding of topics such as photosynthesis

and respiration and their skills in carrying out and reporting scientific investigations are good. Students in Year 9 understand about energy and the social problems related to the use of fossil fuels and renewable energy sources. Low attaining students and those with special needs make good progress.

93. Students make good progress in Year 10 and standards in the current Year 11 are average. Many students reach levels of attainment above this level and achievement is good. They have a sound understanding of some difficult ideas such as the mole concept in chemistry. Lower attaining students demonstrated very good practical skills when using a ticker timer and showed that they understood the difference between speed and acceleration.
94. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall with some excellent features. Teachers prepare lessons very thoroughly with clear objectives that are shared with students. Their subject knowledge is very good and expectations are high. There is constant challenge which maintains students' interest. When this is accompanied by the positive attitudes and motivation shown by most students achievement is good. Teaching is ably supported by four laboratory technicians. Good planning has a positive effect on classroom management. In a well-planned lesson with a high attaining Year 11 group, the teacher skilfully used a range of activities which included discussion, the use of an interactive whiteboard and a well-conducted investigation to ensure that all students developed a good understanding of the effect of temperature on the rate of a chemical reaction. Expectations were high, students were fully engaged and as a consequence achievement was good. Teaching and learning clearly benefit from the implementation of the Key Stage Three strategy. Teachers are aware of the requirements of students with different levels of attainment but insufficient use is made of material and strategies that have been adapted for those with special needs or for the gifted and talented.
95. Teaching and support staff work together well under the very good leadership of the head of department and are committed to raising standards. Teachers exhibit a wide range of teaching skills and standards could be raised further if more opportunities were made available to share good practice. The department is very well managed. Assessment information is used very well to monitor progress and set targets. Students' work is marked regularly often with encouraging comments but these do not always give enough information on what is wrong and what needs to be done to improve. The effective use of ICT enhances both teaching and learning. The department has responded positively to the last report. Students with special needs no longer underachieve and most students now complete their written work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' enjoyment of the course especially in Years 10 to 11 and in the elective sessions.
- Good teamwork within the department to develop the course in Years 7 to 9.
- Good use of ICT to develop learning especially in RE and PE.
- Insufficient emphasis on the principles underpinning procedures.
- Insufficient feedback to students on the quality of their work.
- Too narrow a range of ICT coverage especially of the use of computers to control events.

### **Commentary**

96. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, and remains so at the end of Year 9. Students have skills that allow them to use ICT in their other subjects as required. They are competent when writing publications, presentations and simple web sites or working on simple modelling systems using spreadsheets. Those seen in class learning new areas of ICT learn

quickly. However their understanding and expression of basic principles is weak. Almost all design to please themselves rather than to meet the needs of the specified user. They have almost no experience of computer-assisted control of events. However, this is planned into schemes of work for coverage later in the year.

97. GNVQ results at the end of Year 11 for the few students who take the course are below average. This is borne out in lessons seen, where students carry out procedures efficiently but their work is presented with mistakes. Their self-evaluation is superficial, written in terms of personal preferences or statements unsupported by evidence. The majority of students in Year 10 and Year 11 do not follow a taught course in ICT. Their skills are sufficient for the range of ICT applications used to help their learning across other subjects, but standards are not consistently assessed in Years 10 or 11.
98. Girls' understanding is generally higher than that of boys but boys' range of skills is wider as they are more willing to experiment. There is a much higher number of boys than girls in both of the weekly elective ICT sessions. Students with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their ability because the level of work and support suits their needs. Higher attaining students' attainment is only satisfactory as there is not enough independence and they are not challenged to explain their thinking.
99. Students enjoy ICT with the result that it is a popular choice in the elective programme throughout the main school. Their achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 with good development of basic skills. In Years 10 and 11 achievement in the taught course is satisfactory with continuing development of skills in the taught course.
100. This achievement is the result of satisfactory teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and give appropriate advice to individual students, helping them to work out procedures for themselves by questioning them rather than telling them answers. Pace and delivery in the best lessons seen are lively and interesting. Lesson planning for Years 7 to 9 develops the necessary ideas but rarely leaves time for reinforcement of the underpinning principles at the end of lessons. In some lessons teachers do not adapt materials enough to the needs of particular students. Teachers work in difficult conditions, where classroom layout impedes communication between teachers and students. Assessment procedures beyond oral guidance are not yet developed to the point where students know how well they are doing or how to improve. Aspects of literacy are given too little attention, and so presentation lowers standards throughout.
101. Leadership of the discrete ICT courses is good. The head of department has worked hard to unite the completely changed team, giving good guidance and support to less experienced colleagues. Management is good, in that the head of department monitors teaching and curriculum planning well, except that use of ICT across the curriculum is not yet monitored well enough to give assurances about coverage and standards in ICT.
102. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Discrete lessons are available throughout Years 7 to 9, giving a good basis for the use of ICT in other subjects. The school is well equipped with interactive whiteboards. These are well used to help students learn. There has been good improvement in numbers of computers and in the accommodation for lessons in other subjects.

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

103. ICT across the curriculum is good, in that it is well used in almost all subjects to help learning. However, its management is unsatisfactory, and so its impact is patchy. There are gaps in the extent to which departments use ICT in relation to their curriculum requirements, with variations within departments according to the experience and confidence of individuals. ICT is particularly well used in RE and PE, but there is under-use in design technology and art. Although they use ICT well, the development of students' attainment is not planned coherently,

depending on individual subjects and teachers. Their standard in ICT is not assessed in other subjects, nor is their experience or attainment reported at the end of Year 11.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

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

- There is very good leadership and management of the department.
- Students respond with enthusiasm to good and challenging teaching.
- Work matches the needs of all students who therefore achieve well.
- GCSE results are above the national average.
- The use of ICT, and opportunities for extended writing, are not integrated into schemes of work.
- The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### **Commentary**

104. In 2003, at the age of fourteen, students were attaining results in the National Curriculum tests that would be expected for their age. A much higher percentage of girls than boys reached the top levels. At GCSE the percentage of students getting both A\*-C and A\*-G grades was above average for all maintained schools. The gap in the attainment of boys and girls narrowed. The 2003 results were better than in 2002 and geography was one of the highest performing subjects in the school.
105. The attainment of students on entry is below average and they have weak geographical skills. Their achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. They use technical vocabulary well and have a good understanding of the processes that shape the earth's surface. They understand the main differences between weather and climate. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is also good and standards in work seen are above the national average. Students know how planning decisions may adversely affect man's environment and can analyse the differences between more and less developed countries.
106. Boys achieve as well as girls in class in response to the variety of practical activities. The achievement of high attaining students is good and they are given challenging extension tasks for homework. Students with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the individual attention they receive in well-behaved classes.
107. Teaching overall is good, with some very good teaching in both Years 7-9 and 10-11. In all years students benefit from teachers who have very good subject knowledge and who plan well-structured lessons with varied activities and resources. Students are interested in the subject, work well in groups and respond to the pace of learning set by their teachers. Lessons start briskly with recall activities and questioning techniques are well used to encourage discussion.
108. Homework is well used to extend learning. Assessment is effective in setting targets for improvement and in tracking students' progress in Year 9 and above. Students develop satisfactory literacy skills through constant reinforcement of key words and the many opportunities for discussion, but there is little reading or extended writing. Good teaching of numeracy skills results in the accurate use of graphs and statistics. The use of ICT and internet research are not yet integrated into all units of work. Pupils' skilled extraction of evidence from world-wide case studies contributes to their good cultural and moral development. They reflect sensitively on such issues as the continuing famine in Ethiopia.

The programme of local and overseas fieldwork is successful in developing individual research techniques.

109. Leadership of the department is very good. There is a clear vision for the raising of standards, through specific teaching and learning strategies, as well as a drive and enthusiasm to maintain the high profile of geography in the school. Both new and experienced staff work very well as a team. The routine management of the department is very efficient. Textbooks and other resources have been modernised since the last inspection and the library supports the department well.

## History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved which has led consequently to good achievement.
- Teachers are good role models who know their subject well.
- Standards of behaviour and personal relationships are strong and have a positive effect on learning.
- Higher attaining students are insufficiently challenged within some teaching groups.
- Assessment does not yet identify realistic targets to enable students to have a clear understanding of their progress.

### Commentary

110. Results in the summer GCSE examinations were broadly in line with the national trend. They have continued to rise since the previous inspection.
111. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 9 were broadly average. Students consistently work to near their capacity and good gains are made in their learning as they move up the school. The majority of students generally achieve as well as those in similar schools and when compared to prior attainment. Higher attaining students make good progress overall. A significant number, however, do not yet work to near their capacity within some teaching groups. Students' knowledge and understanding of history are generally good. They have good recall regarding factual information and are encouraged to think critically. Students' written work and skills of presentation are less well developed.
112. The standards of work seen at the end of Year 11 were average overall. All students achieve well in relation to prior attainment. This is due to the appropriate focus on teaching to examination requirements and standards. Students are able to research a topic and ask relevant questions. They produce detailed reports about various topics and form opinions about the past.
113. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are structured well with effective mental starters followed by a good range of activities which engage all students. Teaching expertise and knowledge is a strength. This enables teachers to explain the most difficult concepts clearly and succinctly. Students are generally well supported by an impressive range of materials and artifacts. Expectations are high regarding levels of productivity and standards of behaviour and students appreciate the well-organised lessons they receive, for example, when a Year 9 group responded enthusiastically to a game of 'D' Day Bingo. At present students are not developing independence in their learning because not enough emphasis is being placed on research and communication skills. There is also insufficient focus on literacy skills and extended writing which would further challenge all students but more particularly the higher attaining students.



114. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Leadership is dedicated to improving standards and achievement in all areas of the department's work. Teaching staff are well led and motivated. They are keen to learn from best practice and strive consistently to improve the quality of teaching and learning across all ability levels. Although assessment is used to track performance it is not yet used effectively to inform curriculum planning or to monitor the learning requirements of individual students.

## Religious education

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school does not meet legal requirements of providing religious education for all students.
- Good teaching and learning is raising standards and improving examination results.
- Students' good attitudes contribute to their good learning.
- The department is well led and managed.

### Commentary

115. Students begin work on their short GCSE course in Year 9 and take the examination at the end of Year 10. Nearly all students follow the course and results in 2003 were just below average for grades A\*-C. Results for the small number of pupils who took the full course GCSE rose dramatically in 2003 to just above the national average both for grades A\*-C and A\*-G. Boys gained fewer passes than girls in the A\*-C range but in line with the national difference between boys and girls. Achievement is good.
116. When students join the school their attainment is below average and many are not confident in their use of written English. Students make good progress during Years 7 to 9 and their standard rises to meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement for all these students, girls and boys, those with special educational needs and those with special gifts and talents is good. Students develop good knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs of several world faiths and can apply their knowledge to modern moral issues.
117. By the end of Year 10, when students take the short course GCSE examination, they are working on topics such as the nature of truth and the importance of tradition. In one lesson seen students were comparing the likely views of Christian and Jewish readers towards a modern tabloid newspaper and debating the idea of blasphemy and the role of the law. All students, including those with special education needs, achieve well because work is made relevant and accessible to them.
118. Teaching and learning are good with many very good features. Teachers plan dynamic lessons which are packed with different activities. The subject is taught in an academic way and students rise to the challenge. In one lesson seen, students took part in a hot-seat discussion in the role of an Israeli, a Palestinian and a Buddhist, answering questions from the rest of the class about the current political situation in Israel. Students become more confident in expressing their views and defending their ideas. ICT is used effectively for research and students can present their work in a variety of creative forms. Assessment is used well to help students to evaluate their own work and understand how to improve. This is particularly successful in Years 7 to 9 but could be developed further in Years 10 and 11.
119. Subject leadership and management are both good. Teachers of religious education work very well together, sharing good practice and constantly seeking ways to ensure that students' learning is purposeful and enjoyable. Learning is extended beyond the classroom in a wide range of visits, as well as interesting speakers bringing their experience to share with

students. The department is well aware of its own strengths and weaknesses and is forward-looking and ambitious, with the capacity to improve further. Once the legal requirement for religious education in Year 11 is met, provision will be good.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and Technology**

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

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

- Standards achieved by boys in all aspects of the subject are well below average.
- Standards achieved by girls in textiles and graphic products are well above average.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 over-estimates attainment.
- The use of modern technology needs improvement.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are good.

#### **Commentary**

120. Standards on entry to the school are variable and below the national average overall. At the end of Year 9 standards remain below the national average. Girls perform very much better than the boys. Students with special educational needs and English as a second language make broadly satisfactory progress with extra help from teachers, other students and learning assistants. Standards in the work and lessons seen were variable and below average overall. Achievement is satisfactory.
121. Most students take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were below the national average overall with over four out of ten students obtaining A\* - C grades and nine out of ten A\* - G grades. Girls performed significantly better than boys and well above the national average in the textile technology and graphic products examinations. The results obtained by the boys were well below the national average in all examinations and have fallen steadily over the past three years. The new course in catering has not yet been examined. Standards of the work and lessons seen varied considerably and were below average overall. Achievement is broadly satisfactory.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 7 to 9. All teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan their work well. Topics are introduced effectively and students receive good help and advice when undertaking practical activities. Teachers involve students effectively by asking them questions as lessons progress. Students learn to use an adequate range of materials but the use of metals does not feature strongly in their work. Boys under-perform because many assignment topics do not motivate them, designing and making skills in resistant materials are not sufficiently developed and there are no opportunities to learn systems and control, structures and electronics. Procedures to monitor and record students' progress are good. The current method of assessment over-estimates attainment.
123. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching and learning is always satisfactory and sometimes good or better. Students continue to learn in courses based on their chosen material or graphic products or catering. Relationships are good. Not enough use is made of computing to research topics, present work and analyse results or other forms of modern technology. Students' work is marked and commented on satisfactorily and students are taught how to improve their work satisfactorily. Enrichment activities and additional lessons outside normal school hours are offered.

124. Leadership and management are satisfactory. All teachers are well qualified and work well together. There have been significant staff absences due to illness during the past two years. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Attainment of all students is lower and boys' performance has fallen. The use of modern technology remains inadequate. However, textile technology has been introduced and is proving to be successful.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and Design**

Provision in Art and Design is **good**.

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

- GCSE results continue to improve and are well above national average.
- Students are particularly skilled in painting and drawing.
- Teaching is consistently good in Years 10 and 11.
- There are too few opportunities to work in three-dimensional media.
- ICT remains under-developed.

#### **Commentary**

125. Although standards in Year 9 are below those typical nationally, students achieve satisfactorily throughout Years 7 to 9. Students of all levels of competence make significant progress, given their restricted range of subject skills when they enter Year 7. They develop a good understanding of basic artistic concepts, such as line, tone, texture and colour, and most use them effectively in their work. Students become particularly proficient in drawing and painting from observation and secondary sources. However, they have few opportunities to work in three dimensions, and so these skills remain undeveloped. Students have some knowledge of artistic vocabulary, but gain only a very limited understanding of the work of other artists from the contemporary world and from different times and cultures. Students are not encouraged to use ICT, either as a source for research or an additional artistic medium.
126. Standards in Year 11 are consistently above average, and in 2003, art and design was the highest performing subject in the school. Although art has traditionally been more popular with girls than boys in recent years this is changing. All students, including boys, achieve well in art. Whether students are high achievers or require special support, they become proficient in researching and developing ideas. They begin to analyse and evaluate their work, growing in confidence in their own ability. For example, one student has produced a very expressive frieze of two snooker players from an original idea, inspired by the work of Beryl Cook.
127. Teaching and learning in art are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and consistently good in Years 10 and 11. Students explore art by means of a series of structured units. In the best lessons teachers engage students from the outset by quickly involving them in interesting activities, for example the mini-jigsaw exercise of a famous Escher painting, used as part of a unit on perspective. They provide informed and supportive advice both in lessons and through their marking of set homework. Nevertheless, a minority of younger students are sometimes easily distracted from their work, and are reluctant to complete homework assignments on time. GCSE groups build upon their practical skills and extend their knowledge and understanding through their personal research projects. Teachers also make classrooms available outside of lesson times for students who wish to continue their studies.
128. The leadership and management of art are satisfactory. In recent years new processes in assessment, linked to National Curriculum levels, and development planning, linked to performance management, have been introduced to further drive up standards. Although not yet fully embedded, they represent significant developments in the organisation of change. Since the last inspection, the proportion of good teaching has increased, and the issues raised

there have been addressed. The lack of three-dimensional work, partially as a result of restricted teaching and storage space, and absence of ICT remain to be resolved.

## Music

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good student/teacher relationships.
- An extensive range of opportunities for musical enrichment outside the classroom.
- Effective teaching is helping to raise standards in examination courses.
- Inadequate opportunities for ICT in music.
- The development of core skills and subject knowledge require more attention and consolidation in Years 7 to 9.

### Commentary

129. Teacher assessments and work seen during the inspection indicate that standards at the end of Year 9 are just below average, but because students' attainment on entry to the school is below expectations, this represents satisfactory achievement overall. Students are able to create short imaginative pieces and play simple melodies on the keyboard but the development of core skills and knowledge, whether in performance or the handling of notation, require more careful progression and regular attention. The GCSE examination results for 2003 are a little above national average, but these are from a small group of candidates. Careful targeting of students' needs at this level is helping to raise standards and bring about a good rate of progress.
130. All students have access to the music curriculum, with boys and girls responding and achieving equally well overall. Boys tend to perform better in examination courses. Schemes of work are broadly in line with National Curriculum requirements, though work involving ICT is under-developed at all levels. Assessment takes place but the mechanisms for judging students' attainment, sharing that information with them and providing a secure basis for teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 need greater refinement.
131. The standard of teaching is good overall. Positive student/teacher relationships contribute to the motivation and achievement of students. They enjoy lessons and respond well to the care and enthusiasm shown by their teachers. Teaching is at its best in examination classes. Behaviour is generally good, though some lack of tightness of control limits progress occasionally.
132. The department is well managed and given positive and committed leadership. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, notably the increased range of instrumental tuition available and the numbers of students involved. The accommodation, however, continues to be insufficient for the needs of the department. There is a shortage of space generally, but particularly of practice rooms. Their current location and inadequate sound proofing inhibits other work being done in the department. Resources for music technology are inadequate.
133. The extra-curricular provision is an important aspect of the department's work. Staff give considerable extra time to this and it does much, both to enrich the experiences of students and foster a musical ethos within the school and the wider community. Where students gain experience in ensemble playing as part of the Electives programme, it is important that this can be organised in a way which will allow greater continuity and progression.

134. Overall, music is a successful and flourishing department with established traditions brought about by a strong partnership of students and staff. From this position it is ready to move forward, consolidating strengths and developing new ideas.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching.
- Very good accommodation and facilities.
- Pupils display very positive attitudes to the subject.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Good standards of examination work in the sixth form.

### Commentary

135. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve standards that are at least in line with national expectations. All make good progress. In Year 9 good work was seen in swimming and netball. Boys and girls displayed good knowledge and understanding of the beneficial effects of physical exercise. In 2003 GCSE results were below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades. However the department's results were in line with the average results for the school. Many pupils produce high quality written work that demonstrates a solid understanding of many aspects of anatomy and physiology. By the end of Year 11 the standards achieved by pupils in practical lessons are in line with national expectations and they achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
136. Teaching and learning in physical education are very good. The best teaching was seen in Key Stage 3 and the Sixth form. In Year 9 lessons were characterised by very good pace, high expectations, and the provision of an environment in which all pupils worked very hard and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Few behaviour problems were encountered because pupils were engrossed in challenging activity from which they derived much satisfaction. Pupils demonstrate an extremely positive attitude to the subject. All teachers make effective use of questions to promote pupils' understanding of the subject. When questioning is at its best it leads to open-ended discussions that promote pupils' understanding of the quality of movement and the impact of exercise upon fitness. Practical activities are generally designed to meet the needs of specific groups within lessons but in a minority of cases more challenge could be provided for higher attaining pupils.
137. Assessment within lessons is very effective. Teachers know their pupils well and are quick to modify provision in the light of their responses. The marking of written work contains plenty of positive feedback and correction of factual errors. However more could be done to give pupils better advice about what they need to do to improve. There are very good facilities which have a strong impact on overall provision. Improvement since the last inspection has been good within the department. There are now sufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their own work in lessons. However there are still some problems with the timetable e.g. some pupils in Year 10 receive both their lessons on the same day. Curriculum time for physical education is slightly below the recommended amount.
138. Leadership and management are very good. The self-evaluation of the department has resulted in an accurate assessment of strengths and weaknesses and a highly appropriate development plan.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

139. The focus was on ICT but other courses were sampled.
140. In business studies, less than one in ten students opt to take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, the GNVQ part 1 examination results at intermediate level were below the national average. The girls performed best; their examination results were in line with the national average. This course has been discontinued and replaced by the Applied GCSE in business. The new course has not yet been examined.
141. Two Year 10 lessons were observed. Students were seen learning about human resources in one lesson and learning about the organisation of human resources at Longleat, home of the Earl of Bath, in the other. In the second lesson students were also preparing their work on computers for inclusion in their coursework. Standards in these lessons were below average. Students' work showed inadequate progress had been made since the new course began eighteen months ago; caused in part by change of teacher. The school is planning to transfer the students to another course more appropriate to their ability.
142. Small numbers of students opt to take the Applied GCSE in leisure and tourism in Years 10 and 11. The course began eighteen months ago and has not yet been examined. One lesson was observed. Students were seen learning satisfactorily about the marketing of Drusillas Park by considering the attractions offered, the effects of its location, prices charged and how the park is promoted. They also worked on the marketing of a leisure centre of their choice – Alton Towers and the London Eye for example. Standards in the lessons were below average.
143. The school operates the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) as part of the "Elective Programme" in Year 9 and alternative curriculum in Year 10. Fifteen students are working towards the Bronze Award in this pilot trial of the scheme. They are working on the community, sport and leisure, home management and number handling units successfully. All students were engaged in related work experiences – old people's homes, nurseries and community centres - during the inspection. Work folders showed that students were making satisfactory progress. The school has plans to extend the scheme.

### **CLAIT Information Communications Technology**

Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

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

- Good quality teaching.
- Good match of the course to the students' learning needs.
- Contribution of the course to students' learning skills in other areas.
- Shortage of time in relation to the requirements of the course.

#### **Commentary**

144. The school runs a vocational CLAIT ICT course for Year 11 students who have gained a foundation qualification in a modern language at the end of Year 10. As a result of staffing changes, the course effectively began in January of Year 11. This is its first year and so there are no previous results.
145. Standards of work seen are below average, but students are making good progress in learning basic skills. Almost all produce publications that meet the standards for certification in desktop publishing. This good achievement from a very low point at the start of Year 11 is the result of lively, well-planned teaching that holds the students' attention and gives them

encouragement to work out answers for themselves. Girls concentrate more than boys and so their work is more accurate. Some students also taking the GNVQ course in IT have their standards raised by this reinforcement of their basic skills.

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

### **Personal, Social and Health Education**

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**.

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

- The quality of the specialist teaching team.
- The contribution of the elective programme and extra-curricular experiences.
- The strong contribution by external agencies.

#### **Commentary**

146. PSHE is effectively taught in all years, including the sixth form. It is well established and students benefit from being taught by specialist teams. This helps to ensure quality and consistency as well as sharing the benefits of good practice. Students in Years 7-11 have one period of PSHE per week. In addition in both key stages, heads of year use tutor time for aspects of personal development. A wealth of extra-curricular experiences contribute to the PSHE programme and the 'elective system' enables students to extend their personal experience and skills, for example, through peer mentoring and community sport programmes.
147. There is an impressive programme of Sex and Relationships and Drugs Education for all year groups. The school utilizes the skills and expertise of outside agencies and services well to complement work in lessons. Many visiting speakers are specialists in their field. This gives students the confidence to participate in the fullest sense through debate and discussion in the reassurance that questions will be answered accurately and appropriately. The student council is a growing area of strength. Members of senior management and year tutors are invited to attend as well as community services. The council has recently extended its powers to include a financial remit and is fully involved in the formulation of school policies and procedures.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

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

- The integration of planned citizenship themes across the curriculum.
- The involvement of students in active citizenship.
- The global dimension of the programme.

#### **Commentary**

148. Citizenship is an integral part of the ethos of the school and the taught curriculum. It is delivered across subject departments and through the PSHE programme in Years 7 to 11 and in the Sixth Form. The citizenship programme is flexible and responds to the needs and requirements of students taking into account current issues and events. The school has conducted a full audit and produced an overview of all related activities and events.

149. The students benefit from extra- curricular programmes which deliver an extensive range of related topics including democracy, personal finance, education and legal and human rights. The 'active citizenship' programme is outstanding and involves students from all years. These include many fund raising events, links with local government, councillors, and local MPs. Students are involved in the decision making process at local, national and European level for example *The United Nations Working Group* which supports the move against the exploitation of children.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

150. In the inspection, nine 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.

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

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	6	66.7	90.0	16.7	42.7	21.7	39.0
Biology	9	77.8	81.6	11.1	33.2	21.1	33.2
Business Studies	6	50.0	89.1	16.7	31.7	16.7	35.4
Chemistry	5	20.0	84.8	0.0	36.9	6.0	35.2
Communication Studies	5	80.0	94.2	20.2	36.1	26.0	38.5
Drama	6	83.3	94.6	0.0	37.6	25.0	39.1
English Literature	11	81.8	94.4	27.3	37.9	31.8	38.9
History	6	50.0	91.8	0.0	37.2	16.7	37.8
Other Social Studies	15	80.0	83.2	13.3	32.5	26.0	33.6

### 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
Communication Studies	6	100	98.3	33.3	36.8	70.0	81.1
English Literature	10	100	98.5	60.0	43.7	84.0	84.3
Geography	6	100	97.1	33.3	40.5	70.0	80.9
History	8	100	97.1	12.5	41.0	62.5	81.2
Mathematics	5	100	93.3	20.0	52.2	76.0	84.7
Music	5	100	97.7	60.0	41.8	80.0	82.2
Other Social Studies	13	100	94.3	30.8	38.9	72.3	77.7
Physics	5	100	92.8	40.0	42.8	84.0	78.6
Business Studies	5	80	96.4	0.0	32.8	44.0	76.5



Health & Social Care	6	100	90.1	0.0	60.3	66.7	62.5
Art and Design VQ	6	100	89.0	16.7	27.4	73.3	69.4
Information Technology VQ	8	100	84.3	25.0	24.5	75.0	64.3

*(Results above are for all examinations with more than 5 students entered)*

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

### **English Literature**

Provision in English literature is **good**.

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

- Students achieve well in Years 12 and 13 because of the very good teaching.
- Teachers create a scholarly atmosphere that stimulates students.
- Seven out of ten female students gained the higher A level grades of A and B in 2002.
- Results have fluctuated in recent years.

#### **Commentary**

152. In 2002 the performance of students in GCE A Level English literature examinations was in line with national expectations. The school's results were similar in 2003. In 2002, attainment at higher grades was above national expectations. Three out of five students entered gained the higher grades of A and B. The results of females were even better, seven out of ten students gained grades of A and B. This is the result of very good teaching, the positive attitudes shown by students and their exemplary behaviour. Results have fluctuated in recent years between average and well below average. AS-level results were above average in 2002, but were lower in 2003.
153. Standards of work seen in Years 12 and 13 during the inspection are above course averages. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. The achievement of more able students is good. Students show positive attitudes. Their behaviour is exceptional. This leads to satisfactory achievement for all students and good achievement for more able students. Students enjoy speaking and listening. Most make significant contributions to oral work. They express their viewpoints and ideas clearly, explaining and illustrating them with evidence. They appreciate and criticise alternative interpretations put forward by other students. Teachers prepare and deliver challenging material. The use of talk is central to all lessons as teachers extend students' communication skills and encourage them to adopt a critical approach. Teachers help to develop students' skills of intellectual enquiry through research and effective questioning.
154. Students' attainment in all areas of the curriculum is close to national expectations, especially in reading and interpreting literary texts. Year 13 students have developed the skills of speculation and forming hypotheses as seen in their work on the poetry of William Blake. Students explain their views clearly and illustrate them with evidence during discussion of literary texts.
155. Teaching was very good in all lessons observed. Teachers know their subject very well and adopt a scholarly approach to prepare and deliver intellectually challenging lessons. They provide a wealth of information on the background of literary texts and use this information to assist students in interpretation. Expectations are high.

156. The subject is well led and management is sound. The department is well established and its members have a shared commitment to teach students a love of literature and language as serious critics aiming for a high standard.

157. Since the last inspection the quality of provision has remained constant.

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

158. Lesson observations and discussions showed that students have sufficient language skills to access the curriculum. Students are capable speakers and listeners. They can read in English at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general. The sample of written work available for examination showed that students could write to communicate information, ideas and opinions to intended audiences.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards currently attained are above national averages.
- The quality of the teaching is very good; teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and their students' learning needs are very good.
- Students are well motivated to learn and their positive attitudes promote very good learning which leads to very good achievement.

### **Commentary**

159. Recent examination results and scrutiny of current work indicate that the standards attained by students are above average. There is a large group of students who study mathematics in Year 12, and these students study AS level in three modules – pure mathematics 1, decision mathematics 1 and statistics 1. A much smaller group continue their mathematical studies into Year 13 where they take pure mathematics 2 and 3, and statistics 2.

160. Students' attainment on entry to the course is below average, but their attitudes are such that achievement is very good.

161. Very good teaching motivates students to achieve very well. Teachers' knowledge of the subject material is extremely thorough, and they ensure that students have comprehensive records of the topics that have been covered. Teachers make very good use of the ICT resources available to them when presenting work to students; although at present students do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT themselves.

162. Students' knowledge and understanding are very good and their mature approach to learning ensures very good retention. Students' algebraic manipulation skills are good as are their reasoning skills. Students' recall of previous work is good and they are able to draw upon many facets of their previous learning when solving problems. Students are able to observe patterns, generalise and seek proof of their generalisations.

163. The very good leadership and management ensure that there are high expectations in all aspects of the department's work. Teachers have very high expectations of students who are well guided with any difficulties they encounter immediately addressed.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

164. Students enter the sixth form with adequate mathematical skills and there is no barrier to attainment in any subject. Students use quite sophisticated statistical techniques in biology

when working on their ecology projects and in geography the use of statistical methods is integrated into the course.

## SCIENCE

### Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is always good or better. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and expectations are high.
- Relationships are excellent and students have a positive attitude to work.
- Teaching of the subject is well led and managed. Teachers work well together and are committed to raising standards.
- Tests and formal pieces of work are marked effectively but students' files are not monitored on a regular basis.

#### Commentary

165. Results of the A level candidates were average in 2002 and very much the same as those in 2001 when there was a similar sized entry. Candidates obtained the grades predicted by their previous attainment and achievement was good. In the Advanced Supplementary examination in 2002, the full range of grades was obtained and overall standards were in line with the national average.
166. Standards in the current Years 12 and 13 are average. Students in Year 12 have already settled down well to their studies and are working in a mature way. They have good recall of the work covered at GCSE and were able to use this, for example, to extend their knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the heart. Year 13 students demonstrate in lessons and through their written work a sound understanding of the topics they have been taught. This is exemplified by, for example, comprehensive pieces of work on cell structure, genetics and the nervous system. Their knowledge was enhanced through a successful seashore ecology course. In this they were able to demonstrate, among other things, a sound appreciation of the use of statistical techniques.
167. The quality of teaching and learning in both years is very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and lessons are well prepared. Relationships are excellent and teachers endeavour to ensure that students enjoy their learning. Students are eager to learn and willingly engage in thoughtful discussion with one another and with the teacher. In both years some students lack confidence when carrying out practical work. Teachers have high expectations to which the students respond. In a very well prepared lesson the teacher introduced work on the eye through some simple but amusing experiments on visual perception. Students refreshed their knowledge of the eye through discussion and the examination of models. They then dissected a pig's eye. Appropriate intervention by the teacher ensured that all students made good progress.
168. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers work well together and are committed to raising standards. Students' files consist largely of notes made from printed material or from lessons. Students make reference to other learning activities such as making presentations but written evidence of independent learning is limited. Projects and examination questions are marked well giving students valuable feedback. However teachers do not monitor students' files regularly to check for errors and offer advice on presentation. The previous report made no specific reference to provision for A level biology.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment of Year 13 students in 2003 was average, with good achievement.
- Attainment of Year 12 students in 2003 was below average, with low retention into Year 13.
- The standard of work seen during the inspection has improved over the Year 12 standards in 2003.
- Teaching is good, with good support to individuals in class.
- Students enjoy the course and show a high level of commitment to their work.

### **Commentary**

169. Results in the 2002 assessment were above average, with all students gaining a pass and a higher than average points score. As the subject is relatively new to the school, there is no means of comparing results over time. The standard of work seen during the inspection is above average. Year 13 students have good practical skills in coursework that meets all of the criteria. Their designs for publicity materials show a sense of the needs of the user. With the majority having only low-level prior experience of data-handling software, Year 12 students are still acquiring the range of skills needed to plan and implement their business solutions. Throughout the work of both year groups, there is a weakness in the depth of explanatory and evaluative writing supporting the development of practical work.
170. Achievement is good. Students in Year 12 who have no prior qualification in IT are learning quickly how to design their business systems using software with which they were previously unfamiliar. Year 13 students have made good progress in researching the background to their planning.
171. This achievement is the result of good teaching. Teachers are well qualified by their knowledge and previous experience to teach the AVCE course, so that they clarify their explanations with good practical examples. They support individual students well through discussion, opening out possibilities and allowing students to make their own decisions in Year 13. Teachers in Year 12 explain well the potential of the software to provide solutions, while allowing students to learn by selecting what they feel is most appropriate. The most able students are challenged technically in that they are encouraged to produce high quality practical work. However, teachers do not make clear the depth to which evaluations need to be supported by reasoning.
172. Leadership is good in that the head of department has created an effective team of sixth form teachers from the beginning of the school year when there was an entire change of personnel.
173. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory in that the number of students taking the course has risen, and there are good facilities for the use of IT in other subjects.

### **Key Skills IT**

174. Key Skills IT is offered at level 2 to the majority of students who have no prior qualification in IT or are not studying IT at AVCE, but very few students attend the course.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

175. Students use ICT to help their learning in all other subjects. Their standard meets the needs of their work. IT is particularly well used in mathematics, English, health and social care and business education.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Overall the quality of provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good leadership of the department and a vision for raising standards.
- Students are challenged to independent learning by good teaching.
- The standard of project and coursework is good.
- AS level results are below the national average at the highest grades.
- The standard of extended writing is not high enough.

### Commentary

176. There is one geography set in each of Years 12 and 13 and the retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13 is very good. In 2002 the standards reached at A level were below the national average although grades A to B were broadly in line with the national average and improved in 2003. The quality of individual coursework is good and contributes significantly to improving standards. Geography is one of the highest performing subjects at A2 in the sixth form. Results at AS level were below the national average at grades A-B and declined further in 2003. The cohort is too small for significant comparisons in the performance of boys and girls.
177. Standards in general classwork seen at the end of Year 13 were broadly in line with the national average. Standards in individual project and coursework, including the use of ICT and statistical techniques, were above the national average and achievement in this area is good. Students have a good understanding of both physical processes, such as climate change and river flooding, and factors influencing forced and voluntary migration. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. The high attaining students achieve well when there are opportunities for internet research and the critical application of geographical models to a range of case studies.
178. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching in Year 13. Students benefit from the very secure subject knowledge of the staff and questioning techniques which probe beyond the superficial answer. Students' general knowledge base is low but they are well challenged to extract and summarise information from a range of current sources, including events in the newspapers and on the internet. They respond with enthusiasm to the considerate and courteous approach of staff and are developing well as mature and independent learners. Preparation for examination techniques is good. There are not enough opportunities for extended essay writing which allow students to balance evidence and draw reasoned conclusions.
179. Leadership of the department is very good and there is a clear commitment to raising standards. It has been very well maintained during the period when the subject leader has had the dual role as head of sixth form. Staff new to sixth form teaching are well supported and monitored and work very well as a team. Management of the department is very efficient. There has therefore been good improvement since the last inspection.

## Psychology

Provision for psychology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are variable from year to year but are in line with the national average overall.
- Achievement is good.
- Specialist teaching has a positive impact on students' achievements.
- Consideration needs to be given to the effectiveness of some of the class activities.
- Assessment needs further development to provide stronger learning targets.

### Commentary

180. This is a subject which is relatively new to the school. Students' examination results vary widely from year to year but, overall, are satisfactory. The 2003 results in the A2 examination were particularly strong.
181. The standards of the current work are good. By Year 13 students develop a good understanding of the main psychological theories and the vocabulary necessary to argue their answers effectively. Their written work shows insight and understanding but lacks specific learning targets which would help them focus on areas for improvement.
182. Year 12 students are achieving well. They are developing a secure knowledge of elements of psychological theory. In a discussion on Freudian Dream Theory they showed insight and understanding supported by their personal "dream books" into which they had put a lot of effort.
183. The good teaching of psychology is a consequence of the use of specialist teachers. The use of specialists enables students to develop a mature and considered response to the subject. Lessons are delivered in a brisk and entertaining way which results in students learning well. Discussion with students emphasised their enthusiasm for the subject. However, there is a need to consider how time is used in lessons to maximise students' independent learning.
184. Psychology is well managed. Effective leadership has established the subject as a popular option with a high retention rate. Resources have been well developed and the provision of text books is generous. However, the current level of books in the school library is insufficient. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

### Art

Provision in art is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since 2002.
- The current examination courses are well matched to student requirements.
- The consistently good teaching is well supported by a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities.
- ICT remains an under used resource by most students.

## Commentary

185. The school currently offers a good range of art and design courses. The VCE art and design double award, introduced in 2002, replaces the previous GNVQ courses. In addition the GCE AS/A-level course in art continues. This combination of options has become increasingly popular with students.
186. Standards dipped following the last inspection, but have improved since 2002. They are now in line with the national average, and equal the levels recorded at the last report. Similarly, the numbers of students opting for art have also improved, rising significantly from cohorts as small as a single student, to the current cohort of 14 in Year 12. The quality of work seen confirms these standards across each of the courses visited. Students continue to develop increasingly sophisticated research and development portfolios with enthusiasm. Some show exceptional flair in their choice of subject for special study, for example one Year 13 student has studied 'The place of the female in twentieth century art', and a Year 12 student 'Paris, the capital of Art?'. All students can explore and evaluate their work, and higher achieving students present convincing arguments for their conclusions. The quality of drawing and painting is consistently good, and students are increasingly encouraged to develop an interest in three-dimensional media. Overall, achievement is good, when taking account of the range of the students' entry qualifications.
187. Teaching and learning in art are always good. Relationships between teachers and students are friendly but business-like, promoting an atmosphere of enjoyment and industry. The new VCE course is particularly successful in providing a very structured programme which both leads and guides insecure students towards successful outcomes, without stifling their creativity. All courses mirror this approach, so that students quickly grow in confidence. Many students use photography to collect and develop their ideas, but ICT remains woefully underused despite the recent hardware acquired by the department, and good facilities in the school library. Teachers are good at recognising student need and adapt accordingly by instigating individual support programmes to enable them to overcome perceived weaknesses, for example a prompt sheet of artistic terms to aid the writing of special studies, or special exercises to loosen up a student's painting technique.
188. Progress is maintained by the demands of the work and quality of the guidance offered.
189. The subject is well led. The changes in courses have been well managed and are already proving to be successful. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## Media Studies

Provision for media studies is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The subject is making a significant contribution to the development of language and communication skills.
- The integration of students from other schools has been very successful.
- Information on student performance is not used well enough to improve provision.

## Commentary

190. Recent A2 examination results have improved significantly, particularly the percentage of students achieving an A or B grade, which, in 2003, was above the national average. This improvement has coincided with the increasing popularity of the subject and an influx of new students from consortium schools. Boys perform equally as well as girls.



191. Work seen supports results being achieved in the examination in that much of the work is around national average standards. Students are particularly good at applying media theory in their practical media work. Written analysis of the media is less well developed.
192. The 2002 results at AS level were in line with national figures but performance fell in 2003 to be below the national average, particularly the percentage of students gaining the highest two grades. However, in both years, the percentage of students who failed to gain a pass grade was less than the percentage nationally.
193. The work of Year 12 students seen, suggests that the standards are improving. Students show good levels of knowledge and understanding of media theory and can relate this theory to practical media production. Many students still lack confidence in analysing the media and evaluating their own work.
194. Teaching is very good, underpinned by clear principles which place emphasis on individualised learning methods. All teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise and very good facilitation skills. They use a variety of teaching approaches within each lesson. Constant student interaction develops both an understanding of media concepts and improves communication skill and self-confidence. As a result the achievement of all students, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
195. Students quickly develop as mature learners and clearly enjoy the subject, responding positively to the freedom and responsibility they are given. There is a good friendly relationship and rapport resulting in a very good learning atmosphere. On occasions, however, opportunities to consolidate knowledge of media theory and terminology are missed.

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

### **Health and social care**

Provision in health and social care is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students with moderate entry grades achieve well with results similar to the national average.
- Considerable work and energy have been invested by committed teachers who have limited experience in this subject.
- The well presented course portfolios of most students indicate their enthusiasm and the support they receive from teachers.
- Major changes in personnel have resulted in teachers inexperienced in the subject preparing suitable materials with limited knowledge of what had previously been covered.
- Schemes of work are developed on an ad hoc basis.
- Forward planning is based on meeting immediate contingencies rather than in long term planning.

### **Commentary**

196. Numbers taking this subject have been small. Results indicate that in 2002 students achieved above the national average but no one achieved grades A or B. Available statistics suggest that in 2003 four students completed courses and with similar grades. The numbers have increased with 18 in Year 12 and 5 in Year 13.
197. Standards are average with students entering with moderate results in GCSE. Year 12 students achieve well, and this is reflected in the careful preparation of their portfolios and their use of concepts from other subjects.

198. Articulate students, while recognising the difficulties, are keen to do well and contribute and co-operate with each other and the teachers. Some confident presentations were given by students in Year 13 on health promotion including graphic presentations on drink driving, smoking and diabetes. These were suitably researched and prepared. Students confidently used different techniques in presentation. Folders contain appropriate and careful use of material gained from the internet and other sources.
199. The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good. The teachers prepare lessons with close attention to the examining body guidelines. They relate examples in health and social care while introducing theories from their specialist subjects. Well-prepared lessons introduce a number of different approaches to learning. Students are encouraged to work independently. Teachers have a working knowledge of the strengths of their students and in the main positive relationships have been established. Targets have been set and students appreciate the comments and feedback on their work.
200. The school had not prepared for the substantial changes required by the change of staff. With no subject leader there is a lack of clear purpose and direction. This results in a paucity of information on curriculum monitoring, development plans and the planning of staff development. Timetabling difficulties at the start of the year did not encourage students' confidence in the provision. Resources have improved and teachers benefit from informal discussions and support from staff teaching the subject in the locality. Monitoring, target setting and assessment procedures are in place. The senior management now recognise the difficulties and are taking steps to rectify them. The subject was not reported on in the last inspection.

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

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

