

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PAULET HIGH SCHOOL**

Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124391

Headteacher: Mr Robert Parker

Lead inspector: Mr Anthony Shield

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004

Inspection number: 268874

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

© Crown copyright 2005

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11-18  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 702

School address: Violet Road  
Stapenhill  
Burton-on-Trent  
Staffordshire

Postcode: DE15 9RT

Telephone number: (01283) 239 710  
Fax number: (01283) 239 735

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Barbara Simonds

Date of previous inspection: April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Paulet High School is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18, situated in Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent. Sixth form provision is made jointly on site with Robert Sutton Catholic High School at the Stapenhill Post-16 Centre. Pupils are drawn from the immediate area, and many come from socially and economically disadvantaged homes; the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There are 702 pupils on roll, with 57 students in the sixth form. Attainment on entry is well below average, and for many pupils, levels of literacy on entry are a barrier to progress. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is average, with 85 pupils with identified special educational needs; this represents around 15 per cent of the school roll. Most of these have learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems, although a small number have physical difficulties. Twenty-five pupils have a statement of special educational need; this is above average. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, with small numbers of pupils (around six per cent) from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. There are two pupils with English as an additional language.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                  |                | Subject responsibilities                 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 3569                           | Anthony Shield   | Lead inspector |  |
| 31758                          | Ted Tipper       | Lay inspector  |  |
| 3643                           | Derek Jones      | Team inspector | Mathematics                              |
| 30648                          | Brian Skelton    | Team inspector | English                                  |
| 27368                          | Michael Merchant | Team inspector | Science<br>Biology in the sixth form     |
| 10941                          | Renee Robinson   | Team inspector | Information and communication technology |
| 1240                           | John King        | Team inspector | Art and design                           |
| 27351                          | Michael Stanton  | Team inspector | Design and technology                    |
| 22849                          | Ron Catlow       | Team inspector | Geography<br>Citizenship                 |
| 3892                           | Eric Needham     | Team inspector | History<br>Physical education            |
| 34089                          | Robin Gaff       | Team inspector | French<br>German                         |
| 31850                          | David Nevens     | Team inspector | Music                                    |
| 30072                          | Joe Skivington   | Team inspector | Religious education<br>Psychology        |
| 17530                          | Mary Cureton     | Team inspector | Special educational needs                |

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
1 – 4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

|   | <b>Page</b>    |
|---|----------------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>                            | <b>4 - 7</b>   |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>       |                |
| <b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>                             | <b>8 - 12</b>  |
| Standards achieved in subjects and courses                      |                |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities          |                |
| <b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>              | <b>13 - 19</b> |
| Teaching and learning   |                |
| The curriculum  |                |
| Care, guidance and support                                      |                |
| Partnership with parents, other schools and the community       |                |
| <b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>                                | <b>19 - 21</b> |
| <b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b> | <b>22 - 41</b> |
| <b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>               |                |
| <b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>                   |                |
| <b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>        | <b>42</b>      |

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school. **Its overall effectiveness is currently satisfactory**, and in a number of areas the school's work is good. Teaching in particular has improved since the last inspection, and as a result of the school's drive to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the school's climate for learning is now good. Standards in most subjects are below the national average, but most pupils achieve well, though not consistently so in all subjects. The school's value for money is satisfactory.

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

- Good teaching in most subjects is leading to good achievement.
- Results at GCSE, A-level and in national tests at the end of Year 9 have all improved significantly since the last inspection, as a result of the good leadership shown by the headteacher and his key staff.
- Pupils' good attitudes and good behaviour are making a strong contribution to their achievement.
- The achievement of most pupils is good in English, mathematics and science, and a number of other subjects, although achievement in art and design is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' literacy skills are a barrier to progress, and measures to improve pupils' reading and writing skills are inconsistently applied.
- The school provides good pastoral care and good relationships are characteristic of the whole-school community.
- Leadership and management of most subjects are good but monitoring procedures are not consistent enough.
- Self-review and improvement planning are not coherent enough to ensure a sharp focus on priorities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but their progress is not monitored with sufficient rigour.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection in 1999. Standards overall in Year 9 tests and in GCSE examinations have improved faster than the national trend. The quality of teaching has improved and this is leading to increasingly good achievement. Key issues at the time of the last inspection have mostly been tackled effectively, particularly those relating to improving the climate for learning and the quality of teaching.

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance compared with: |                                 | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                            |                                 | 2002        | 2003 | 2004 | 2004            |
| Year 11                    | GCSE/GNVQ examinations          | D           | D    | E    | C               |
| Year 13                    | A/AS level and VCE examinations | E           | D    | n/a  |                 |

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

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

**Achievement is good** overall, given the pupils' attainment on entry in Year 7. Although the average total points score of the pupils' best eight subjects was well below average in 2004, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\*-G grades was average, and the proportion achieving five or more A\*-C was below average. In work seen, standards overall in Years 9 and 11 are below average. In work seen in English, mathematics, biology and psychology in the sixth form, standards are around average. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 9 and 11 are below average, but pupils' achievements are good in each

subject. In other subjects in Year 9, pupils' achievements are good in information and communication technology (ICT), history, modern foreign languages and physical education; they are satisfactory in all other subjects except art and design where they are unsatisfactory. In Year 11, pupils' achievements are very good in German and good in ICT and history. In all other subjects, except art and design, achievement is satisfactory.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good.** Pupils are keen to learn and punctuality is good. Their positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their achievements. Behaviour is good, and most pupils are thoughtful and considerate of others. Incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils' personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in particular, is satisfactory. Attendance is average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good. Teaching in particular is good.** Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and many are developing imaginative and successful approaches to learning. As a result, learning is good in many lessons. However, approaches to improving literacy are inconsistent. The curriculum is satisfactory, preparing pupils successfully for their future. A reasonable range of out-of-school clubs and activities enriches the curriculum, and the programme planned through the Burton Advantage Scheme in particular is having a significant impact on the achievement of some pupils. The school's procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils are good, and relationships amongst the whole-school community are very good. Tutors know their pupils well and are committed to their personal and academic development. Good links with partner schools and satisfactory community links make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** Good leadership by the headteacher, his senior team and managers at all levels has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and examination results since the last inspection. The work of the governors is satisfactory, although their role in monitoring the school's work is underdeveloped. **Management is satisfactory.** The school runs smoothly and management procedures for the monitoring and self-review of its work are in place, but not yet consistent enough in all areas. Although the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form are not fully met, governors have done all they can to ensure compliance, and standards are not being adversely affected.

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

The school's partnership with its parents is satisfactory. Parents are supportive of the school and, by and large, the school has their confidence. In particular they are pleased that their children are expected to work hard, and that they make good progress as a result of good teaching. A small minority of parents do not feel they are well informed about the progress of their children. Pupils also express support for the school. They think it is a good school, and feel that they are expected to work hard, and that the teaching is good. Whilst many pupils are critical of the behaviour of a minority, they feel that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous enough to promote a more consistently good quality of teaching.

- Ensure that improvement planning at whole school level and department level is linked to identified needs through more rigorous self-review procedures.
- Improve the consistency with which approaches to literacy are developed in all subjects.
- Address the underachievement in art and design.
- Ensure the progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored more carefully.
- Ensure better recruitment to the sixth form through developing a wider range of courses;

**and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- review the arrangements made for collective worship and religious education in the sixth form.

## THE STAPENHILL POST-16 CENTRE

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form centre is providing a **good** education for its students, and it has improved well since the last inspection in 1999. Although standards in 2004 were well below average overall, most students achieve in line with their predictions. Results have improved steadily in recent years, and standards in the work seen during the inspection are average. Given their below average prior attainment at GCSE, students' achievements are good as a result of good teaching. There is a clear sense of direction, and leadership and management are good. The sixth form is cost effective.

**The main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Overall results at A-level were well below average in 2004; however, students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Student numbers in some subjects are too small.
- Students are overwhelmingly supportive and enjoy being part of the sixth form.
- Teachers are committed to the progress of individual students, and systems for assessing and monitoring their progress are good.
- The curriculum provides a good range of academic subjects, but currently lacks a wide enough range of vocational and applied course 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 area                               | Evaluation   |
|---|--|
| English, languages and communication: English | <b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Good teaching challenges students and their positive response leads to good achievement.   |
| Mathematics                                   | <b>Good.</b> Standards are average. The good teaching and learning ensure good achievement. Good leadership and management have led to a good improvement since the last inspection. |



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Science: Biology       | <b>Good.</b> Standards are average and improving as a result of good teaching. Students achieve well.  |
| Humanities: Psychology | <b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Achievement is very good because of very good teaching which encourages independent learning. New leadership and management are both good. |

---

*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**

The quality of personal support and guidance that students receive is good. Tutors and subject teachers know their students very well and are sensitive to their needs.

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

**Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.** The new sixth form accommodation and consortium arrangements are providing a strong impetus for development. The head of sixth has a clear vision and rationale for the sixth form and considerable attention is being given to developing suitable courses and a welcoming learning ethos in the new centre. Management systems are well organised and thorough. Arrangements for the joint governance of the sixth form are satisfactory.

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

Students enjoy being part of the sixth form and the overwhelming majority surveyed considers that the teaching is challenging. They feel that they are encouraged to work independently and that their work is assessed carefully and helpfully. Their views are welcomed, although formal procedures for listening to sixth form views are only just being established. Some students were critical of the range of enrichment courses available to them but the head of sixth is responding positively to this criticism.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Standards of work seen overall during the inspection are below the national average in Years 9 and 11, and average in Year 13. Pupils' achievements are good throughout the school. Standards are improving and results in Year 9 national tests, GCSE and A-level examinations have all improved since the last inspection.

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

- Most pupils' achievements overall are good throughout the school.
- Results at GCSE, A-level and in national tests at the end of Year 9 have all improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The achievement of most pupils is good in English, mathematics and science, and a number of other subjects, although achievement in art and design is unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

1. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 7, as measured by the pupils' standards in national tests taken at the end of their primary schooling, is well below average, although test results have been improving in the most recent years. The school admits fewer pupils of high ability than average and the proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs is about average. However the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need.
2. In national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the latest year for which national comparative figures are available, the pupils' performance in English was above average, but results in mathematics and science were well below average. Although results fell back slightly in 2004, there has been an overall improvement in results in all three subjects, and up to 2003, the overall trend of improvement was better than the national trend.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004***

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 31.2 (33.4)    | n/a (33.4)       |
| mathematics   | 31.5 (32.7)    | n/a (35.4)       |
| science       | 30.8 (31.2)    | n/a (33.6)       |

*There were 129 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

At the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\* - C grades in GCSE examinations in 2004 was 43.8 per cent, below the national average but well above the similar schools average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\* to G grades and one or more A\* - G grades was average. The average total "capped" points score per pupil, that is the best eight subjects taken, was below the national average but in line with similar schools.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004**

|   | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades  | 43.8 (46)      | 53 (52)          |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades  | 89.2 (84)      | 89 (91)          |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades  | 97.7 (97)      | 97 (96)          |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 249.1 (252.6)  | 282.3            |

*There were 126 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. Most pupils taking GCSE in 2004 achieved well, although there were some boys who underachieved. However, in other years, boys have achieved well and during the inspection, inspectors noted no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. An analysis of the GCSE results of those pupils supported during the year by the learning partner through the Burton Advantage Scheme shows that these pupils made better than expected progress.
4. In 2004, pupils achieved particularly well in English literature, German, home economics and statistics, but less well in art and design, music, design and technology, French and single science.
5. The challenging GCSE targets set for 2004 were exceeded. Ambitious targets have been set for 2005 and suggest that standards will improve further.
6. Overall, in work seen during the inspection in Years 9 and 11, standards were below average in line with recent tests at the end of Year 9 and with recent GCSE results. Most pupils' achievements are good, given their prior attainment on entry, and good progress is made through the school.
7. In work seen during the inspection, pupils of all abilities, including able pupils achieve well. All pupils with special educational needs make at least the same good progress as the rest. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection. In English, mathematics and science, good provision ensures good progress. Pupils make satisfactory but not such good gains when withdrawn for specific support because targets do not always reflect the requirements of the statement of educational needs. The progress of pupils undertaking a corrective reading programme in Years 7 and 8 is not assessed, but these pupils are usually supported well in lessons.
8. The school has very small numbers of pupils from other than white British backgrounds. Inspectors found no significant evidence of different progress made by pupils from different ethnic heritages. In this respect, all pupils are making good progress.
9. In work seen in English during the inspection, standards were below average in Years 9 and 11. Nevertheless, given their attainment on entry, pupils' achievements are good, because of the good teaching and their positive attitudes. Their literacy skills improve, but standards remain below average throughout the school and are a barrier

to more rapid progress by some pupils. Standards of writing in particular are holding back the achievement of some pupils.

10. Standards in mathematics are also below average in both Years 9 and 11, although pupils' achievements are good, given their prior attainment. As in English, good teaching and good attitudes ensure progress in handling number is good. However, some pupils, even in Year 11, still have difficulty with basic calculations and numeracy skills.
11. Standards in science are below average in Years 9 and 11. Their achievements are good throughout. Pupils have a reasonable grasp of scientific principles and are learning to apply them in a range of contexts.
12. In other subjects, standards in work seen in Year 9 are below average in most subjects, and well below average in religious education, although average standards were seen in history, physical education and French and German. Pupils' achievements are good in all subjects except design and technology, religious education, citizenship and music where they are satisfactory, and in art and design where achievement is unsatisfactory. The problems in art and design are the result of too wide a variation in the quality of teaching and the part-time nature of the leadership in the subject.
13. In Year 11, standards remain below average in design and technology, geography, art and design, music, and citizenship. They are well below average in religious education, and average in other subjects. Pupils' achievements are very good in German; good in information and communication technology (ICT), history and French, and satisfactory in all other subjects except art and design where they continue to be unsatisfactory.

## Sixth form

14. In 2003, the latest year for which national comparisons are available, the results of students entered for AS- and A-level examinations were below average. The average points score of candidates entered was 201.2 compared with the national average of 258.2. Boys did particularly well in 2003, and their points score was around the national average for boys. However, numbers taking courses at this level are relatively small and national comparisons must be treated with caution.
15. In 2004, results were similar, and there were some good results in English, psychology and business studies.

### **Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003**

|  | School results | National results |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades | 93.8 (85.3)    | 89.4 (92.6)      |
| Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades | 25.0 (16.0)    | 32.6 (35.3)      |
| Average point score per student          | 201.2 (150.6)  | 258.2 (263.3)    |

*There were 17 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

16. The school encourages open access to the sixth form and has adopted an inclusive policy towards taking students onto courses. Potential students are guided onto appropriate courses. Currently, only around 25 per cent of Year 11 students stay on

into the sixth form; many leave to pursue other vocational courses elsewhere. As a result, attainment on entry has been below average for several years. The sixth form has recently moved into new buildings as part of the Stapenhill Post-16 centre, and recruitment is beginning to show signs of picking up. Standards are improving as a consequence of increasingly good teaching which offers good levels of challenge, and a focus on developing independent study skills.

17. Only four subjects were inspected in detail during the inspection. In English, mathematics, biology and psychology, overall standards were average, although students' achievement, given their standards on entry to the sixth form, is good.

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

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work and towards others are good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Attendance is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form, while punctuality is very good throughout the school. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

### **Main strength and weaknesses**

- Pupils' good attitudes and good behaviour make a strong contribution to their achievement.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative to help them build up their confidence and self-esteem.
- The school seeks to provide its pupils with a sense of morality and help them become good citizens but gives them limited opportunities to develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them.
- The school has made progress in raising the levels of attendance and in ensuring pupils arrive at lessons on time.

### **Commentary**

18. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and make a strong contribution to their good achievement through the school. In lessons, pupils are interested in their work and are keen to get involved, answer questions and get on with their work. They arrive at lessons promptly and settle to work quickly. In assemblies, pupils sit quietly and attentively; at break, they play harmoniously despite the limitations of the playground. At lunchtime, pupils wait patiently for their turn and the overall atmosphere is relaxed. Movement around the school is calm and orderly.
19. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is average. As a result of the school's determined efforts, the incidence of unauthorised attendance is declining.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 6.1 | School data          | 1.8 |
| 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.*

20. In lessons, behaviour is good for the most part, although inappropriate behaviour of some pupils was observed on a small number of occasions. The school has made significant progress in improving behaviour and the climate for learning since the last

inspection, when the overall ethos was judged to be unsatisfactory. Bullying is not considered a major problem by pupils, who report that it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

21. The relatively low number of pupils excluded reflects the success of the school's procedures for managing behaviour.

***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                                     | 645                   | 39                                | 2                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 7                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 9                     | 4                                 | 1                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 1                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 4                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian                     | 2                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  | 4                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 3                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 8                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 4                     | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 15                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

22. Good relationships are characteristic of the whole-school community, and are the foundation for building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds get on well with each other. Good relationships are particularly evident in the special educational needs department and these lead to confident learning. This improves pupils' self-esteem and is a strength of their provision.
23. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Some Year 11 pupils are appointed as prefects, with four becoming head and deputy-head boy and girl, and representatives from across the school also sit on the newly re-formed school council. Pupils are given opportunities for organising parents at parents' meetings, for organising teams

for sports events and for organising charitable events. However, many do not take such opportunities and the confidence and self-esteem of some pupils is low.

24. Pupils' social and moral development is good. Lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship, such as the one in Year 8 where the rights and wrongs of foxhunting were maturely discussed, help pupils develop a moral code. Pupils are regularly encouraged to work with one another by teachers and, as a result, most work and play well in pairs and small groups. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Apart from some good practice in religious education and isolated examples in other subjects, pupils are given little opportunity to develop an understanding of their own beliefs and those of others around the world. Also, they are given limited opportunities to explore a range of cultural traditions, despite good opportunities in art.

## **Sixth form**

25. As in the main school, good relationships between staff and sixth formers are a key strength of the school's provision. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good, and they are learning to mix well with students from other schools in the centre. Students behave with increasing maturity and respond well to the challenge to develop their skills of research and independent learning. Students respond very well to the increased freedom and responsibility for managing their own learning, and consider themselves treated as young adults. Attendance and punctuality are very good.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. In particular, the good quality of teaching, the satisfactory curriculum and assessment, the good quality of advice and guidance given by tutors and pastoral staff and the effective links with partner primary schools and the community are ensuring that most pupils achieve well.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory and is being used with increasing effectiveness to inform planning and the pupils themselves on how they might improve.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in most subjects is leading to good achievement.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are much higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- Good relationships and mutual respect are encouraging pupils' confidence in their ability to learn.
- Literacy skills are inconsistently developed in all subjects.
- Pupils have infrequent opportunities to develop research and independent learning skills.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is not monitored carefully enough.

### Commentary

26. Pupils themselves consider that they are well taught, a view echoed by parents in both the pre inspection questionnaire and at the parents' meeting held with inspectors before the inspection. Inspectors judge the quality of teaching overall to be good, although there is some variation both between and within subjects. However the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 137 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good      | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor    | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| 1 (0.7)   | 34 (25.2) | 51 (37.8) | 44 (32.6)    | 4 (2.9)        | 1 (0.7) | 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.*

27. The school has begun to address the issue of teaching quality through the appointment of an assistant headteacher with specific responsibility for implementing the national Key Stage 3 strategy and improving the overall quality of teaching. Working groups of teachers have been set up to discuss best practice in the use of ICT, approaches to literacy and numeracy and support for special educational needs. These groups have representatives from each department, and reflect the school's increasing focus on teaching and learning. Although slow to start, these initiatives are now beginning to make a difference. The work in spreading good practice and developing innovative approaches to learning is proving fundamental to school improvement.
28. Where teaching is most effective, it is led by the teachers with confidence and skill in presenting ideas imaginatively and clearly. Planning is thorough and class management skills secure. In a very good Year 10 science lesson, the pupils were

learning about food groups. A powerful exposition was lively and authoritative and demonstrated the teacher's confident subject knowledge. Questioning of the class was incisive and ensured all pupils were included. As a consequence the learning moved at a rapid pace and the teacher was able to judge the extent of pupils' understanding. Most pupils responded enthusiastically to this approach and put considerable thought into their work. Learning was characterised by high levels of challenge and a sharp pace. As a result, pupils made very good gains in their learning.

29. Low expectations were a feature of much of the teaching at the time of the last inspection. This is now much improved and teachers consistently offer challenge in the work set. Pupils themselves report that teachers expect them to do their best. This alongside the good relationships and positive attitudes that characterise most lessons enables a purposeful and productive climate for learning in classrooms.
30. The introduction of new technologies is encouraging teachers to develop imaginative and effective ways of using them to support learning. In this respect some good work was observed in mathematics. The use of starter activities and plenaries in which learning is consolidated and reviewed at the end of the lesson is being adopted with increasing effectiveness. Teachers have a good subject knowledge, enabling them to interest and engage the pupils in relevant and interesting activities, and to plan work which builds successfully on previous learning.
31. A major weakness in the quality of teaching is the inconsistent approaches adopted to improve pupils' literacy. Much good practice exists in English, science and history, but practice is patchy elsewhere. Not all teachers encourage pupils to develop their speaking and reading skills in lessons or give support to pupils in structuring their writing. This is an important factor in the below average standards in most subjects.
32. Some teachers offer infrequent opportunities for pupils to organise and develop their learning independently. This is partly because of the inadequacies of the library and resource centre which doubles as an ICT classroom and has insufficient library stock to be of real value. Although some teachers are particularly good at offering encouragement and building confidence in the pupils' ability to learn independently of the teacher, much of the less effective teaching was characterised by an over-dependence on the teacher for information and answers.
33. Marking is not always being used effectively to inform pupils of their progress and prompt them to improve their work with comments and guidance on how to improve. While there is some good practice in ICT and geography, marking in English, history, design and technology, modern foreign languages and science is often unsatisfactory in this respect.
34. In most lessons, planning is thorough and detailed, and caters well for the full range of ability, although less effective teaching is often characterised by planning which fails to identify tasks to challenge all pupils at their own level. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly when pupils are supported in class. Teachers are aware of specific needs and of the targets in individual education plans, although the plans vary in quality and are not always sharply focused. Good use is made of targets in lesson planning by teachers, and a good range of learning strategies supports pupils' progress. The work of the newly created special educational needs development group, in which all subjects are represented, is beginning to prove effective in raising awareness of the most effective learning strategies.

35. Assessment is satisfactory. A substantial range of assessment data is available for heads of department. An analysis of pupils' performance in national tests taken at the pupils' primary schools enables the school to gauge pupils' potential in English, mathematics and science. In the absence of externally validated data in the other subjects, the school has introduced baseline assessment in Year 7. In addition to national tests in Year 9, a range of externally provided assessment data is used. These give an indication as to pupils' future performance. Most departments use this data to set targets for their departments and increasingly to identify targets for individual pupils. With the implementation of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy, the school is introducing assessment for learning where pupils assess their own performance in relation to explicit objectives and agree targets with their teachers. The school assessment policy has been rewritten to reflect this and suitable training has been provided for teachers. Some departments are more advanced than others in implementing this policy. Practice is good in science where data is analysed thoroughly and realistic targets are set for pupils. Self assessment plays an important part in art and design and ICT.
36. Assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. Individual education plans are inconsistent in quality as they do not relate sufficiently closely to pupils' statements of special educational needs and provide an insufficiently clear picture of progress. The department is unable to demonstrate progress in the corrective reading scheme.

## **Sixth form**

37. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. Inspectors' judgements reflect those of the students themselves, who consider that they are well taught and challenged to do their best. They particularly value the help and encouragement they are given to study independently and to research topics on their own. They also value the thorough assessment of their work which enables them to see how they can improve. Good relationships between teachers and students characterise teaching at this level. Of the subjects inspected in detail, teaching in English and psychology was judged very good, while in mathematics and biology, it was good.
38. Good relationships and mutual respect are encouraging students to respond confidently and to be prepared to take risks in their answers and with their learning overall. Much teaching is planned to encourage students to develop more independent and self-reliant approaches to their learning. Questioning is often used effectively to provoke and deepen understanding. Where the teaching is less effective it is often because the teaching is over-directed and opportunities are missed to encourage more active approaches by the students themselves.
39. Students' learning skills are satisfactory. Most take care with the presentation of their work, and files and notes are, by and large, well organised and can be used effectively for revision. Communication skills are developed well in most lessons through written work, well-managed discussions and group work. Pupils are encouraged to complete research tasks and discuss their findings. Numeracy and ICT are also used well.
40. Assessment procedures are good overall. The tutorial approach is used very effectively in mathematics to offer individual students detailed and thorough feedback. In English, a close link between planning and assessment objectives enables students to be confident in how well they are doing and making progress towards their targets.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Arrangements for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities are also satisfactory. Staffing, accommodation and resources meet the needs of pupils satisfactorily.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum has breadth and balance and caters well for the needs of pupils.
- The programme planned through the Burton Advantage scheme is having a good impact on the achievement of pupils.
- Preparation for later stages of education and employment is good.
- Religious education is not taught in the sixth form, as is required.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but their progress is not monitored with sufficient rigour.

## **Commentary**

41. The school provides a satisfactory range of curricular opportunities in Years 7 to 11 which cater well for the particular needs of pupils. A policy for gifted and talented pupils has been newly agreed but not yet fully implemented. One significant gap is the lack of opportunities for drama. However, curricular provision for ICT is a significant strength, and all pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a GNVQ course in the subject, which enables pupils to use their skills well in most subjects.
42. Although there is a detailed policy for teaching literacy, it is not consistently implemented by all teachers in all subjects. As a result, many pupils' below average reading and writing skills are a barrier to more rapid progress. Aspects of the National Literacy Strategy are not fully implemented and a sharper focus on the development of literacy across the curriculum is an important priority for the school.
43. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered a satisfactory range of GCSE courses, and the school has addressed the issues mentioned at the time of the last inspection in relation to physical education and religious education. The school has worked hard to develop the curriculum so as to make provision increasingly relevant and worthwhile. In addition to GCSE courses the school liaises effectively with a local college to provide vocational courses in Years 10 and 11, which include accredited courses in motor vehicle maintenance, hairdressing, administration, catering with workplace experience, brickwork, carpentry, engineering and health and social care. There are plans to extend some of these courses into the sixth form.
44. Funding through the Burton Advantage Scheme has enabled the appointment of a learning mentor to work with 30 Year 11 pupils. This work is well targeted and has added value to the performance of these pupils. Provision is supported by a well staffed and properly resourced study club held every Saturday morning at a local community centre, which is well attended.
45. Governors have approved policies for sex and relationships education and lessons on the abuse of drugs and alcohol. These form part of a coherent and satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education.

46. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and effective support in lessons enables these pupils to make good progress. However, aspects of the planning for their support are not so effective, and progress is not monitored rigorously enough to ensure withdrawal from lessons is kept to a minimum.
47. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. Opportunities for sporting activities are a strength, and trips abroad are arranged annually. A homework club provides good support for pupils outside of the school day, and there are good opportunities for public performance.
48. Preparation for the later stages of education and employment is good. The school uses the services of specialist careers advisers from Year 9, and work experience opportunities are well managed. Pupils regularly attend careers fairs and the school holds a business dynamics day. Young Enterprise is promoted from Year 10 to help pupils understand the world of work. All pupils have well monitored careers action plans and receive good professional advice on how to carry them out in order to achieve their career goals and fulfil educational ambitions.
49. The number of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. Deficiencies in staffing described in a previous report have been overcome, and teachers' qualifications are now appropriate. The school has achieved the "Investors in People" award. Performance management of teachers is well planned, well organised and appropriate and the procedure is being systematically extended to other staff. The induction of new staff continues to be helpful and effective.
50. Much has been done since the last inspection to improve the standard of the accommodation. The school building is in a good state of repair and its internal decoration is of a high standard. The refurbishment of the library to create a learning resource centre has been well managed, and it is now well used for a homework club and for ICT lessons during the day. At times, however, the library is locked and inaccessible to pupils, and with no librarian it does not fully meet the needs of pupils. The standard of displays on the walls is not consistently satisfactory and some areas, for example the reception area, do not provide a welcoming learning environment. Resources are satisfactory in all subjects in the school except in ICT where they are good and the library where the supply of appropriate books is unsatisfactory.

### **Sixth form**

51. The curriculum is satisfactory in the sixth form. Provision is shared with a neighbouring school. There is a good mix of vocational and academic courses. Flexibility in responding to students' needs is a strength. The school is increasing its range of vocational courses with health and social care, business education and sport studies to develop progressive routes from Year 11. Enrichment includes courses in citizenship, creative thinking, higher education employment skills and study skills, as well as opportunities to take part in quizzes and Young Enterprise. As was the case at the last inspection, the school is in breach of requirements in failing to provide lessons in religious education for students in the sixth form.
52. The sixth form is newly housed on site. It offers very good accommodation. Overall resources are good although the range of library books is inadequate.

## Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides them with a level of support, advice and guidance that is good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Arrangements for seeking the views of pupils are satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good level of personal support, advice and guidance for its pupils, who develop very trusting relationships with adults within the school.
- Pupils are well cared for in a safe and healthy environment.
- Very good induction arrangements exist for pupils joining the school.
- Pupil surveys and the school council are beginning to enable pupils to become actively involved in influencing the life of the school.

## Commentary

53. The school places considerable emphasis on caring well for its pupils. Form tutors, who generally follow the same group through the school, are responsible for overseeing the personal development of their pupils and provide good levels of personal support and guidance to their tutees. The pastoral team, consisting of the assistant heads of school and an assistant headteacher, supports them in this very well. Staff are able to develop fairly close relationships with pupils, and 86 per cent of pupils who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt there was an adult they could turn to if they had a problem. Parents are particularly appreciative of the personal support their children receive. While subject teachers give good support to pupils, the role of tutors in the academic support of pupils is not quite as well developed. A good level of care, personal guidance and support is also available for pupils with special educational needs.
54. The school meets health and safety requirements and this aspect of care is well managed. Potential hazards are quickly identified and acted on. All statutory risk assessments are in place, and each subject department produces its own assessment. No examples of unsafe practice were observed during the inspection. Child protection procedures are fully in place, and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Arrangements for providing first aid and the administering of medicines are appropriate and address the concerns raised by the last inspection report.
55. The head of Year 7 has developed very close relationships with the two primary schools from which the overwhelming majority of the school's pupils come. Induction arrangements are thorough, involving both parents and pupils and enable pupils new to the school to start confidently. Curricular links in English, mathematics and science are also developing well and provide effective continuity of learning. This effective system is much appreciated by parents, 89 per cent of whom felt, in the pre-inspection survey, that arrangements for helping their children settle in were good.
56. The school is looking to take the views of its pupils into account through the introduction of the school council and surveys of their opinions. Evidence from the pre-inspection survey and discussions with pupils, however, indicates there is some way to go to make them feel fully involved in helping to shape their life in the school.

## **Sixth form**

57. Support and guidance are good because of the effective leadership and management of the sixth form by the head of sixth form. Sixth form tutors and subject staff work well together to monitor their students' achievements. Any individual learning problems are quickly identified and additional support provided. These factors are effective in raising achievement. The work of a learning mentor who is employed specifically to help students with applications for higher education institutions is particularly effective.
58. Students overwhelmingly enjoy being at the school and find teachers helpful in assessing their work and encouraging them to study, and carry out research, independently. They have tutorials every two weeks, during which they can raise any concerns, but over one-third who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire felt there is no adult who knows them well.
59. Students express disappointment at the range of extra-curricular activities and the way the school is seeking and responding to their views. However, they do accept that both these issues are beginning to be addressed through the introduction of a sixth form council and activities such as a debating society.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school has satisfactory relationships with its pupils' parents and carers and with the local community. Its links with other schools and colleges are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standard of information provided for parents is better than at the last inspection.
- The school needs to involve its parents more in their children's education and helping to shape the future direction of the school.
- Links, which are of clear benefit to the progress of pupils, have been established with other schools.
- Opportunities offered by the community to broaden pupils' educational experiences have not been fully exploited.

## **Commentary**

60. Parents are mostly positive towards the school and feel comfortable about approaching a member of staff with a query or concern. Most also feel they are able to help their child with their learning. However, the school accepts it could do more in this direction, especially in ensuring the link books are used more consistently as a means of communication between parent and teacher. The success of a recent parental survey on homework, in terms of assessing the suitability and consistency of its implementation, has convinced the school of the value of seeking its parents' views. It intends to do this more regularly in future.
61. Information provided to parents is satisfactory. A termly newsletter is very informative and the school website is increasingly being used to communicate with parents. The Paulet Post is a very well presented and readable publication, which includes pupil contributions. Parents have welcomed the recent improvements made to the annual progress reports. However, reports give little indication of each pupil's targets or

advice on what they should do to meet them. This, linked to the fact that there is only one formal opportunity to meet teachers a year, helps explain why one quarter of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel they were kept well informed about how their children were getting on.

62. Links with partner schools and colleges are good. In addition to the links with the school's two partner primary schools, there are also links with other learning providers in East Staffordshire to offer a co-ordinated approach to the 14-19 curriculum.
63. The school has satisfactory links with the community. Some links with local sports clubs are providing additional opportunities for pupils but the lack of a co-ordinated approach means links elsewhere are more limited. Although some good examples exist, including links with an electrical engineering company and a local garden centre, more could be done to develop its contacts with local businesses to enhance the work-related curriculum.

## **Sixth form**

64. The school has also developed a good partnership with the Robert Sutton Catholic High School, enabled by the effective joint governance and management of the Post-16 Centre. Parents of students receive regular updates on their children's progress. Concerns about progress are quickly picked up and addressed with the support of parents. The Young Enterprise scheme makes good use of local business expertise and is particularly useful in providing students with an understanding of the world of commerce. Involvement of students in the local community is satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is giving a clear lead; he is well supported by his senior team and managers at all levels. Management is satisfactory. Governors have a reasonable grasp of the school's work and are making a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership by the headteacher, senior staff and managers at all levels is leading to secure improvement in standards and provision.
- There is a strong commitment to valuing all pupils.
- Management of most subjects is good but monitoring procedures are not consistent enough.
- Self-review and improvement planning are not coherent enough to ensure a sharp focus on priorities.
- Recruitment of governors has been difficult and, as a result, their ability to affect change has been limited.

## **Commentary**

65. The school's improvement in recent years is evidence of a clear sense of purpose and direction. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and valuing all pupils equally. Its motto, '*Encouraging achievement in a positive environment*', has been the touchstone for improving standards, and the perception of the school by parents and the community generally is of an improving school. All of this has been led by the



headteacher with a confident touch. Steady but secure improvements in provision have been made and although change has not been as rapid as some would like, the school is well placed for further improvement. Its application for mathematics and computing specialist college status is evidence of its commitment to further improvement.

66. The deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers provide effective support to the headteacher. An open and consultative management style has created an atmosphere of trust in which professional issues are discussed openly and supportively. Line management processes enable consultation to be wide ranging while offering an effective procedure for holding middle managers to account for the work of their teams. A new meetings structure has been set up which will more effectively underpin the improvements to teaching and learning in particular which are necessary for the school to make further improvements.
67. Leadership at other levels is also good and heads of department are providing effective leadership of their subjects and working hard to improve provision. Leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. While improvements to provision are being made, not all are being monitored systematically.
68. Management is satisfactory overall. Management systems are in place to monitor provision, but monitoring is not systematic and there is a lack of consistency in the regularity and rigour with which it is carried out. Although performance management is effectively in place, in some cases this is the only opportunity heads of department take to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Work sampling is also undertaken, but neither is this a regular part of everybody's work. As a result, although performance data is increasingly being used as the basis for self-review, the effectiveness with which the school carries out self-evaluation is patchy.
69. The school strategic plan is a three-year plan and priorities are clear and target driven. The three main areas for development: teaching and learning, supporting and developing staff and enhancing the learning environment, are appropriate and provide a realistic framework for school improvement. However, there is a lack of coherence between self-evaluation, strategic planning and professional development. As a result, the school is unable to focus on a limited number of key priorities, and is perceived by some staff to be moving forward on too many fronts.
70. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are hard working but recruitment difficulties have led to an increasing burden of responsibility being placed on too few governors. Most have a reasonably good understanding of the school, take their responsibilities seriously and are able to question and challenge the headteacher and his senior staff appropriately. Much work is usefully carried out in committee, but attendance at full governors' meetings can be sporadic. As a result, governors' impact on both the strategic direction of the school and monitoring is more limited than it should be. Statutory requirements are met, except with regard to the provision of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |           | Balances (£)                             |        |
|----------------------------|-----------|--|--------|
| Total income               | 2,266,590 | Balance from previous year               | 60,610 |
| Total expenditure          | 2,242,574 | Balance carried forward to the next year | 84,626 |

71. The school's budget is well managed, and the school provides satisfactory value for money, given its income per pupil and educational outcomes. Governors have a sound overview of the budget and are updated half-termly with clear monitoring statements. The school applies best-value principles to its spending. Designated funds, including those for special educational needs and staff training, are used well. Measures to introduce workplace reform have been thoughtfully implemented.

### **Sixth form**

72. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The director of sixth form, who has a joint appointment with both partner schools involved in the Stapenhill Post-16 Centre, has a clear vision for the future of the centre and effective management systems in place to monitor provision. In the relatively short time since his appointment, he has established good working relationships with both schools and is well on the way to establishing a distinctive ethos for the sixth form. Governors from the two schools involved have set up a joint governing committee, which has a good over-view of provision.
73. The attractive new building has helped enormously in creating a separate identity for the sixth form, and more students are now considering staying on. This, however, remains an important priority for the director of sixth, who has sensible and realistic plans for its expansion, in particular the development of Level 2 courses. Development planning is well considered and is providing a good platform for the next stage. Sixth form performance is evaluated well, but the monitoring of teaching and standards of work, as in the main school, is inconsistent. Courses are cost effective, and best-value principles are well applied.

### **Work-related learning (WRL)**

The school's provision for work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are provided with a good understanding of the workplace through the school's link with Burton College courses.
- Pupils are provided with access to effective careers advice.
- There is insufficient planning in other subjects that takes account of and identifies work-related learning.

### **Commentary**

74. Pupils' achievements in WRL are satisfactory. A number of pupils find courses of a practical nature interesting and stimulating, and the school is increasingly offering courses such as NVQs in catering and construction, in conjunction with Burton College. Courses have proved popular and pupils are keen to succeed. Most achieve at least a pass grade. Pupils following courses in GNVQ and vocational ICT achieve well.

75. Pupils are well prepared for work experience and feedback from both the college and employers involved in work placements has been positive. As a result, pupils are learning some of the skills and attitudes that are necessary in the workplace and gain a good understanding of 'real world' situations.
76. Much of the work-related element of the curriculum is not planned but is incidental. However, in ICT, citizenship and PSHE, work-related links are fully integrated, and work-related teaching and learning seen in these subjects were good. One particularly effective aspect of the school's provision is the involvement of business and the community in the Young Enterprise Scheme for Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Careers guidance is satisfactory, and the annual careers fair provides opportunities for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 to receive further useful careers guidance.
77. Leadership and management of work related opportunities are satisfactory. However, the school does not yet have a policy for co-ordinating WRL in place. Although activities are monitored for their impact and effectiveness, there is no clearly defined development plan for the further development of the work-related curriculum.

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

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

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

Media studies was not a focus subject for the inspection but one Year 11 lesson was sampled in which pupils were analysing the structure of a short film. The teaching and learning were good. Activities were well planned and the material was very well prepared and well used. The pupils were observed to be achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strength and weaknesses**

- Standards in national tests in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are below average.
- Pupils' literacy skills act as a barrier to progress and measures to improve pupils' reading and writing skills are inconsistent in subjects across the curriculum.
- Good teaching leads to good achievement and pupils make good progress in all years.
- Marking in Years 7 to 9 gives pupils insufficient guidance on how to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well and demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work.

#### **Commentary**

78. Results in national tests in Year 9 have been below average in recent years, although improving steadily, despite a dip in 2004. When compared with performance of schools with similar prior attainment, performance has been above average. Girls tend to do better than boys, although the difference has been narrowing. Standards in English in 2004 at GCSE were below average, but above average in relation to similar

schools. The attainment of girls is higher than that of the boys. In English literature the proportion of pupils entered who gained grades A\*-C was above the national figure but fewer than half of the pupils in Year 11 took the examination. Nearly twice as many girls as boys take English literature at GCSE and their attainment is better.

79. Work seen in both Years 9 and 11 was below average, matching standards seen in recent tests and GCSE examinations. However, the achievement of all pupils throughout the school is good, including those with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language. On entry, pupils' attainment is well below average, and there are relatively few pupils who have reached higher levels. Despite this low starting point, pupils make good progress in developing their language skills through a combination of skilful teaching and positive attitudes.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. The best teaching is characterised by an effective mix of teaching techniques in well-structured lessons that challenge pupils. Teachers routinely emphasise correct grammatical terms so that pupils understand the functions of different parts of speech. A scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed the good achievement seen in lessons. Accurate assessment information is well used by the department to organise classes and to plan appropriate work. Where the teaching is less effective, teachers do not make the lesson objectives clear to pupils at the start nor reinforce what has been learned at the end. Work is marked frequently and accurately. Comments are positive but, particularly in Years 7 to 9, do not give sufficient explanation of what level pupils are working, nor what they should do to improve. This aspect is better in Years 10 and 11 where examination criteria are well used to indicate to pupils what grade they are working towards. Completed assignments are very accurately marked for examinations.
81. The leadership of the subject is good. There is a clear vision and a commitment to raising standards, shared by the department. The curriculum is good and makes an important contribution to the personal development of pupils. Schemes of work and assignments are carefully planned, and exercises to develop literacy are systematically incorporated in lesson plans. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Although the department runs smoothly, monitoring of teaching and learning is not regular or rigorous enough to ensure consistency and the sharing of good practice. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

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

82. Although there is a comprehensive policy for the development of literacy, measures to improve pupils' reading and writing skills are inconsistently adopted. Good practice in science is not replicated in all subjects. For instance, key words and technical vocabulary are on permanent display and systematically drawn to pupils' attention. Reading skills are specifically promoted and teachers in science use their awareness of individual pupils' reading ages to promote appropriate reading strategies. There are also good opportunities for pupils to write at length. Some good practice was also observed in history, art and design and geography.
83. Speaking and listening skills are often promoted in lessons through the encouragement to answer at length and discuss and debate issues in groups. Pupils use colloquial expressions freely but are not so confident when required to use formal English in written work. Reading skills develop well in science, history and English, but are insufficiently promoted in other subjects. The library is an inadequate resource for pupils to develop their reading, research and independent learning skills.

84. Some good practice exists in promoting writing skills but it is less evident than in other skills like speaking or reading. Pupils benefit from good opportunities for extended writing in English, science history and geography: the most effective strategies include the use of writing frames and demonstrate good models of writing. Improving writing, especially boys' writing, is recognised as a priority. Higher standards achieved in recent examinations are a result of improved teaching which recognises the literacy needs of pupils. The co-ordination of a whole school approach to promoting pupils' skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing remains an area for development.

## **French and German**

Provision for both French and German is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching overall is good, and in German it is very good.
- GCSE results in German are very high in comparison to national averages.
- The results for GCSE in French in 2004 were well below average.
- The GCSE Spanish course is allocated insufficient time and is inappropriate for the pupils who take it.

### **Commentary**

85. Attainment as measured by teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 has varied in recent years, but is broadly average in both French and German, though better in German than in French. GCSE results in German have been well above average in recent years, but French results dipped in 2004, although girls performed better than average.
86. In work seen, standards in Year 9 are broadly average in French and above average in German. In French, pupils write confidently, for example, about what they have done at the weekend, and what they intend to do in the summer holidays. In Years 10 and 11, German standards remain above average, while standards in French are average. Pupils at this level significantly increase the range of language they can use and speak with fluency and confidence in expressing opinions. Pupils make good progress in all three languages and in all year groups, and their achievements are good throughout. In German, pupils' achievements are very good during Years 10 and 11. In general, pupils show positive attitudes to learning languages.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to include a good range of activities which cater well for the interests and abilities of all the pupils in their classes. They manage their classes well, and establish a good working atmosphere. Teachers use French, German or Spanish not only for routine classroom business but also, in the best lessons, for explanation and language development. Pupils generally enjoy taking part in oral work. In French and German lessons, pupils performed very well in role plays in which, for example, they asked for and gave information about places of interest. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, but they do not always give them sufficient information in writing about the standards they are reaching or what they need to do to improve.
88. The quality of leadership in modern languages is very good. Staff share a clear vision of the role of languages and a strong awareness of the department's strengths and

weaknesses. They know what needs to be done to bring about improvement, particularly in GCSE French results. Teachers work well together and share good practice, for example in developing common starter activities for lessons. Priorities, policies and procedures are comprehensively outlined in the departmental handbook, although not all schemes of work contain sufficient detail about timescales for coverage of the syllabus. Pupils do not have enough time in the GCSE Spanish course to develop adequately the skills they require. Improvement since the last inspection has been good: in particular, high standards in German have been consolidated, and the overall standard of teaching has improved significantly.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching and learning have led to good achievement and rising standards.
- Good leadership and management have led to a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Time in lessons is not always used well enough.

### **Commentary**

89. In the 2004 tests at the end of Year 9 performance was well below the average of all schools nationally, but well above the average of similar schools based on pupils' previous performance in the Year 6 tests. Performance is improving better than the trend nationally. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Standards dipped slightly in 2004, due in part to the absence of some high attaining pupils from the tests. In the 2004 GCSE at the end of Year 11, standards were well below average for the number of pupils with grades A\* - C. Performance was average in relation to similar schools, based on pupils' previous performance in the Year 9 tests. There has been a good improvement in the standard of mathematics at the end of Year 11 since the last inspection. A small number of pupils attend extra classes in their own time and are entered for GCSE statistics, one of the better performing subjects.
90. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 9 were below average and reflect the rising trend of earlier years. Inspection evidence shows achievement is good overall in Years 7 to 9 and is good in many lessons. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 11 were below average, confirming the rising trend in attainment and representing good achievement by these pupils compared to their well below average levels on entry to the school. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in their higher level course; their work on trigonometry is above average. Average attaining pupils have a secure foundation in statistics, drawing neat, accurate frequency graphs, for example. Low attaining pupils produce neat work with plenty of examples, but they have difficulty understanding problems. Standards of literacy are below average and are a barrier to pupils' understanding of some mathematical problems. Standards in ICT are average in the use of computer-aided learning, for example. There is no difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. The achievement of pupils has improved since the last inspection.

91. Teaching and learning are good. The strengths of the teaching are the good subject expertise of the teachers and the good planning of lessons. This combination captures pupils' attention, explains matters clearly, accurately and very thoroughly, which is why pupils learn well. Pupils' good attitude to their work maintains concentration and engagement in the lessons. In lessons that are satisfactory overall, the rate at which pupils learn is satisfactory, but teachers sometimes fail to push the learning on at a good pace. Most teachers use ICT with imagination and this enlivens and interests pupils. However, this is not a feature of all lessons. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place, a significant factor of the good teaching seen. Pupils' oral contributions are particularly effective in these lessons, as they clarify what is known and what requires further learning.
92. Leadership and management are good. The work of the department is very thorough, responsible for the good improvement since the last inspection in both standards and teaching. The support for newly qualified teachers is excellent. The teachers work hard and well as a team. Analysis of data is used well. The use of assessment data with pupils is good. A notable feature of the department's work is the support for pupils, particularly in classes after school hours as examination time approaches.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

93. Standards are below average, although there has been an improvement in pupils' numeracy skills since the last inspection, and this helps pupils to deal more effectively with numeracy work in other subjects. Pupils, for example, use their mathematics reasonably well in measuring, estimating and calculating areas and volumes in their design and technology work. Spatial awareness also develops appropriately through construction work. Work in ICT, history and geography also encourages pupils to use and interpret data and graphical work is well developed in science. Although calculations are usually accurate, some pupils in Year 11 still have difficulty with basic number work.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good and most attain standards higher than expected from their prior attainment.
- Teaching and learning are good, with much that is very good and excellent.
- Teachers know pupils well and set high expectations for them.
- Marking and assessment do not always give enough guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Very good leadership has established a team of staff who work well together to develop learning activities that engage pupils and motivate them to learn.
- The head of department has a very clear vision of how the subject may be improved.

## Commentary

94. Results in national tests in 2004 were well below average for all schools, but well above average when compared with similar schools. These results were lower than those of the previous year, but overall, there has been a rise in standards which is similar to that seen nationally. There was little difference in the standards attained by boys and girls and results in science were lower than those in English and mathematics. One factor that depressed the test results in 2004 was the very high number of pupils who failed to attend school to take the tests. Too many pupils did not attain the standards of which they were capable and achievement was unsatisfactory. Results in 2004 GCSE examinations were well below average for all schools and also for similar schools. In relation to their standards at the end of Year 9, most pupils achieved satisfactorily. The proportions achieving higher grades in double award science were very low and few achieved the highest grades. GCSE results have been improving slowly.
95. Standards of work seen are better than these results and are beginning to reflect the improvements put in place by the head of department, particularly her focus on improving teaching and learning. Pupils enter the school with well below average standards in science. By the end of Year 9, standards have risen to below average, representing good achievement for all pupils. Year 7 pupils make very good progress and quickly acquire a good knowledge and understanding of scientific processes and methods of enquiry. Most pupils continue to make good progress into Year 9 where the most able can give reasoned explanations for the apparent increase in global temperatures. Good teaching and learning coupled with an accurate tracking of pupils' progress through Years 7 to 9 ensures this good achievement. Pupils with a special educational need make similarly good progress. This is because, although class support from teaching assistants is not always present, science teachers are very aware of the needs of these pupils and carefully plan their lessons to meet them.
96. By the end of Year 11, standards are below average overall, again representing good achievement. Boys, girls and pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. Pupils' standards in scientific enquiry are comparable with their knowledge and understanding of scientific processes. Weak standards of literacy sometimes affect pupils' achievement and the department has put in place a number of successful strategies to redress this, such as a focus on key words in lessons and on assisting pupils to organise their thoughts through diagrams. These are now beginning to allow pupils to increase the depth with which they respond to questions and demonstrate analysis and evaluation of their findings in experiments. The use of ICT in all years is developing well. Teachers ensure that pupils use ICT to gather, handle and display scientific data. Number skills are successfully practised in the use of scientific formulae and the drawing of graphs appropriate to the science curriculum.
97. Teaching and learning are good overall. There is much that is very good and excellent and only a very small proportion that is unsatisfactory. Teachers know pupils very well and establish very good relationships. They make very good use of information about pupils to set very high expectations of work and behaviour and to tailor lessons and activities to secure good learning. This knowledge is used to provide well for pupils with special educational needs. Very good laboratory management practices ensure safe and co-operative working and good attention from pupils so that they achieve well. Teachers work well as a team, sharing examples of good practice so that learning activities are varied and engage pupils' interest. In the best lessons, every moment is used for learning and momentum is maintained by judicious change of



activities. Assessment is regular and rigorous. Pupils contribute to the process and results are analysed to inform future planning. Marking of pupils' work, however, is not always constructive and does not always provide guidance for pupils on how to improve.

98. In the minority of lessons that are less than good, the pace of learning is slowed because the lessons are ponderous, pupils have few opportunities to think for themselves and the work lacks variety and interest and relies too heavily on worksheets and textbooks. Consequently, too many pupils work through tasks with, at best, passivity, and sometimes with reluctance.
99. Leadership is very good and management is good. The subject leader is knowledgeable about science teaching and has driven improvements. As a highly effective teacher, she provides a role model for the team. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject provision. The development plan addresses suitable priorities, based on detailed analysis of results and thorough monitoring of pupils' progress. The department successfully strives to improve teaching. New teachers, support staff and trainees are very well advised and supported. Some policies and procedures, such as marking of pupils' work, are not always consistently and systematically implemented. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have improved steadily and pupils' achievement is now consistently good. The quality of teaching is higher, and standards of scientific enquiry have risen.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good departmental management and good teaching are encouraging good pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as other pupils because they are well integrated into lesson activities.
- While the programme for using ICT across subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory, a few subject areas are inconsistent in application.

### **Commentary**

100. GNVQ results in 2003 were average, and 2004 results show further improvement. Standards have been rising steadily since the GNVQ Intermediate course was established three years ago. Results indicate good achievement.
101. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are below average, although pupils' achievement is good given their below average attainment on entry in Year 7. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic users of computers. They navigate successfully through the Internet and in one Year 9 lesson observed, pupils effectively combined text and images to produce a multi-media presentation on roller coaster rides. They are adept at using the teacher-produced worksheets linked to data projector work to help, guide and improve their learning. Higher-attainers work quickly, follow instructions well, and help other pupils. Some boys find writing difficult and this slows down their planning and theoretical aspects of their work. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve

well and they express pride in their work, although a few boys have poor attitudes and behaviour in lessons which impedes their progress.

102. Standards seen in Year 11 were average, and achievement is good throughout Years 10 and 11. Pupils are confident and work independently, using a range of hardware and software including the Internet to simulate vocational practice. In a Year 11 lesson observed, pupils worked successfully on setting up a website with hyperlinks on a topic of their own choice, as part of their coursework. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and are keen to do well, although a small minority of boys coast during lessons and, while not disruptive, make little progress.
103. Teaching and learning are good overall. The excellent use of a data projector has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. New knowledge and skills are introduced and taught quickly and efficiently to the whole class. The time saved is well used as teachers are able to give more individual help and this benefits achievement. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are well supported and thereby also make good progress. Teachers have a good, up-to-date subject knowledge and lessons are well organised. They explain new work clearly and engage pupils' interest. Lessons have a brisk pace, but summaries are not always effective in reinforcing and consolidating learning. Marking of pupils' work is regularly carried out and recorded carefully.
104. Good leadership and management have ensured an effective team approach to the subject and good improvements since the last inspection. Standards are rising and there is considerable potential for further improvements. The curriculum has been revised and very well designed to interest and engage pupils of all abilities.

## **ICT across the curriculum**

105. The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects, and most pupils are competent users of ICT, at least in Years 10 and 11. Overall standards across the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 are below average but improve during GCSE work. Computer resources have improved significantly since the last inspection and access is at least satisfactory in most subjects, although this is not the case in geography, music, art and religious education. Particularly effective use of ICT to support learning is made in science, design and technology, mathematics and history. Data handling is very well taught through science and effective use of computer-aided design is made in design and technology.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well.
- Pupil attitudes are positive and contribute to their learning.
- ICT is not used enough to support learning and research.
- Planning does not always take into account the needs of the more able pupils.

## Commentary

106. GCSE results in 2003 were below the national average. The girls' results were above those of the boys. The results for 2004 were below those of the previous year.
107. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 were below average. Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9 relative to their prior attainment on entry is good, this being helped by the teaching they receive, their positive attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate a relatively sound understanding of the geographical processes and the impact they have on the environment. Pupils have the basis for understanding the effects of the sea on our coastlines and how we manage it. There was evidence that pupils were able to use maps, draw diagrams and, less often, graphs; however, their skills in using computers were less well developed. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards their targets, particularly when supported. While more able pupils make good progress, they are not always challenged to extend their knowledge more widely.
108. In the work seen in Year 11, pupils' attainment was below average, and their achievement was satisfactory. Pupils make relatively sound progress in their geographic knowledge, understanding and use of geographic skills. Pupils of all abilities had made some progress in their understanding of the structure of the earth. The writing and presentation skills have improved over time and this could be seen in the sample of work, particularly in Year 11. The use of key words in lessons and displayed around classrooms is having some effect on pupils' understanding.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good but less consistently effective in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan their lessons well with appropriate learning objectives, though these are not consistently shared with pupils. Most work is adapted for the different ability levels in each class, but work is not always challenging enough for the most able. Teachers use a good range of resources to stimulate pupils' thinking and develop their interest. The use of ICT for research by pupils is not well developed as access to computers is not always possible. Most pupils work hard in lessons and respond well to opportunities to take some responsibility for organising their own learning. Marking is regular and is most effective when comments are made which guide the pupils to the next learning step.
110. Subject leadership and management are good. The new head of department has a clear vision about the direction the subject needs to go in, and the development plan is well constructed with clear action points. Monitoring procedures are in place and beginning to impact on raising standards. Currently, the use of fieldwork to extend and enhance classroom activities is limited and should be developed for all years. The use of fieldwork needs to be extended to all years to enhance what is learnt in the classroom. Accommodation is satisfactory and good use of display is made to celebrate pupils' work. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes and learn well.
- Pupils are well taught and enjoy the subject, but marking does not always show pupils how to improve.
- The subject is well led and managed.

## Commentary

111. When pupils join the school, the standards of most are below average. By Year 9, attainment is still below average, but not as far below as when they joined. By Year 11, pupils are close to average standards, consistent with GCSE results in 2004. Although girls achieved better than boys in GCSE, the gap is narrowing, and during the inspection, there was no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs were achieving better than expected standards with help from well-organised classroom assistants. Gifted and talented pupils produce very good written work in Year 9, a feature which continues into Years 10 and 11.
112. Pupils' achievements are good throughout and they make good progress in all years. This is strongly encouraged by very positive attitudes to their studies and the good, often very intense, quality of the teaching. In Years 7 to 9, pupils listen very well. Working in planned co-operative ways, they make very sensible deductions from evidence. They show very good understanding, as in a Year 9 lesson on Zeppelin raids over Burton-on-Trent. Pupils in Year 11 made very effective links between causes and effects in recent Irish history.
113. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. All teachers know their subject matter very well and have very good teaching skills. All lessons are very well planned and, as a result, pupils' individual needs are well met. Teachers adopt a range of effective teaching methods to encourage pupils and develop their self-esteem. Relationships are very good and, as a result, the climate for learning is very positive. The use of resources is particularly effective in Years 10 and 11, but there is much use of carefully presented original source material in all years. This has a marked impact on improving the quality of pupils' written work and understanding. In all lessons, pupils are keen to do well and work hard. Teachers' effective use of ICT is highly appreciated by pupils and strongly encourages high levels of motivation. Although, there is a well-planned system of assessment of pupils' work, the marking of pupils' work does not always suggest specific ways for improvement. Although there is much discussion with pupils about their work, they would benefit from a more developed system of individual work planning and target setting.
114. The subject is well led and managed. The head of department has a clear vision of what a successful department should be. He and his colleagues organise their teaching and administrative systems well, so providing a good foundation for effective learning and progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, and much effective work has gone into improving examinations results and standards generally.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned lessons make effective use of resources to encourage learning.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Teaching styles do not challenge pupils to develop independent learning skills or extended written expression.
- Access to ICT is unsatisfactory and does not support learning.

## Commentary

115. The results in the GCSE short course in 2004 were an improvement on 2003 results, but still well below the national average with 35 per cent gaining A\*-C grades. Most pupils entered, however, achieved a pass at A\*-G grades.
116. Prior attainment on entry in Year 7 is well below national expectations. By the end of Year 9 in 2004, teacher assessment indicated most pupils were working at well below average levels. Standards in the current Year 9 mirror this. However, there are encouraging signs that standards are beginning to rise as more effective teaching strategies secure better learning. Pupils understand the use of symbolism and ritual and can explain some differences and similarities between the main religions. Higher attaining pupils contribute some very thoughtful personal insights in class discussion, and are able to express an opinion in a simple way, but are unused to writing at any length in the form of a discussion or argument. Lower attaining pupils are able to see the connection between belief and behaviour, for instance, in learning about Muslim and Christian marriage traditions, but lack clear understanding and have difficulty in expressing their ideas in writing. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well because of the very helpful support given by teachers, and texts which are tailored to their learning needs. The lack of teaching assistants to help these pupils when there is a sizeable group in some classes is a barrier to their further learning. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged by some extension tasks and they too achieve as well as the others.
117. Standards in the current Year 11 continue to be well below the national average but improving attitudes to this subject and some genuine interest are beginning to be shown. Pupils are able to explore moral issues, for example, abortion and euthanasia, and listen respectfully to each other, but when it comes to committing their thoughts to paper they are unable to express more than one opinion because they have not had the opportunity to discuss any subject to any depth. In almost every lesson pupils put down their ideas, or the teacher's, on worksheets, filling in boxes with single words or phrases, and rarely in completed sentences or continuous writing. The result is they are unable to marshal their thoughts or express themselves coherently, as seen in many examples of very simplistic writing in the work scrutiny. Pupils' spiritual development is well supported in reflective stillness exercises, and they have a well-formed sense of right and wrong through their exploration of ethical dilemmas. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 continues to be satisfactory.
118. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory, with some good teaching observed. Where teaching is good, strategies involving pupils in their own learning are effective, for example, small group work in one Year 11 lesson using flash cards to revise and reinforce learning. Lessons are well prepared and resources, for instance, a video clip on Muslim marriages, make a powerful impact. Where teaching is less than good, there is little variety, with a heavy reliance on worksheets, and pupils sit quietly

listening to very informative and interesting presentations but have little real input into the invariable question and answer sessions, where the teacher elaborates at length but fails to challenge and probe the pupils' own understanding. Homework assignments are not yet securely linked to pupils' levels, with the result that a half term's homework can be an unchallenging decorated word-search or, in Year 9, a crossword. Assessment is in place and most pupils know what level they are at. Level descriptors are in pupils' files so that they know what to aim for, and marking, especially at the end-of-module tests, is helpful in suggesting how they can improve. This is beginning to have an impact on slowly rising standards.

119. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The recently appointed new head of department, although a non-specialist, is coming to grips with the challenge and has a strong commitment to improvement. Teaching and learning styles have not yet become the main focus for better achievement, but the departmental development plan includes these. Access to ICT is unsatisfactory, and support for independent learning is further undermined by the poor selection of out-of-date books in the school library.
120. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Although provision and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are now satisfactory, there is still no provision for religious education in the sixth form. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 appear to have slipped since the previous inspection, although variations in level descriptors and assessment in this subject since then make significant comparison difficult. Teaching, but not learning, was judged to be good and very good, where now it is mainly satisfactory.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Child development was sampled and good teaching was seen in the one Year 11 lesson observed. Standards in the 2004 GCSE examinations were below average. However, pupils achieve well and perform better in this subject when compared with most other subjects because of the good quality of teaching.

### **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Girls' achievement is good in GCSE courses in food technology and resistant materials.
- Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge and expertise.
- There is too much paper based designing and insufficient evaluation of existing products in Years 7 to 9.
- Day-to-day teacher assessment and marking is inconsistent in Years 7 to 9.

### **Commentary**

121. Teacher assessments show that by the end of Year 9, standards are below average. This was reflected in inspection evidence. At GCSE in 2004, results were below overall and well below average in textiles. Pupils generally perform as well in design and technology as they do in other subjects.

122. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, given pupils' attainment on entry. In general, girls achieve better than boys. More able pupils achieve higher standards because they can express their ideas through annotated sketches and make finished products that are of good quality. The progress made by lower attaining pupils is acceptable, but they lack the knowledge and understanding of basic materials and processes.
123. In Year 11, standards are also below average and achievement is satisfactory. There are some good examples of pupils' coursework, for example, in food technology where pupils design and make dessert products to a good standard. Achievement in textiles, although not as good as that in resistant materials and food technology, has improved recently. Girls' performance is, again, better than the boys', in common with the national picture.
124. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons teachers' preparation and classroom management are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject, which are used effectively to motivate their pupils. They use skilful, well-targeted question and answer sessions, keeping the pace of the lesson brisk and no time is wasted. In less effective lessons, activities have insufficient challenge and pupils are, as a result, less productive. In Years 7 to 9, end-of-unit tests and assessments are used to help pupils understand their level of attainment and set targets for improvement in their next units of work. However, the day-to-day assessment and marking is inconsistent. In Year 11, pupils' progress in GCSE coursework is well monitored and interim targets agreed.
125. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of the department has developed a mutually supportive team approach, which contributes to the department's development. He is aware of areas in need of improvement and has systems in place to further raise pupils' attainment. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is based on too much paper based designing activity and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate existing products. There has been satisfactory progress made since the last inspection and the department continues its upward trend in standards. There is effective use of ICT, but there are insufficient facilities for computer manufacturing.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some teaching is very good.
- GCSE results are well below average.
- Standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Management and leadership are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

126. GCSE results are below average and have declined over the last three years. The proportion of higher grades is low, and pupils perform less well in art than they do in

other subjects. Boys' performance is lower than that of girls. Teacher assessments in Year 9 are well below the national average. Standards in work seen in both Years 9 and 11 are below average.

127. Achievement is unsatisfactory in all years. Pupils undertake insufficient investigative work and weaknesses exist in their basic drawing and painting skills. Observational work is weak and pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of art. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in lower ability groups.
128. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall but some very good teaching also takes place that leads to very good learning. The best teaching is well planned with a series of short tasks that effectively secure and maintain pupils' interest. In lessons such as these, increasingly challenging tasks improve pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, a Year 10 lesson started with pupils studying a text about Yoruba art; they skim-read the piece and highlighted key features. In addition to improving their knowledge and understanding of Yoruba art, this also improved their literacy skills. The teacher provided good examples to show pupils how to design lettering and the lesson ended with a plenary in which the pupils reflected thoughtfully on what they had learned. Unsatisfactory teaching does not structure the learning sufficiently, tasks are sometimes too difficult and pupils are not effectively taught the necessary skills such as how to draw natural forms. Insufficient guidance is given to the whole class and this leads to pupils losing interest, talking about unrelated matters and making little progress.
129. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. All of the teachers, including the head of department, are part-time. Insufficient control is exerted over what is taught or how it is taught and this results in considerable inconsistency. The curriculum lacks breadth as it consists of mainly two-dimensional work. The allocation of two lessons to Year 8 and one in Years 7 and 9 is inappropriate as pupils have below-average standards on entry and need more time at that stage. Similarly, two lessons in Year 10 and three in Year 11 is inappropriate as they need the maximum time in the later part of the GCSE course to review and complete coursework. The departmental review identifies appropriate targets; it is therefore highly ambitious but is not accompanied by a sufficiently detailed plan of action, and progress in relation to the targets is slow. Several of the GCSE classes are taught by more than one teacher; this is not appropriate because the work is not sufficiently well co-ordinated. Assessment arrangements are sound; pupils receive useful spoken feedback about their work and an element of pupil self-assessment is beneficial. Progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and the good aspects of teaching and learning have promoted a significant improvement in pupils' opportunities in and their attitudes to the subject since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' standards and achievement are much better than before and now demonstrate the potential to improve even further.
- Subject planning is not sufficiently focused on the impact of the curriculum and teaching and learning on raising further pupils' standards and achievement.
- Lack of subject-specific ICT resources reduces the competencies of pupils in Years 7 to 9.



## Commentary

130. The previous inspection report recorded weaknesses in all aspects of provision in music. Teaching and learning, assessment, resources and enrichment opportunities had little impact on pupils' poor standards, progress, behaviour and attitudes. Improving pupils' standards, progress and teaching in music was a key issue for action for the school. Improvement since the previous inspection is good because of good leadership and the good aspects of teaching and learning which have promoted significantly better opportunities for pupils, raised their standards and achievement and improved their attitudes and behaviour.
131. Pupils' standards on entry are below the national average overall, with a significant minority well below average. By both Years 9 and 11, standards remain below average and overall achievement is satisfactory. However, these standards and levels of achievement represent good and even very good improvement on those recorded by the previous inspection report. With the exception of 2002, when GCSE results at A\* - C grades exceeded the national average, recent results have been well below it. In 2004, the percentage of A\* - G grades was close to the national average and is creditable considering the wide range of musical capability represented within the cohort. Girls and boys, pupils with special educational needs and talented pupils achieve as well as others.
132. The significant improvement in standards, achievement and attitudes indicates the positive impact of good teaching and learning. This has resulted in pupils behaving well in lessons, good attitudes to music and enthusiasm for it. Relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils are very good and contribute well to the success of collaborative activities. However, current teaching and learning are satisfactory because pupils continue to develop their performing, composing and listening without gaining a sufficiently balanced and progressive knowledge and understanding of music concepts, processes and the inter-relation of basic musical skills and elements. Both the curriculum and teaching methods have not adapted quickly enough to the developing needs of pupils at this stage in the growth of the subject. Because of this learning in Years 7 to 9 does not now provide the best foundation that it could for pupils who continue music in Years 10 and 11. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop analytical and critical reasoning skills to improve their confidence in speaking and listening. Although pupils in Years 10 and 11 use music composition programmes, those in Years 7 –9 have no access to subject-specific ICT because of insufficient resources.
133. There was no enrichment programme during the previous inspection. Currently a growing number of pupils learn instruments and are extending their performing experience well in small ensembles for wind and string instruments and voices and in the annual musical theatre production. Music provides satisfactory support for pupils' personal development.
134. The current head of department, who teaches virtually all lessons, inherited a subject at the lowest point of its decline. His good leadership has ensured that its status, focus and self-respect have been restored and that pupils now have proper opportunities to develop their musical capabilities and interests. Management is satisfactory, as subject planning for the next stage of development is not sufficiently detailed or focused on changes in the curriculum and teaching and learning to fully realise pupils' musical potential.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress and have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Pupils are well taught by highly motivated teachers.
- The curriculum strongly supports a wide range of learning.
- The quality and range of accommodation available strongly support learning.

### **Commentary**

135. In 2003, GCSE results were significantly below average but improved in 2004, with nearly two-thirds reaching the higher grades A\*-C. Attainment on entry is below average. In work seen in Year 9, pupils' attainment is average and pupils' achievements are good. In Year 11, pupils following the general course are reaching average standards, and their achievement is good.
136. Although overall standards are around the average, some individuals demonstrate high standards, and make very rapid progress. In a Year 7 badminton lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated very accurate serving and in Year 7 rugby lesson, pupils made good progress in developing a combination of moves. Some pupils find the coursework element of GCSE more challenging and literacy skills are sometimes an impediment to better progress in examinations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very strong features. The partnership of skilled teachers with pupils motivated to learn is very important in ensuring good progress. Teachers demonstrate effectively how to learn and practise skills; in a Year 10 basketball lesson observed, the quality of teacher demonstration was very high. All teachers know their subject very well and understand how pupils learn. Teachers have a positive range of strategies to motivate learning. Throughout lessons, there is a strong emphasis on keeping up a steady pace of learning. As a result, pupils respond positively, are keen to get involved and work hard to improve. Lessons are characterised by a respect for all and all pupils feel included.
138. The quality of leadership and management is good. The subject is well led by a thoughtful and motivating head of department. With his colleagues, he plans the curriculum and the day-to-day management well. The departmental three-year plan is sensible and achievable. Routines are very efficient. There are no health and safety issues. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The good quality and range of extra-curricular activities have been maintained with more opportunities added for girls.

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

### **CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching helps pupils to become responsible citizens.
- Good leadership of the subject provides a clear focus for development.
- Assessment and recording are still in its infancy and does not as yet fully inform pupils on how well they are doing.
- Some subject departments do not always raise awareness when citizenship is in their teaching plans.

### **Commentary**

139. Citizenship is taught through subjects or within the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Standards are below average at the end of Year 9. Pupils have a reasonable knowledge of aspects of society. For example, in Year 9 PHSE lesson, pupils were examining mental well-being and the value of good relationships, and were able to discuss different perspectives with understanding. Year 8 pupils demonstrated a mature response when writing a letter which weighed up the arguments for and against in an issue such as foxhunting. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss important issues and develop their thinking skills and awareness of citizenship issues.
140. By the end of Year 11, pupils' knowledge and understanding remain below average. Pupils show an understanding of a democratic society both from their work in the classroom and having recently taken part in an election for the school council. In design and technology, Year 11 pupils develop a mature understanding of their responsibilities for conservation and waste recycling, and develop an awareness of responsible action through considering the effects of certain products or manufacturing systems on society and individuals. Some pupils are being trained to participate in the school council and come to a practical and active understanding of the workings of a democracy.
141. Teaching is good overall. Issues are introduced with imagination and careful planning. Pupils are encouraged to develop informed opinions and to challenge those of others. Good relationships in the classroom ensure that issues that are controversial are dealt with sensitively. However, citizenship issues are not always clearly identified in the planning for some subjects. Assessment and recording procedures have recently been put in place but teachers are not as yet giving pupils sufficient information about how well they are doing or what they should do to improve.
142. Leadership and management of the introduction of citizenship are good. The head of department has a clear vision for the development of the subject. An audit of provision across all subjects has been undertaken. However, monitoring of the programme across other subjects needs more careful co-ordination to ensure consistency, progression and coherence for all pupils.

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM**

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

**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         | 2              | 0.0                  | 80.1    | 0.0                  | 23.7    | 0.0                 | 29.9    |
| Chemistry              | 1              | 100                  | 72.7    | 100                  | 13.9    | 50.0                | 24.1    |
| Drama                  | 1              | 100                  | 86.5    | 0.0                  | 19.6    | 20.0                | 30.6    |
| Information technology | 2              | 100                  | 67.0    | 0.0                  | 10.9    | 20.0                | 21.4    |
| Other social studies   | 1              | 100                  | 69.7    | 0.0                  | 16.7    | 40.0                | 24.1    |
| Physics                | 2              | 100                  | 68.6    | 0.0                  | 14.4    | 30.0                | 22.7    |
| Sociology              | 1              | 100                  | 71.8    | 0.0                  | 18.4    | 30.0                | 25.4    |

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

| Subject                | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E |         | % gaining grades A-B |         | Average point score |         |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
|                        |                | School               | England | School               | England | School              | England |
| Art and design         | 2              | 100                  | 98.6    | 0.0                  | 50.2    | 80.0                | 87.5    |
| Biology                | 2              | 100                  | 96.4    | 50.0                 | 39.2    | 90.0                | 78.6    |
| Chemistry              | 1              | 100                  | 97.6    | 0.0                  | 49.0    | 80.0                | 84.9    |
| Communication studies  | 1              | 100                  | 99.4    | 0.0                  | 37.8    | 60.0                | 82.1    |
| English literature     | 4              | 100                  | 99.5    | 25.0                 | 46.5    | 80.0                | 86.5    |
| Design and technology  | 1              | 100                  | 97.8    | 100                  | 35.3    | 120.0               | 77.9    |
| Geography              | 3              | 100                  | 98.7    | 33.3                 | 44.5    | 73.3                | 84.0    |
| History                | 6              | 100                  | 99.0    | 16.7                 | 44.6    | 70.0                | 84.6    |
| Information technology | 3              | 100                  | 95.6    | 0.0                  | 24.6    | 53.3                | 69.5    |
| Mathematics            | 1              | 100                  | 96.7    | 100                  | 55.6    | 120.0               | 88.8    |
| Music                  | 1              | 100                  | 98.8    | 0.0                  | 38.9    | 80.0                | 81.1    |
| Other sciences         | 2              | 100                  | 97.3    | 100                  | 41.5    | 110.0               | 80.3    |
| Other social studies   | 6              | 100                  | 97.4    | 16.7                 | 42.7    | 76.7                | 81.8    |
| Physics                | 1              | 100                  | 96.7    | 0.0                  | 44.6    | 60.0                | 81.7    |
| Sports/PE studies      | 1              | 100                  | 98.0    | 0.0                  | 30.9    | 80.0                | 75.2    |

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

English was inspected in detail. French and German were sampled. In the Year 12 French lesson observed, students showed that they are building on the skills they acquired for GCSE. The teacher provided a range of activities through which students were able to extend their knowledge of expressions relevant to the topic being studied (the impact of advertising). Although the lesson was conducted at a good pace and all the students were actively involved throughout, the teacher had not established French as the normal medium for communication in the classroom.

In the German lesson sampled, Year 13 students made good progress in developing their listening and speaking skills. The teacher conducted the lesson almost entirely in German, at a level which appropriately challenged the students, and dealt sensitively with a potentially difficult subject, the spread of AIDS in Africa. The students were attentive throughout the lesson, but were somewhat reluctant to take part in discussion, despite skilful prompting from the teacher.

### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and very effective teaching methods help students to achieve well.
- Good collaboration between the schools ensures good curriculum planning and effective deployment of teachers.
- Students enjoy a wide experience of teaching styles and group work.
- Students' positive response to challenging lessons contributes to very good achievement.
- Accommodation is very good but resources for independent learning are inadequate.

### **Commentary**

143. Standards at AS-level in 2004 were average, and almost all students continued with A2 in Year 13. In 2003 the average points score of pupils taking A-level English literature was close to the national average. Numbers taking the subject have been too small for valid statistical conclusions, but the general trend despite fluctuations is below the national trend. Standards seen in a scrutiny of their work are higher than standards in examinations over recent years, and are around average.
144. Students achieve well relative to their prior attainment. Girls outnumber boys and were observed achieving better than boys. Students spoken to enjoyed their lessons and felt that they were achieving well. Over the two years students make significant gains in maturity as well as knowledge and English makes a valuable contribution to their social, moral and cultural development.
145. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lessons are brisk and challenging, with teachers leading a high level of lively discussion as students respond with enthusiasm and maturity. Assignments are well planned and well prepared in lively discussions. A significant feature of some very good teaching

was the way in which students took responsibility for choosing and planning major assignments in Year 12. Students are aware of examination criteria and assessment objectives so that they understand what they need to do to improve. Completed coursework is very accurately assessed.

146. The leadership of the subject is good. There is an ambitious vision for the subject at this level. Curriculum development has been good and the partnership has led to new approaches. The management of the subject is good. Assessment is well used for departmental planning and to help individual students improve on their work. Accommodation is very good in the new sixth form centre. Resources are good overall but the library resource centre for the sixth form is inadequate and cannot support the independent learning and wider reading essential at this level. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

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

147. Students on sixth form courses are not limited by a lack of reading and writing skills in the same way that younger pupils are because the language skills of students entering the sixth form are higher. There is still a wide range of capability. The most successful teaching is aware of this and takes effective measures to help students improve their skills. Good practice was seen in several subjects. Important new words are introduced in context and teachers check that they are being used correctly. This was particularly effective in science. Students demonstrated good speaking and listening skills in discussions in English and in psychology.
148. Reading comprehension skills develop well. Some students in a Year 12 English group had done very good Internet research into Greek myths, but the new resource centre/library is inadequate to support independent learning at this level. Scrutiny of students' work confirms that writing skills develop well, with good opportunities for extended writing and a good awareness of appropriate styles for formal academic work. Year 12 students in English were taking personal responsibility for major coursework assignments which count for a third of their total mark. Good teaching at the planning and drafting stages helps individual students achieve well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good subject expertise has led to good teaching and learning.
- Good leadership and management have resulted in a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Very good assessment enables students to learn how to improve.

### **Commentary**

149. Of the three students entered in the A-level examination in 2004, two earned a grade, one with grade A. Standards seen in the inspection are average for students on an A-level course. Year 12 students have made a good start to their course. Their statistics work, for example, is particularly neat and accurate. Students work hard, and it shows in the quality of their work. The performance of Year 13 students was average at AS-level in 2004.

150. Achievement is good in the sixth form. Year 12 students' algebra relates well to their GCSE course and their work shows signs of steady improvement since they started the course. Students themselves recognise and enjoy the challenges of their work. Older students consolidate difficult algebraic operations successfully and use computers with confidence. Their knowledge of the basic rules of calculus is secure.
151. Teaching and learning are good. Good subject knowledge enables clear and accurate explanations to students, from which they learn well, and at a good rate. Computers are used well in the teaching and enhance students' visual learning, particularly in the introduction of new work. A notable feature of the teaching is the individual support for students' learning, which is very good. Marked assignments are discussed in detail, showing clearly how marks are gained and lost in the solution of problems.
152. Leadership and management are good. The sixth form arrangements incorporating sixth form students from other schools are efficient and helpful to all students, who benefit in their learning from discussions with a wider range of students. The resources are very good. The teachers work hard and well as a team. Improvement since the last inspection is good as teaching and standards have improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

153. Standards are average for sixth form students. Biology students make satisfactory use of correlation techniques. Statistical work in psychology and sociology is helpful to students' learning. Calculations are accurate in mathematics; students are developing good levels of algebraic skill.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Biology**

Provision in biology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving and students are achieving well.
- Teaching is good and enables students to make very clear gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- Students enjoy their lessons and clearly feel valued.
- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision.

### **Commentary**

154. Too few candidates have been entered for the AS and A2 examinations in recent years to allow comparisons with national averages. Six students were entered for the A2 examination in 2004; none attained the higher grades A or B and one in three failed to gain at least a grade E.
155. The work seen of students currently in the sixth form indicates that standards are average. In relation to their attainment when they begin the course, this represents good achievement. Year 12 students have made a good start to their course. Their achievement is good and many begin their AS studies with modest prior attainment at GCSE. Year 13 students build well on what they learnt in Year 12. Their coursework

planning is very thorough and students show a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies they are planning to use. They have a very secure grasp of how science can be related to the everyday world, for instance the symptoms and treatment of diabetes.

156. The teaching and learning in biology are good, with much that is very good and excellent. Teachers have a deep knowledge of and love for their subject, which encourages the students, particularly in Year 13, to work at their own learning in a highly focused way. Lessons are fast moving, keeping the students on their toes because teachers plan their lessons with great care, and, in particular, draw on a wide range of methods and resources. Students' learning is reinforced by a very careful use of homework tasks. Marking of students' work is thorough, with very clear guidance on what has been done well and what needs to be done in order to improve.
157. As a result of the consistently good teaching, students show enthusiasm for the subject. Biology is an increasingly popular option in the sixth form and it recruits the widest range of ability. Less able students often lack confidence but teachers work hard to improve this and ensure that all students feel valued.
158. Leadership is very good, with very clear vision and direction. Management is also very good; planning for improvement is strong. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

159. One lesson of AVCE ICT was observed. Teaching was good and students showed high levels of independence as they worked on multi-media presentations. ICT skills and knowledge are at national average.

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

160. Students are confident and competent users of ICT as a tool to support their studies. They are particularly skilled at research and in manipulating and presenting information. Provision is good both within lessons and for independent work, so students make extensive use of computers in their coursework assignments.

## **HUMANITIES**

Sociology was sampled. Results are consistently in line with the national average. Current standards at the end of Year 13 are average; achievement is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. In the one very good lesson observed, very effective strategies took students through examination questions, and this was both useful and challenging, because the students themselves had to make the intellectual effort to diagnose a question and understand what the examiner was looking for. Students' attitude and commitment to the course were very good. The marking of work and feedback to students were very full and really showed them how to improve. This impacts significantly on achievement. Leadership and management are both very good.

### **Psychology**

Provision in psychology is **good**.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Challenging teaching encourages real intellectual effort and commitment.
- Good subject knowledge and enthusiastic teaching inspire and support learning.
- ICT is used effectively to support independent learning.
- Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are not yet fully in place to ensure ongoing achievement.

## **Commentary**

161. Results at A-level in 2004 were in line with the national average, which compared well with results in 2003. The small numbers taking A-level make any year-on-year comparison difficult. The standards of attainment in the current Year 13 are in line with the national average for A/B grades. Students have a secure grasp of methodology and psychological perspectives. Literacy and numeracy skills are good, evidenced in the students' understanding and appropriate use of psychological terminology and statistics. The writing of the higher attaining students is of a high standard. They are able to source authorities and use them tellingly in support of their arguments, and evaluate and summarise well. Lower attaining students struggle with the theoretical aspects and make fewer intermediate judgements in their essays. Students in Year 12 are at an early stage in this new subject but already work seen suggests that standards are at least in line with the national average.
162. Achievement in both Year 12 and Year 13 is very good given the students' varied starting points based on GCSE results and predictions, and a new and demanding subject.
163. Teaching and learning are both very good. Lessons are well planned to involve students in their own learning. Teaching is enthusiastic and challenging, with high expectations. Students respond to probing questioning with good intellectual effort, because there is a very good rapport between teacher and students, which leads to total commitment from students and an eagerness to do their best. ICT is used well to encourage independent learning, not only in research tasks but also in assured peer presentations using PowerPoint. Only one or two students have the ability to depart from the script and expand on their chosen topic, but all benefit in confidence from such work-related experiences. The teachers' explanations are very clear, and this helps students understand. Their understanding is checked frequently, for example, in very effective role-play exercises. Assessment and marking contribute to learning because they show the students not only what they must do to improve, but also how to achieve this.
164. Leadership and management are both good. The recently appointed head of department has vision and commitment to improvement, although not all monitoring and record-keeping systems are fully in place. Self-evaluation procedures have yet to be developed. The number of students choosing to study psychology is set to rise rapidly. The subject makes a good contribution to the students' own personal development, which they recognise and appreciate.

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

165. Art and design was sampled. In the one lesson observed, a small group of Years 12 and 13 students were achieving satisfactorily with sound individualised teaching.

Students were working on individual projects such as figures in motion based on the work of artists such as Matisse. Students used media expressively. Teaching provided pupils with helpful guidance.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

|  |   |          |
|--|---|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> |   | <b>4</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 3 | 4        |
| The leadership of the headteacher                  |   | 3        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 3 | 3        |
| The effectiveness of management                    | 3 | 4        |

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