

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **The Grange School and Sports College**

Warmley, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109322

Headteacher: Mr Steve Colledge

Lead inspector: John Carnaghan

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 269192

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	863
School address:	Tower Road North Warmley Bristol
Postcode:	BS30 8XQ
Telephone number:	01454 862800
Fax number:	01454 862801
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Dean
Date of previous inspection:	25-Jan-1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Grange School and Sports College is a smaller than average, 11 to 18 secondary school serving the Bristol suburb of Warmley. The area it serves has some deprivation but is, overall, average in background. The standards of attainment of pupils as they enter the school are below average. The number who take free school meals is below average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and a very small proportion speak English as an additional language. There are no travellers and looked-after children, and no refugees. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and the numbers of those with Statements of Educational Need are average. The numbers of pupils who join or leave the school are below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1352	John Carnaghan	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
12775	Judith Goodchild	Lay inspector	
32251	Peter Bratton	Team inspector	Mathematics
34521	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	English Special educational needs
24453	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector	Science
31096	John Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32216	Annie McCabe	Team inspector	Art and design
1385	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Design and technology
32147	Ann Wallis	Team inspector	Geography
22458	Gilbert McGinn	Team inspector	History Business education
12408	Alan Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Work-related learning
34084	Mary Davis	Team inspector	Music
33131	Glen Hayes	Team inspector	Physical education
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Citizenship Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The Grange School and Sports College provides a **good** standard of education. It is being transformed by improvements introduced by the headteacher. Pupils' standards have improved at a similar rate to the national average and achievement is **good**. Teaching and learning are consistently **good**. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is **very good**, focusing on raising expectations and improving standards. Management is **good** and the way the school is monitored is good and ensures consistency between teachers. Governance is **satisfactory**. Governors have not ensured that all elements of the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum are covered, that health and safety requirements are met or that there are daily acts of collective worship for all pupils. The school is more expensive than most schools but, given the improvements under way, it gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher has ensured a climate of improvement.
- Teaching is good so pupils learn and achieve well. The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct, promoting good behaviour.
- The school is well managed and governors make a strong contribution to its development.
- Procedures to promote attendance are excellent.
- Procedures to enable pupils to work in a healthy and safe environment lack rigour.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges and good links with parents and the local community.
- The school provides very good opportunities for the professional development of staff.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. The development of pupils' spiritual awareness is unsatisfactory.

The school was previously inspected in 1999. It has successfully addressed six of the eight key issues. Of the other two, the development of cross-curricular literacy and numeracy has been good but that of ICT has been inconsistent and not all of the weaknesses in the ICT curriculum have been addressed. Pupils' standards in tests and examinations have kept pace with national improvements and current standards are average. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	C	D	C

*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.*

Current standards are average at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. On entering the school standards are below average, so pupils' achievement across the school is **good**. Pupils' achievement is very good in mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education in Years 7 to 9. It is good in English, art and design, music, citizenship, religious education, and design and technology in Years 7 to 9. The performance of boys relative to girls varies between subjects but is generally similar to the national pattern. There are too few pupils from different ethnic groups to make judgements on standards but they achieve as well as their peers, as do pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. Attitudes and relationships are satisfactory and behaviour is good. Development of moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory but the school does not do enough to promote spiritual

awareness. The action the school has taken to promote good attendance is excellent and as a result attendance has improved rapidly.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. For the school as a whole, more than seven out of ten lessons were good or better with nearly a third of lessons very good. Teaching is consistent, particularly in the way planning has a clear focus on what is to be learnt. Lessons employ a wide range of strategies to stimulate pupils' learning. Pupils do not always participate fully in their learning and are not sufficiently encouraged to work independently.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and innovative and does much to address pupils' needs. There are good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities but elements of the ICT curriculum for Years 10 and 11 are not covered. There are too few acts of collective worship. Guidance to help pupils improve is satisfactory. Assessment is good. It provides the school with valuable information that is consistently used to set clear improvement targets for pupils. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is satisfactory. Although groups of pupils do meet staff, their views are not given sufficient weight. The school has good links with parents and the local community and very good links with other schools and colleges.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher is a very good leader who gives a strong, shared sense of purpose to the school. He has raised the staff and pupils' expectations and developed a climate for improvement. Management of the school is good and line management has ensured consistency of practice. Methods of self-evaluation are good and the school has used its knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses to set clear and sensible priorities for improvement. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the school well, seeking to challenge its priorities. However, it has not ensured that the school meets all of its statutory requirements in ICT, in ensuring that health and safety procedures are rigorously monitored and in providing acts of collective worship.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. Most report that their children like school. A minority are concerned about the information they receive from the school but inspectors found that reports and other information sent home are satisfactory. Most pupils like school and say teaching is good. However, many showed concerns about behaviour and bullying in their questionnaires. When interviewed, pupils say that bullying is not common and the school deals with it well. The view of inspectors is that parent's concerns about behaviour are unjustified. Some pupils thought they were unfairly treated and did not think there was an adult they could talk to. The inspection does not support the first of these issues, but finds that opportunities for pupils to raise concerns and make their views heard are limited.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop pupils' independent learning skills
- Improve opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Meet National Curriculum requirements for ICT so that its provision has a positive effect in raising standards.
- Clarify the school health and safety policy so that it is an effective working document.
- Ensure that the school provides the required acts of collective worship.

## SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the sixth form is **satisfactory**. Students' standards are average but their achievement is **good**. Teaching and learning and the assessment of students' work are **good**. The curriculum is **good** because it provides a wide range of subjects. The leadership and management of the sixth form are **satisfactory** and governance is **good**. The sixth form gives **satisfactory** value for money. Improvement since the time of the previous inspection is **good**.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The consortium arrangements allow a wider curriculum than expected for the size of school.
- Students' study and independent learning skills are under-developed.
- Students' work is thoroughly assessed so that they have clear targets for improvement.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The organisation of the key skills and careers programmes is unsatisfactory.

### 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>Satisfactory</b> . The quality of teaching and learning are good. Standards are improving. Leadership and management are satisfactory.
Mathematics	Mathematics. <b>Good</b> . Students are well taught and learn well. They are conscientious and work hard, and achievement is good. Very good leadership sets high expectations.
Science	Physics. <b>Satisfactory</b> . At this early stage of the course students are slowly making the transition to the higher demands of sixth form study under the guidance of specialist teachers. Achievement is satisfactory.
Physical education	Physical education. <b>Very good</b> . Engaging and effective teaching means that students learn very well. Assessment is very informative and the subject is very well led.
ICT	ICT. <b>Satisfactory</b> . Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Standards are below average. Leadership and management are 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 use of assessment to promote students' learning is good. Tutors and subject teachers make good use of the data to ensure that all students are suitably aware of their strengths and areas for improvement and to set useful targets. Preparation for students' futures after Year 13 is satisfactory. Most students feel they are given a good degree of responsibility and treated as young adults.



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

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The management of the links with the partner schools and colleges is good and ensures a broader curriculum. However, the organisation of the key skills and careers programmes has weaknesses and is unsatisfactory.

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

Students have a positive view of the sixth form. They say they enjoy sixth form life and get on well together. They applaud the quality of teaching and value the wide range of subjects to choose from. Many, however, feel that the school does not seek their views sufficiently. The findings from inspection were that the school does not regularly ask for or act on students' views.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement across the school is **good**, given the lower than average standards they show on entry to the school. The standards pupils currently attain in Years 7 to 11 are generally similar to the national average

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in examinations at the end of Year 9 and 11 have kept up with national improvements in the period 1999-2003 and improved again in 2004.
- Achievement in mathematics and modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 11 and in physical education in Years 7 to 9 is very good.
- Current standards in mathematics and modern foreign languages are above average.
- Current standards in science, ICT and geography across the school are below average. They are also below average in Years 7 to 9 in art and design and in Years 10 and 11 in design and technology and history.

#### Commentary

- 1 The area of the school is one of some social and educational disadvantages. As a result, pupils start life at the school in Year 7 with academic standards that are below average. However, they settle into their new school quickly and achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Following carefully planned courses, the majority of pupils make worthwhile gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.6 (31.8)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	36.2 (35.1)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	31.7 (31.3)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 153 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- 2 The school's results in tests at the end of Year 9 have fluctuated a little from year to year but overall, the improvement in results in five years 1999 to 2003 is similar to the rising national trend. In 2004 they improved again. There were variations between standards in the three main subjects. In 2003, compared with national averages, mathematics results were above average, and science and English results were below average. However, when compared with these pupils' prior attainment in tests at the end of Year 6, mathematics results were very high and in the top 5 per cent nationally, those in English were average and in science they were below average. These figures indicate generally good achievement, although not in science, for this group of pupils over Years 7 to 9. Girls' results were similar to those of boys.

- 3 Year 9 pupils' current standards are largely similar to those expected nationally. They are above expectations in mathematics and modern foreign languages. However, they are below expectations in science, ICT, art and design and geography. These standards generally represent effective provision and teaching in these subject areas. In terms of statutory targets for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2003 based on pupils' prior attainment, the school reached its targets in mathematics, science and ICT but fell short in English.
- 4 The gains that pupils make in Years 7 to 9 provide a sound foundation for their continuing studies. With continuing consistency in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement is good in Years 10 and 11. It is very good in mathematics and modern foreign languages and satisfactory in science, design and technology, history and geography.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	38 (39)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	89 (89)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (94)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.8 (32.6)	30.5 (34.7)

*There were 202 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- 5 GCSE results have maintained pace with the improving national trend for the five years up to and including 2003. Results in 2003 were below average in comparison with all schools nationally but were above average when compared with these pupils' Year 9 results. Results improved in 2004. GCSE results in 2003 were above average in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. However, they were below average in ICT, art and design, geography and music. They were well below average in science, business education and design and technology. They were very low in history. The percentage of pupils who gained five GCSE A\*-C grades and one A\*-G grade fell short of the school's 2003 target. However, the school beat its average points target, indicating satisfactory achievement overall. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.
- 6 Year 11 pupils' current standards are generally in line with what is expected. Standards are much better than expected in mathematics, modern foreign languages and on the core physical education course. They are below what is expected in science, ICT, design and technology, history and geography.
- 7 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the additional support that they receive. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. They are making good gains in reading and spelling skills. The majority meet the targets in their individual education plans and improve their social as well as academic skills. Most are entered for a range of GCSE examinations. The school is developing a range of non-GCSE accredited courses which will broaden the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs.

- 8 The school has very few pupils from different ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language so their standards cannot be compared. However, pupils from both groups are well supported and achieve as well as their peers.

## Sixth form

### *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	96.1 (88.2)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	16.4 (18.8)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	256.3 (212.4)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 27 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 9 Students' standards in the sixth form are currently average. In 2003 examinations, the average points score of students was in line with the national average. However, very small numbers who sat the examinations may make these comparisons unreliable. Female students performed better than their male counterparts, in line with the national trend. In 2004, results showed a decline.
- 10 The inspection focused on five subjects in depth and standards seen may not reflect the wider pattern across the whole sixth form. With students' standards which are generally similar to what is expected nationally, the examination results and standards seen during the inspection represent good achievement. The good teaching and positive attitudes seen in the sixth form are leading to improvements in students' achievement. In the subjects inspected, standards seen were in line with expectations in mathematics and physics. Standards are better than expected in physical education but below expectations in English and ICT. Students' achievement is good in mathematics and very good in physical education. It is satisfactory in English, physics and ICT.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes of pupils are **satisfactory**. The behaviour of pupils is **good**. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is **satisfactory**. The attendance of pupils is **good** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The change of culture within the school to celebrate achievement is having a positive effect and behaviour is good.
- The school's procedures and actions to raise attendance levels are excellent and attendance levels have risen significantly over the last year.
- Teachers have to work hard to engage pupils in their learning as many pupils have low aspirations and this affects their attitude towards study.
- Pupils independent learning skills are underdeveloped.
- The spiritual development of pupils is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

- 11 Since the previous inspection the school has changed its culture to one of celebration of achievement. This has begun to raise student's confidence and self-esteem and contributes significantly to their attitudes and good behaviour. Pupils are proud to belong to a specialist sports college. However, many have low aspirations. Teachers have to work hard to engage pupils' attention in lessons and enthuse in them a desire to learn. Independent learning skills have not been consistently developed in the past and many

pupils depend too heavily on teachers in lessons rather than taking the initiative. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to improve this aspect. Pupils in Year 7, for example, have taken part in a 'learn to learn' day to introduce them to a range of independent learning skills and it is planned to run this course for other year groups. When stimulated by lively and interesting teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and sometimes very good. They become interested in their studies and are able to sustain their concentration well. Where teaching is less effective, and pupils' interest is allowed to deteriorate, they demonstrate a lack of enthusiasm for their work with the consequent lack of progress in learning during the lesson.

- 12 The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between pupils are good and lunch times are socially harmonious occasions. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions has reduced significantly due to good behaviour management procedures and pupils being very clear about what is acceptable behaviour. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection where behaviour was identified as a key area for improvement. The school successfully reintegrates pupils from other schools that have been either excluded or considered to be at risk of exclusion. Great care is taken to ensure these pupils know they have been given a fresh start.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	822	71	8
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	3	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

- 13 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory overall. It is not

consistently planned for in all subjects and opportunities are missed to reinforce this aspect of pupils' education. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. This was a key issue at the two previous inspections and the school has not done enough to improve provision in this area. The religious education syllabus and teaching provide good opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils. The moral development of pupils is good. Pupils are well aware of right and wrong actions and most have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the school community by acting as buddies, mentors and prefects. The school council is undeveloped as a forum for the expression of pupils' views and to involve them in future developments affecting the school community. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Whilst some subjects such as religious education and English have a well-planned element of multicultural education in lessons, other subjects do little to promote awareness of different ethnic groups and cultures in society. Assemblies are generally of a high quality and reinforce social and moral themes and contribute towards pupils' personal development. They do not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

## Attendance

- 14 For the last academic year attendance was 92.5 per cent and above the national average for all schools. This represents a significant improvement in attendance and fully addresses the key issue raised at the previous inspection.
- 15 Excellent procedures to monitor and improve attendance have been implemented. A concerted effort by governors, administrative and teaching staff and the education welfare service has brought about this improvement. Interviews with pupils to find the reasons why they do not come to school allow specific support plans to be generated. These could include group work or additional support from subject staff to help remove any barriers to learning and change pupils' attitudes towards coming to school. Parents are invited to an attendance panel with governors and senior managers. If they fail to ensure the improved attendance of their child then fast track prosecution procedures are started. Staff closely monitor attendance targets set for individuals. Pupils are realistically rewarded as their attendance improves. Punctuality to school and lessons is satisfactory.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	8.6	School data:	1.9
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.*

## Sixth form

- 16 The attitudes and behaviour of students in the sixth form are good. They show a responsible attitude towards their studies, whether at this school or one of the other partner institutions that they attend. Several students have volunteered to act as mentors to younger pupils within the school. They have trained to deliver the 'Learning Challenge' and indications are that this scheme is proving beneficial to both pupils and students. Some students have trained to become Community Sports Leaders and work with both primary and secondary schools. The attendance and punctuality of sixth form students is satisfactory.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education that the school provides is **good**. Teaching, learning and the assessment of pupils' work are **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The school provides **satisfactory** care for

pupils and there are **good** links with parents and the local community and **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

## Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching, learning and assessment are all **good**. Teaching is consistently good across all age ranges. Pupils behave well so that, although their capacity for independent study is limited, their learning is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A large proportion of teaching is good or better.
- Teachers consistently apply good practice from the Key Stage 3 National Strategy.
- Independent learning skills are insufficiently promoted by teachers.
- Marking is good and clearly indicates to pupils what their academic standards are and what they should do to improve.
- The school gathers assessment information well and uses it with increasing effectiveness to promote achievement.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 126 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2%)	39 (30%)	51 (41%)	30 (24%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

17. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Most lessons are good or very good. Teaching is consistent and lessons are invariably well planned. Teachers almost always deliver lessons with clear introductions explaining what is to be learnt and effective closing sessions reflecting on the outcomes of the lesson, consolidating what has been covered and planning for future activities. The reason for this is consistency in the effectiveness of monitoring. Teaching and learning are significant elements in teachers' continuing professional development. Monitoring of lessons by school managers is rigorous and weaker classroom practice is challenged.
18. More than two-thirds of lessons are good or better. These lessons are thoroughly planned, with varied activities and careful attention given to ensuring that all pupils are given the correct degree of challenge. Learning builds well on earlier work and the structure of lessons encourages strong consolidation of learning in closing sessions. Relationships in the classroom are generally constructive. There are some variations in the quality of pupil management. While behaviour is usually good, in a few less effective lessons pupils are not effectively engaged in their learning, sitting passive while the teacher 'delivers' the lesson. Pupils are not naturally active learners and some teaching does too little to develop independence in their learning. Pupils generally have too few opportunities to undertake extended work or research. However, teachers' expectations of pupils taking GCSE and other examination courses are high and pupils respond well, working hard with a strong emphasis on meeting the requirements of the examinations.

19. The best teaching involves close collaboration with pupils. Many teachers display great enthusiasm for their subjects and this, in turn, promotes an enthusiasm for learning among pupils. ICT is increasingly used to enliven the learning experience. Literacy skills are well promoted in many lessons. The school increasingly uses the teaching expertise within the mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education departments, as well as that of the advanced skills teachers, to disseminate good practice.
20. Where teaching is less effective, there are weaknesses in pupil management and, in consequence, the pace of learning can be too slow. Some lessons do too little to promote pupils' independent learning, pupils can become over-reliant on their teachers and lose interest in their studies. Some teaching is unimaginative and fails to engage pupils sufficiently.
21. The school has promoted the significant elements of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and the increasing use of the recommended lesson pattern enables a strong focus on learning outcomes to be maintained. Secure knowledge of the demands of examinations in Years 10 to 13 ensures that pupils' learning is relevant and well focused. Learning is good across all age ranges.
22. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good. A variety of strategies are used to meet the needs of children identified as needing additional help. Pupils from Years 7 to 9 are withdrawn from class for literacy lessons in reading, spelling and writing. Pupils are well taught on individual programmes which use a good variety of resources to develop literacy skills. Effective curriculum support from learning support assistants is delivered principally in mathematics and science to support the development of pupils' number and word skills. There is currently no similar provision within English lessons. As a result, the literacy strategy is not being delivered as effectively as it might. Learning support assistants deliver progress units effectively to identified Year 7 pupils in the morning registration period. The majority of subject teachers are aware of the wide range of learning needs in their classes and plan their work accordingly. The history, religious education and music departments have particularly good approaches to providing materials adapted to a wide range of learning needs.
23. The school has developed thorough systems of assessment. Pupils take nationally recognised tests on entry to the school and, subsequently, at regular intervals. The results of these tests are used effectively in setting targets for pupils to aim at as they progress through the school. They are also used to send frequent brief progress reports to parents. All teachers have copies of pupils' prior attainment records and their targets. These goals are well known to pupils and are regularly reviewed. This means they are of great practical value to pupils. The data the school gathers is also used to track pupils' progress, to predict grades in examinations and to trigger intervention if required. In this way, assessment is effectively used to promote higher standards.
24. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. All Year 7 pupils are tested on arrival in school for reading and spelling levels. This information, together with test scores from Year 6, is used to identify pupils who need additional help. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored, and information on progress and individual plans is given to departments regularly. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed of their child's progress and they are invited to annual reviews.
25. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and consistent. Guidelines inform pupils of their National Curriculum or examination levels, a policy which is consistently applied. Pupils have good knowledge of their current standards and they are set straightforward, achievable targets. These benefit their achievement.

## **Sixth form**



26. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. The quality of teaching promotes the good achievement seen among sixth form students. Students' positive attitudes help ensure that lessons have good pace. Teachers consistently encourage students and foster constructive relationships. The attention continuously given to the requirements of examinations is good and ensures that teachers' planning of lessons has a strong focus on learning objectives.
27. The use of assessment to promote sixth form students' learning is good. The school collects and analyses data to predict expected grades in A and AS level and other examinations. Departments use this data to ensure that all students are making good progress and are aware of their strengths and areas for improvement. The use of assessment data to set realistically challenging short- and long-term targets for students is a significant factor in ensuring their good achievement in their time in the sixth form.

## The curriculum

The curriculum provision for pupils aged 11-16 is **satisfactory** overall with **good** provision of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are **good**. Staffing is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good and expanding range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11.
- There is good extra-curricular provision which promotes sport, the arts and other interests.
- The provision of ICT for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and of a daily act of collective worship, do not meet statutory requirements.
- Accommodation for sport is very good, but other areas of the school need refurbishment.
- Resources are good overall, but the library is under-resourced.

### Commentary

28. The curriculum is broad and meets the needs of pupils well. Pupils in Years 9,10 and 11 are offered a good range of vocational and fast track courses. A developing alternative curriculum programme meets the needs of pupils who benefit from studying fewer subjects to a higher standard. Not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive the full range of ICT experiences and, as a result, the school does not meet statutory requirements of this subject. The provision for collective worship does not meet statutory requirements.
29. A good range and innovative choice of curriculum options is offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, this wide choice, together with a similar free choice of subjects in the sixth form, does impose constraints on the timetable. This sometimes results, for example, in classes in some subjects being large or containing pupils of a wide range of abilities.
30. Arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numerical skills across the curriculum are good but the use of ICT across the curriculum is inconsistent. Personal, social and health education is well planned and forms part of an integrated teaching programme, which includes citizenship and work-related learning. This combined programme makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Sex and relationships education and issues associated with the misuse of drugs and alcohol are clearly explained by teachers, the school nurse and visiting speakers. Pupils are given appropriate advice to help them choose new courses and prepare for future employment.
31. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, especially in sport, where participation rates are high. Many subjects run clubs and give support for learning outside of the school day. The geography, history and modern foreign languages departments run residential trips to a range of places in the UK and abroad, which all enhance pupils' learning.
32. Overall, accommodation is good. Although the buildings are showing their age, recent refurbishment has brought them to an acceptable standard. However, further work is still

required in certain areas, particularly the art rooms, which are shabby and poorly furnished. Provision for sport is particularly good. There is a large well-equipped indoor sports hall and the school has ample outdoor sporting facilities, including several all-weather courts. These sporting facilities are shared with the community. The school has good security and the site manager provides a good service to the school through his routine painting and maintenance of the buildings. Access for the physically disabled is satisfactory.

33. Resources are good. The school now has a higher computer-to-pupil ratio than the national expectation, although at times access can still be a problem for classes. The library area is very modern and forms an impressive learning and study area with numerous networked computer terminals. The library has an inadequate supply of suitable books. Provision of support staff for the school is satisfactory. Staffing meets the school's curriculum requirements.

### **Sixth form**

34. The sixth form curriculum is good and meets the needs of students well. The statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form are met. Students have a free choice of a wide range of AS, A-Level and vocational courses. Good partnership arrangements with other schools help to increase the number of courses available. However, these arrangements do result in long learning sessions in some subjects. There is a satisfactory and developing programme of enrichment activities in sport, drama and design. All students have access to key skills courses but the courses are not always well tailored to students' individual needs.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is **satisfactory**. The support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, pupils receive is **good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The restructured pastoral system enables closer monitoring of pupils' progress and pastoral support for pupils is much improved.
- Induction arrangements for pupils coming into the school are good.
- Pastoral managers are strongly committed to developing a high quality pastoral provision for individual pupils.
- Pupils feel they do not have a voice in the school and their views are not listened to.
- Procedures to monitor health and safety within the school are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

35. Since the previous inspection, the pastoral system has been restructured. Recently appointed pastoral managers have a strong commitment to developing high quality pastoral support for pupils and have been given time to enable them to do this. They have set in place good foundations on which to build and have a good understanding of what still needs to be done to support pupils in raising levels of achievement. The recently introduced student mentoring system ensures that all pupils have a termly meeting with their tutor to assess progress and discuss any problems that may be a barrier to learning. Some pupils, particularly those in Year 10, felt that they could not approach members of staff if they have any problems. This partly arises from staff leaving the school but is compounded by changing tutors at the end of Years 7 and 9. This affects tutors' ability to build strong relationships with pupils and their families that are supportive and promote good learning. Although effective learning partnerships have been established between pupils and some staff, this is not universal.

36. The induction arrangements for pupils entering the school in Year 7 are good. Pupils are familiarised with the school by taster days from Year 5 onwards, a formal induction day and a two-day programme at the beginning of term. One of these days is spent on 'Learning to Learn' to help them develop independent learning skills. A mental health day introduces Year 7 pupils to tai chi and yoga as part of learning how to manage stress. The head of Year 7 closely tracks pupils' progress and quickly identifies any areas of concern and this is good. A useful range of support programmes, such as a breakfast club run by the learning mentors, and group work help pupils who are experiencing difficulty moving into the secondary school. A minority of pupils in Year 9 are given good support when they are accurately identified as needing alternative curriculum arrangements in Years 10 and 11. These pupils are currently benefiting from attending colleges of further education to study a range of vocational courses some linked with extended work placements. Careers guidance is satisfactory and helps pupils to make informed post-16 choices.
37. The learning support base is well used at lunchtimes by a number of pupils who come for help with homework or more general support. There are three learning support assistants providing good help and support to pupils.
38. Arrangements for health and safety are unsatisfactory. Responsible staff have not received adequate training and procedures to monitor health and safety within the school lack rigour. The Health and Safety Policy is still in draft form and has not been ratified by the governing body. Child protection procedures are fully in place.
39. The school is trying to involve pupils more in its daily life and to provide a more effective forum for their views to be expressed. This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. Under the various self-evaluation initiatives undertaken by the school, pupils' views have been sought and acted upon such as the behaviour audit in Years 7 to 9. An increasing role is being developed for the school council and the sports council but it is still in its early days. Representatives are elected by their peers but many pupils interviewed were unclear what its role was or of its successes. Prefects, buddies and mentors are appointed by staff and play a significant role in the running of the school.

## **Sixth form**

40. Students in the sixth form felt that their induction into the sixth form had been good. They were happy with the support they received particularly with their application to university. The sixth form does not have a 'Connexions' advisor and this aspect is unsatisfactory as it affects the quality of careers guidance students receive. Assessment profiles are produced each term by subject staff at the different schools in the consortium and used by mentors in tutorials with students and to identify any potential problems. Students felt they did not have a forum in which to express their views because there is no sixth form council but inspection finds that their views are sought and acted upon.

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

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and the community is **good**. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good links with other secondary schools and a college of further education extend the range of subjects pupils can study.
- Specialist sports college links with other schools are very good.
- There are good links with primary feeder schools.
- The good partnership with parents effectively support pupils learning.
- Curriculum bridging links are not in place to ease the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school.

## Commentary

41. The school's partnership with parents is good. There is a commitment by the school to continue to improve its links with parents. Annual consultation meetings are held for all parents to discuss the progress of their child. Some parents were not happy with the arrangements for these. They felt they were not well organised and sometimes they were not able to see all the staff they wanted to. Annual reports to parents are clear and most give an indication of what their child has studied and how they are achieving. Not all set targets to help pupils improve their work. This year, parents will receive copies of the assessment monitoring sheets every half term so they can track progress more regularly. The school is committed to establishing partnerships with parents if problems occur and parents are asked to arrange interviews with staff to devise a support plan. The school's attendance panel has been particularly successful in its work with parents. The school's newsletter, 'Grapevine' is a well-produced magazine that keeps parents informed of the activities of the school and the successes of its pupils.
42. The school's links with the community are good. The school benefits from effective links with local business and industry. These provide a source of sponsorship and for placements that give pupils' experience of the world of work. The local and wider community extensively uses the sports facilities. For example, 120 netball teams use the facilities to play matches every week. Pupils are encouraged to join in with some after school adult classes such as dance and a lifestyle group that looks at diet and fitness.
43. There are very good partnerships with other schools and colleges. There are close, consultative, working relationships with primary schools. The mechanisms for the transfer of pupils into school are good but there are no curriculum bridging units in place to support the continuity and progression in their learning. The 'Kingswood Partnership', a consortium of secondary schools and a further education college, helps the school to provide an extensive range of subjects for students to study in the sixth form.
44. Under its sports college brief, physical education staff work with primary teachers to develop their skills and schemes of work through the sports co-ordinator scheme. During the inspection, for example, 200 primary school children took part in a cross-country run organised by the school. A course for teachers in the use of ICT in physical education was well attended. Pupils from Bath Spa University on placement provide very good role models for pupils and help to raise their aspirations towards higher education. This is supported by visits to Bath University by all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the quality of leadership and management throughout the school is **good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is **very good** and the leadership of other key staff is **good**. The effectiveness of management throughout the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vision of the headteacher and very good strategic planning provide a clear direction for improvement for teachers and pupils.
- Management of subjects and the pastoral system is good.
- The governing body plays an important role in the school's improvement, although it has not ensured that all statutory requirements are met.
- The school uses self-evaluation well to monitor its progress and to initiate improvement.
- Performance management, induction of new teachers and professional development of staff are very well organised and effective.

- The school's financial planning is very effective and it applies principles of best value very well.

## Commentary

45. The overall quality of leadership is good throughout the school. In the two and a half years since his appointment, the headteacher has shown very good leadership. He has raised teachers' and pupils' expectations and created a climate for improvement. By initiating significant improvements, nearly all the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively tackled. Very effective strategic planning and his commitment to raise standards, strongly shared by the re-organised senior management team, have led to a clear school improvement plan with clear priorities. This is shared by both governors and staff and is strongly reflected in departmental improvement plans and the successfully reformed pastoral system. The targets of raising standards of attainment, teaching and learning and behaviour are being successfully met by good leadership in nearly all subjects. Mathematics, design and technology, physical education, modern foreign languages and citizenship are very well led. Very effective teams, combining experience and innovation, have been created at both senior management and subject level, with many leaders being good role models of very good practice.
46. The effectiveness of management in nearly all areas of the school is good. The school has successfully established a culture of effective self-evaluation. There are at least good systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and the quality of pupils' work in nearly all subjects. Departments are accountable to senior staff through effective line management and regular classroom observation. The use of performance data to identify concerns, followed by positive action, has much improved since the previous inspection and only a few subjects have yet to develop this. By recruiting young, dynamic teachers and five advanced skills teachers, the headteacher has been able to encourage more challenging, innovative and confident teaching which is now of good quality. This is enhanced by the very well organised programmes of staff performance management and staff development which effectively relate targets to school and individual teacher's needs. The very well run induction programme also supports new staff very effectively. Teachers are encouraged to develop their potential, morale is high and a good climate for learning is therefore produced.
47. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. The learning support base is well managed, but the day-to-day management of special educational needs provision of all subjects within the curriculum leads to some variations in provision.
48. Governance is satisfactory with aspects that are very good. The governing body is actively involved in the life and work of the school and is committed to its continuing improvement. A well-organised committee structure ensures that aspects of the school's work are closely monitored. This is achieved through an annual cycle of meetings that link into key events of the school's academic calendar. The committees oversee and monitor areas related to the curriculum, personnel and finance well. The governing body is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is involved in the identification of targets for school improvement. Individual governors have good links with faculties in the school to offer support and monitor performance. The chair of governors meets regularly with the headteacher and is kept fully informed of the school's activities and this is good. The governing body is aware of its responsibility to ensure a daily act of collective worship but understands the school's difficulties in organising this activity. Governors have not fulfilled their legal obligation to produce a policy for health and safety nor have they met requirements to make provision for all pupils to learn ICT in Years 10 and 11.
49. Financial management and monitoring procedures are very good. The governing body plays a full and active part in the management of the school's finances. It agrees the school's

budget with the headteacher and its finance committee meets regularly with the school's bursar to monitor the budget throughout the year. After a period of neglect, significant improvements to accommodation are underway, the significant sums carried forward are to finance, in part, further improvements. The principles of best value are strictly applied and governors ensure that the school takes any necessary action following auditor's reports. There has been very good improvement in this area of the governing body's responsibilities since the time of the previous inspection.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income (inc bal b/fwd)	3,338,632	Balance from previous year	-15,967
Total expenditure	3,229,740	Balance carried forward to the next	108,892
Expenditure per pupil	3,928		

## Sixth form

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Governance is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of the links with partner institutions is good and ensures a broad curriculum.
- The mentoring and evaluation of students' progress are well organised.
- Aspects of the organisation of key skills and careers are unsatisfactory.
- The governing body has made an effective contribution to the development of the sixth form.

## Commentary

50. Links with other schools and colleges through the 'Kingswood Partnership' are well organised so that students benefit from a broader choice of subjects and a wider learning experience. Regular mentoring of students' progress enables them to be effectively guided towards improvement. Teachers responsible for sixth form subjects also evaluate performance data well and use it effectively to inform teaching and learning, although this is less well developed in English. Although there is a good additional curriculum in the form of a core programme of general studies, religious education, sport and school placements, some students are confused by the organisation of key skills. The rationale behind studying them has not been clearly explained, especially when students find themselves studying a skill which they are already doing at AS or A-level. Although there is a sound programme to guide university entry, careers guidance for non-university students is undeveloped.

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

## **Work-related learning**

51. The school's provision for work-related learning is good. The area is well led and managed. A curriculum mapping exercise has taken place for Years 7 to 11 and the programme is well planned to ensure all pupils are well prepared for the world of work as they move through the school. The work-related curriculum features in the work of several departments, including design and technology, science and physical education.
52. All pupils in Year 10 benefit from work experience and the school is successful in ensuring that they are placed in environments relevant to their future intentions. Extra-curricular activities contribute well to work-related learning and include effective links with external organisations, such as the army, drama groups and other schools. Pupils in Year 11, who can benefit from it, have piloted an opportunity to do the ASDAN Silver Award (which gives national recognition of their achievement) and this meets their needs well.
53. A range of vocational options is available in the sixth form through the local partnership and retention rates are similar overall to those of the academic subjects, which are good. Monitoring of students' progress in work-related areas is satisfactory, but informal at the moment. Opportunities for students to see a Connexions adviser are limited and guidance on the career implications of option choices is variable. The school has not yet mapped the work-related curriculum in the sixth form, but has plans to do so.

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

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

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

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Teaching is well planned and structured with a variety of activities.
- Assessment is effective, so pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- There is some underachievement in Year 9 and Year 11, particularly by boys and the ablest pupils.
- Pupils do not use computers enough during lessons.

#### **Commentary**

54. Standards of attainment are below average when pupils enter the school. Results in Year 9 tests in 2003 were below average but similar to results with similar prior attainment for pupils in Year 6. Early indicators for 2004 show that results have improved at Level 5 and 6. Girls' performance is better than boys. Work seen during the inspection shows standards in Year 9 are average as teaching is good. Achievement from Year 7 to 9 is good. In 2003, GCSE results were above average for both English language and English literature examinations. School analysis for 2004 indicates that results are likely to be closer to the national average. Boys have underachieved in English language, but not in English literature. In 2004, the number of A\* and A grades was low. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good.
55. In all years, higher attaining pupils speak clearly and listen carefully to other pupils. The reading skills of pupils in all years and at all levels are good. In all years, and for pupils of all abilities good use is made of the study of literature to support written activities. Pupils' writing skills are being well developed from Years 7 to 11. Overall achievement in Years 7 to 11 is good.
56. In Years 7 to 11 the quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons carefully, including a range of activities, which develop literacy skills. They share objectives with pupils and most teachers link them to assessment. The development of schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 and the implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy have had an impact on raising standards. Currently, opportunities for using ICT in the planning and re-drafting of work are underdeveloped, and not contributing to the raising of attainment. Further work is planned to focus on additional strategies to raise the attainment of boys. Teachers set high expectations for the quality of the work they want to see from pupils and the standards of behaviour in the classroom. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils to ensure that pupils have access to the curriculum, and a number of strategies are employed to support the development of writing of the least able. In most lessons, there are good working relationships which promote good learning. However, a minority of boys in some lessons do not become engaged and cause distraction. Assessment and marking of work is consistently good. It includes regular feedback on National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades and targets for pupils on what they need to do to improve. Assessment tasks are set regularly in speaking, reading and writing and are carefully marked and recorded. Pupils are expected to review their own work and there are occasions where pupils assess each other's work effectively.



57. Leadership of years 7 to 11 is good. Since his appointment in January, the head of department has identified appropriate priorities and started to act on them. Departmental planning is now in place to support the raising of standards further by focusing on boys' achievement and higher attaining pupils at all ages, and developing the use of ICT. Management of the department is also good. Monitoring of the teaching and learning has included regular lesson observation and work scrutiny.
58. Standards in Years 9 and 11 and girls' attainment have both been raised since the previous inspection. Provision is better than at the previous inspection and improvement has been good.

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

59. Standards of literacy in Years 7 to 11 are satisfactory. The contribution to raising standards of literacy by all subjects in the school is good. There are good practical strategies for improvement within the policy, and departments are making use of them. Key departments make a good contribution to the development of literacy skills.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision for modern foreign languages is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved considerably.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- All teachers have high expectations.
- Pupils work diligently and effectively, but are too dependent on their teacher.

### **Commentary**

60. By the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards were above national expectations in both French and Italian. Boys' results were not as good as girls', but the difference was the same as that seen nationally. In 2004, results were generally similar to those gained in 2003. Standards observed in lessons are above expectations and achievement is good.
61. Achievement is very good. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average in French and results in Italian were better still. Both boys' and girls' results were above average. The pass rate went down slightly in 2004, but achievement improved, as far more candidates were entered, spanning a wide ability range. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are also above average. All pupils respond to the level of challenge set in lessons, and their achievement is very good. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is promoted effectively through the opportunity to take a second language in Year 8 and, in some cases, a third to GCSE level by the end of Year 11. Boys achieve as well as girls and pupils from ethnic minority groups also achieve very well. The department requires all pupils, including most of those with special needs, to learn at least one language until the end of Year 11, and those with lower prior attainment achieve as well as all others.
62. Pupils learn very well because teaching is very good. They are fully involved in lessons and benefit from rapid pace, competitive activities and teaching methods emphasising the skills of memory, pronunciation, literacy and speaking. Teachers are highly competent in the language they teach and speak it during lessons. Some do so constantly, requiring pupils to do so too. Teachers continually focus on high attainment and explain examination requirements precisely. Pupils know the level they are on and what they must do to move higher. Use of ICT is increasing, but there is not enough emphasis on independent language learning skills and even the older pupils remain too reliant on their teacher.

63. The department is very well led and managed. The faculty head has inspired great improvement in language learning. Starting with a clear vision of the importance of languages, she has built a team of teachers committed to achieving success for all pupils. The department uses innovative methods and is constantly developing, with no complacency. Self-evaluation is a significant feature, with detailed analysis of data and a carefully constructed plan to remedy any weaknesses. The department and the senior leadership team monitor teaching regularly and provide feedback, so improvement is constant. Trips and visits abroad are a regular feature of the department's provision. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent leadership creates an ethos of high expectation and challenge.
- Very good teaching results in very good achievement by pupils.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure that pupils clearly understand their progress.
- Teaching gives pupils little opportunity to develop independent learning skills.
- Limited delegation of managerial responsibilities results in a lack of co-ordination of policies and procedures.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards obtained by Year 9 pupils in the 2003 national tests were above average for all schools and very high and in the top 5 percent nationally for similar schools. This represents excellent achievement by these pupils. The improvement in results over the past four years is significantly greater than the national trend. Unvalidated results for 2004 are in line with this improvement. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the 2003 tests was well above that for similar schools and in line with that for all schools nationally. The overall standard reached by boys was marginally higher than that of girls but this was not reflected in work seen.
65. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in the 2003 GCSE examinations was above the national average. The results were significantly higher than their results in other subjects and represent very good achievement. Unvalidated results for 2004 continued the rising trend of improvement with a greater proportion of pupils awarded the higher grades. These results are in keeping with the standard of work seen of pupils in Years 10 and 11 and confirm the very good achievement in lessons. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good in all year groups.
66. Teaching and learning across all year groups are very good. Teachers plan their work well and make good use of assistants to support pupils with learning difficulties. The attitude and behaviour of pupils are very good. A strong work ethic is evident in all lessons and pupils respond enthusiastically to the high expectations placed upon them. They make good use of a self-assessment system that is part of the school's very good procedures for monitoring their progress. Very good teaching is characterised by effective planning, a suitable level of challenge and a stimulating pace. The strong emphasis placed upon teacher-directed learning has brought about significant improvement in pupils' learning. The department is now in a position to focus more on developing pupils' independent learning skills. Pupils' work is marked in accordance with a policy that recognises effort and corrects errors and misunderstandings with helpful comments and corrections.
67. Leadership of the department is excellent. Management is good. The head of department is an experienced and highly skilled teacher who has created an ethos of high expectation and challenge that has brought about a significant rise in standards since the time of her appointment. She has a clear vision for improvement and has created a strong culture of

achievement amongst her colleagues and pupils. Although she has support in specific aspects of management, some policies and procedures lack overall co-ordination as a result of limited delegation of wider responsibilities. The curriculum is good. It is well planned and designed to challenge the abilities of pupils. ICT is integrated into the curriculum, but limited access to computers inhibits learning in this area. Classrooms provide attractive teaching and learning environments with relevant displays promoting the subject.

68. There has been very good improvement in the provision for mathematics since the time of the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. The school has an established policy designed to identify the relevant use of numeracy in other subjects. Implementation of the policy is monitored by a representative group of teachers, led by a teacher of mathematics. Pupils demonstrate good use of numeracy skills in science where they draw graphs and tabulate data successfully. In history, pupils draw chronology time-lines and bar graphs correctly, whilst in art and design they apply their knowledge of proportion and ratio effectively to develop their appreciation of painting. Pupils also use numeracy skills successfully in ICT, technology, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results for Years 9 and 11 are too low.
- Frequent changes of faculty leader have hampered progress and development.
- The temporary faculty leader is a very good role model and the department is very well managed.
- Many pupils are not keen to learn, which reduces their achievement.
- Marking is good and complements the department's excellent data in the effective monitoring and assessment of pupils.
- Pupils' access to and use of ICT in lessons are limited.

### **Commentary**

70. Standards in the Year 9 national tests in 2003 were below average but showed an improvement on the previous year's results for passes at Level 5 and above. These results indicate a broadly upward trend, but the rate of increase is less than that nationally. There is no consistent pattern in the relative performances of girls and boys. Standards in science were lower than for English and mathematics. In 2004, results fell, but these were anticipated and the department's targets for this cohort were met. Based on the below average entry attainments of the pupils, these latest results represent satisfactory achievement. At GCSE, the 2003 results were also well below the national average for A\*-C grade passes and were the lowest for several years. Very few students gained results above grade C. The 2003 results for both boys and girls indicate significant underachievement. Results for girls were disappointing compared to the previous year's successes and contributed greatly to this decline. Reasons for this are the frequent change of department leader in the last three years and other staffing issues. Results in 2004 show a rise of 9 per cent for A\*-C grade passes, returning to the values of 2001, indicating overall satisfactory levels of achievement for these students based on their earlier results in Year 9.
71. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below average across all year groups. A major feature of the work seen was the emphasis given to practical work and to the development of skills needed in coursework, which is contributing to better standards.

Pupils in all year groups enjoy practical work and are confident in handling apparatus. Some pupils show good graphical skills. However, there were very few examples of pupils using ICT either in lessons or for homework. In the books seen, standards of marking were high with clear guidance given to pupils on how to improve.

72. Teaching is good for Years 10 and 11, satisfactory for Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory overall. Two lessons were seen which were less than satisfactory. In these lessons, pupils were poorly motivated and failed to show any real desire to learn. This is attributed to the pupils' poor attitude to the subject, caused by several changes of teachers in the previous year. Learning is satisfactory, as pupils' wider knowledge base is weak. Too few pupils are prepared to fully engage with the teaching and to make the required effort needed for success. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives and plenty of opportunity for practical work. The development of practical skills needed for coursework and the ability to predict, analyse and evaluate results is given particular emphasis. In the better lessons, knowledgeable teachers create a sense of fun in the learning process and allow the pupils to be involved in their own learning. In one lesson on photosynthesis the teacher made very effective use of the department's interactive white board to enhance the learning. In less successful lessons the use of question and answer sessions is weak. Starter and closing activities often do not do enough to engage pupils in active learning and to provide feedback.
73. The management of the department is very good and leadership good. Following frequent changes in department leader in the past three years, the department has operated under the guidance of the second in department. The department has been led with drive and determination and the department leader provides a very good role model. She has been well supported by others in the department and there is now a dedicated team of teachers and technicians. Lesson plans and teaching material are shared between colleagues. A strong feature of the department has been the development of assessment utilising its own impressive database, which is used to monitor and assess pupils' achievement.
74. Since the previous report, improvement has been good. Standards have improved from a very low base and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. The behaviour of most pupils is also much improved and as a result there are more good and very good lessons. New courses have been introduced to provide a greater match of pupils' abilities to taught material. Previous health and safety issues have been addressed. However, storage facilities are inadequate for the department's needs. The recent loss of the department's staff base limits opportunities for the informal exchange of information and ideas between teachers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at Year 9 and 11 are below average.
- Application of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy is starting to raise standards in Year 7.
- Good resources support learning.
- Competence in using ICT is below average in Years 10 and 11 as not all pupils experience the full range of activities.

### **Commentary**

75. Teacher assessments in 2003 were below average and this trend continued in 2004. Standards of work in Year 9 are below national expectations. However, this represents satisfactory achievement as pupils' standards when they start school are below average. Pupils in Year 9 write simple instructions to control a process, but they do not make suitable changes to make it more efficient. They create leaflets and presentations, demonstrating a basic understanding of ICT techniques. However, they do not amend the style of their presentations for specific purposes or audiences. The full introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy in 2004 has already started to improve standards in Year 7.
76. There were no external examinations in 2003. Provisional results for the vocational course in 2004 are better than the school average. However, no pupil attained any of the higher grades. Pupils had received very little ICT before starting the course and in reality completed it in one year. For this group, this represents satisfactory achievement. Two small groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the vocational course. They demonstrate how ICT is used in a chain of restaurants, but the standard of work is below average. Pupils research the Internet for suitable material and insert text and graphics into documents. However, they do not fully appreciate the need to consider how the layout of these documents impacts on a reader. There are no separate provisions for pupils with special educational needs, but they achieve as well as others.
77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, teachers plan lessons carefully. They set tasks to extend pupils' skills and understanding of ICT. The success of these tasks is sometimes limited because teachers do not fully discuss with pupils what they have to do. In Years 10 and 11, teachers prepare lessons more effectively. Lesson activities are detailed and enable pupils to meet examination requirements. In good lessons, clear objectives and positive use of technology ensure pupils know how to complete each task. Good individual support encourages all pupils to make progress. As a result, standards in examination work are rising. Constructive assessment procedures are used to track pupils' progress, though they do not involve pupils setting and assessing targets. Teachers do not use sharply focussed questions at the end of lessons to establish how well the pupils have achieved. Homework is generally set to consolidate learning or prepare for the next lesson. The marking of work with helpful comments that tell pupils how they can improve is inconsistent. There are no tasks to extend the higher attaining pupils. Unacceptable behaviour from some boys results in them not progressing as well as they should or as well as the girls.
78. Leadership is satisfactory and there is a clear vision for the sustained development of ICT. Management is also good. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 now gives all pupils a wide range of experiences. The pupil computer ratio of nearly 4:1 is much better than the national average. Pupils' learning is supported by the good resources, but, in some classes, not all pupils have individual access to computers. Computer networks are efficiently managed by good support staff. In Years 10 and 11 some aspects of the National Curriculum are not taught in discrete ICT lessons nor delivered through other subjects. As a result, pupils' competence in ICT is below other pupils nationally. Good departmental management creates effective teams. Procedures for assessment of progress and the evaluation of performance clearly contribute to the continued improvement in ICT provision.
79. Progress since the previous inspection has extended the use of ICT in teaching and learning. However, pupils still do not receive their full entitlement to ICT experiences. Statutory requirements are still not fully met. Improvement is satisfactory.

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

80. The development of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has conducted an audit to identify gaps in pupils' ICT experiences. Pupils are not taught all aspects of ICT through other subjects. There is no strategy to map and monitor

how other subjects contribute to the overall ICT provision. The improved resources now provide sufficient computers, though limited access to the ICT rooms is compromising learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching has improved and is good overall.
- Assessment procedures are used well to target improvement in Years 7 to 9.
- Good leadership has introduced important innovations.

#### **Commentary**

81. Standards in Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement, given that pupils enter the school with skills in history that are below average.
82. GCSE examination results in 2003 were very low and some of the worst in the school. Although well below average, results improved in 2004, when all pupils gained A\*-G grades. The evidence from inspection is that standards are now improving to below the national average in Year 11, as a result of effective changes to teaching, resources and the curriculum. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily in Year 11. Year 10 pupils achieve well as they are benefiting from the recent, stronger emphasis on skills development. However, skills of analysis and interpretation are still below expectations for the majority of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well throughout the school as other pupils.
83. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their very good knowledge to plan lessons thoroughly, with sharply timed and focused activities. Pupils are stimulated to learn well through a wide range of challenging tasks, using good resources such as overhead projectors. However, the use of computers has yet to be fully developed as a resource. The strong encouragement of literacy promotes pupils' history skills of enquiring into different resources, recording and extended writing. Good learning results from good relationships with pupils and effective classroom control. It is also promoted by the pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to work, although a significant minority find independent enquiry work difficult. Marking is good in Years 7 to 9, and provides pupils with useful advice about how to improve. Although teaching in lessons is good in Years 10 and 11, there is less consistently rigorous marking and monitoring of pupils' progress.
84. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The head of department provides a clear vision and strong direction. Teachers work well together in joint planning and the sharing of good practice through lesson observations and monitoring. There is a well-organised programme of outside visits, which stimulates pupils' interest in history.
85. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. A critical evaluation of standards has prompted a positive response in changing teaching styles and the curriculum. Consequently, standards and teaching have improved throughout the school, although the improvements have not had time to impact significantly on GCSE results.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results in 2003 were well below average.
- Lesson planning is good.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their enquiry skills through fieldwork are good.

### **Commentary**

86. At the end of Year 9, results in teacher assessments are below average but represent satisfactory achievement, given pupils' below average standards when they enter the school. In work seen, standards are below average in Year 9 and Year 10 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. No pupils are currently studying geography in Year 11. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average and pupils did not do as well in geography as many other subjects they took. However, results improved markedly in 2004.
87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some teaching is good. Teachers plan and structure lessons well so that most pupils are productive and move smoothly from one task to the next. Resources are used to engage pupils' interest and they are given good opportunities to develop their geographical skills through fieldwork. Pupils speak confidently and are keen to contribute to discussions but their listening skills are less well developed and this sometimes inhibits learning. New systems of assessment, where pupils evaluate their own and each other's work, are beginning to enhance learning.
88. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been considerable staffing turbulence in the department over the last two years that has had a negative impact on pupils' learning. The acting head of department has made considerable efforts to put clear and detailed schemes of work in place. Good support is provided by the acting head of department for inexperienced and temporary members of the department and their work is monitored well.
89. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory because standards have fallen in comparison with national averages. However, the staffing of the department is now more settled and new staff are gaining further experience. GCSE results improved markedly this year and the department has a plan in place to ensure further improvement.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching contributes well to pupils' achievement.
- The good leadership of the subject ensures that pupils receive a rich curriculum.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Commentary**

90. Standards in the GCSE short course in 2003 were below average but had improved from previous years. In 2004, short course standards fell because entries did not include the highest attaining pupils. This group was entered for the GCSE full course and nearly three-quarters achieved A\* - C grades.
91. In Year 9, standards are in line with the expectations of the local education authority agreed syllabus, an improvement since the previous inspection. Given pupils' below average standards on entry to the school, this represents good achievement. Pupils show skills in

linking their knowledge of religion with everyday experiences. By Year 11, standards are average. Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of how they can learn from religion and apply it in their lives. They make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of religious concepts. They usually question and explore their own attitudes in depth, owing to the enabling skills of the teachers. They achieve well. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good, because pupils are provided with good support and work that matches their needs. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is good. Pupils demonstrate a clear respect for the views, faiths and traditions of each other.

92. Teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers' good use of discussion and questioning enables pupils to express their opinions and form clear judgements about religious and moral issues. The use of key words and subject specific language enable pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. Pupils achieve well as a result of the teachers' very good knowledge of the subject and an awareness of individual needs. Teachers' use of effective teaching methods, coupled with high expectations and challenge, enables all pupils to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of religious and moral issues.
93. Curriculum leadership is good, with a clear sense of purpose and direction. The head of department approaches the task with enthusiasm and commitment. She has been very successful in developing a strong team approach and is well supported by three other teachers, none of whom are specialists. Management is satisfactory, as insufficient use is made of the monitoring of the work of teachers. The extent of the curriculum leader's other responsibilities does not allow her sufficient time to devote to the management of the subject. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been good.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Good teaching is raising standards.
- Interesting activities ensure pupils enjoy their learning.
- Leadership of the department is very good.
- Assessment is informative and tells pupils how to improve.

#### **Commentary**

94. In 2003, GCSE design and technology results were well below average. However, there were significant differences between the subjects. Standards in food and resistant materials were in line with the national average. Standards in graphics were very low. The 2004 graphics results are much higher. Pupils' attainment has been adversely affected by serious staffing difficulties and the lack of workshops during refurbishment. Standards observed during the inspection are much higher than previous examination results. Pupils



work hard on their coursework and are on target to achieve standards close to the national average this year. This represents good achievement as their attainment on entry to the school was below average. Pupils are encouraged to show originality and creativity. Good opportunities are provided for them to use ICT to research, design, manufacture and improve the presentation of their coursework. Teachers' advice is ensuring pupils constantly improve their work. This is increasing their GCSE coursework marks and is raising standards.

95. Year 9 teacher assessments of pupils in 2003 were below the national average. However, this represents satisfactory achievement, given their below average attainment on entry. Their attainment was also adversely affected by the staffing difficulties and lack of access to workshops. During the inspection, significant improvements were seen. Pupils have done a lot of work since September. Year 9 pupils are attaining average standards. Some of the work undertaken by the Year 7 pupils exceeds expectations for pupils of their age.
96. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils benefit from well-qualified and hard-working teachers, who are continually looking for ways to improve. The new workshops, which are open and well equipped, have a positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly. Activities are interesting and enjoyable. Relevant homework is set and pupils do it conscientiously. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. Effective advice is given to individuals, which helps them improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and teachers successfully develop their self-esteem. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to undertake more challenging activities. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of visits, visitors and industrial links. Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and accurate. Older pupils are given detailed advice on what to include in their coursework folders and how to improve their practical work. Younger pupils are assessed frequently and have targets matched to their ability. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in lessons. Their practical skills are well developed and the clocks and cam toys made by Year 9 pupils are of a good standard. Pupils are introduced to the use of computer aided designing and making programmes from Year 7. They quickly learn how to write design specifications and evaluate their finished artefacts against them. Pupils take a pride in their work and try to ensure a high quality finish.
97. The head of department provides very good leadership. She is enthusiastic, willing to try new ideas and has a clear vision of the future development of the subject. She has high aspirations and provides a good role model for others to follow. The department is managed well. The work of the department is carefully monitored and good practice identified and shared. Data is thoroughly analysed, and strengths and weaknesses are identified and used to improve results.
98. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The quality of teaching has improved and behaviour is now good. The curriculum is much broader and now fully meets statutory requirements. ICT now plays an important part in pupils' learning. Industrial and community links have been considerably extended. Accommodation and resources have been significantly improved.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Standards are rising, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The contribution of ICT to the art and design curriculum is unsatisfactory.

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions and be challenged to reach the highest levels.
- The consistency of planning, teaching and assessment across the department is good.

## Commentary

99. Pupils' attainment on entry at Year 7 is below average. In Years 7 to 9 an emphasis is placed on the development of their practical art and design skills and systematic use of sketchbooks. This is effective as it enables pupils to improve, particularly their observational drawing, across a variety of materials. Achievement is satisfactory so that by the end of Year 9 most pupils' standards are close to the expected level.
100. All pupils gained a GCSE A\*-G grade in 2003, which is above the national average, but the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades A\*-C was below average. Girls achieved significantly better than boys. Test results in 2004 and work seen during the inspection, show a marked improvement, with the proportion of pupils working at the higher grades matching the national average. In Years 10 and 11 the achievement of all pupils including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils improve their practical skills and use their sketchbooks well to research and then record their ideas and evaluations. However, the potential for greater originality, particularly for the more able, is limited by the rigid structure of units of study, which inhibits opportunities to work in a less structured fashion.
101. Teaching and learning are good in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Lessons are consistently planned, using a well-structured scheme of work. Teaching in all years is direct and clear and this has enabled pupils, particularly those of lower and middle ability, to achieve well. Teaching does not yet sufficiently challenge pupils to apply their existing knowledge, skills and experiences or to make more of their own decisions. Assessment procedures are consistently used so pupils know how well they are doing and have targets for improvement. Learning is good, pupils show engagement, and enjoyment and they are productive in their lessons.
102. Leadership and management are good because monitoring, self-review and improvement planning leads to improved achievement. The department works well with other creative arts subjects to provide extra-curricular opportunities, the quality of which has been recognised through an Artsmark award. Display within the art areas and around the school is very good and promotes pupil achievement well.
103. There is no systematic access to ICT, so pupils do not receive their entitlement to learn through this medium. This, together with the shabby, poorly furnished accommodation, are issues which have not been addressed since the previous inspection. However, standards are improving and overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' inspirational use of live performance results in good learning.
- Increased use of ICT provision supports learning and enhances pupils' liking for music.
- A variety of good assessment techniques are used to improve learning.
- Accommodation and resources are good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities and instrumental tuition.

## Commentary

104. In Years 7 to 9 standards are average. At GCSE level, where few pupils take the subject, the number of A\*-C grades were below average in 2003 with a slight improvement in 2004. In Year 9, standards of composition are strong with pupils creating music for a purpose, using ICT to record, evaluate and develop their work. The achievement of all groups of pupils is good because tasks set are appropriately challenging and matched to individual needs.
105. Teaching and learning are good with a proportion of lessons very good. All teachers have strong subject knowledge and are able practical musicians providing good role models for their pupils. Good teaching is characterised by well-planned tasks that both challenge and reinforce what is already known. Relationships are good, resulting in a calm atmosphere that supports learning. Well-established classroom routines ensure that pupils remain focused even in practical lessons. ICT is used effectively in most lessons to present tasks in a dynamic way that inspire pupils to achieve well and ensures consistent involvement. In some lessons, the use of ICT and live performance are very powerful. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 are linked closely to National Curriculum levels and focus on music for particular purposes, such as computer games and film music topics, in order to engage interest and enthusiasm. However, opportunities are currently being missed to incorporate more music from the standard classical repertoire or world music to increase general knowledge, particularly in Year 7. Pupils work well together and support each other so their learning is also good.
106. Assessment is good because individual targets are set to help pupils understand how they can develop their work in order to improve their grades. The department employs a wide range of assessment strategies, including self and peer assessment that are built into lessons. There is good use of assessment data to inform learning. Pupils receive individual support from teachers in their practical lessons, their written work is carefully marked and clear targets are set for improvement.
107. The school has made successful use of the 'fast-track' scheme to recruit new leadership for the department and provides good support for newly qualified teachers in posts of responsibility. Leadership and management are currently good, and there is clear evidence that in the past the department has been well led and managed.
108. There is an increasing breadth of opportunity for music-making outside the school day, including opportunities for pupils to use the recent innovations in ICT to record their performances and compose. The addition of vocal tuition to the normal orchestral and popular instruments provides wider opportunities to gain expert performing tuition to compliment the work in the classroom. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## **Drama**

109. A Year 10 drama lesson was seen during the inspection. Teaching and learning were good. There was a wide range of abilities within the group, but pupils worked well together and teaching took account of this. Pupils had a developing sense of audience and were at the early stages of learning about theatrical devices, and the structure of their pieces. With good teacher support, pupils shared their ideas well and responded to presentations with constructive evaluation. The standard of work seen in the lesson represented the full range of GCSE grades. A range of extra-curricular activities further enhances pupils' experiences of the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The head of department has a clear, shared vision for the department, and there is a strong team spirit.

- Very good teaching is well planned, motivational and challenging and promotes very good learning.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good and are plentiful, well attended, recreational and educational.
- Very good facilities aid teaching and learning.
- Sports college status is now making a very positive impact on the school.
- The department does not set demanding enough work for more able pupils.

## Commentary

110. Achievement of all pupils is very good, as standards are above average overall. By the end of Year 9 most pupils' standards are average. Year 11 standards are above average, except in GCSE where the proportion of A\*-C grades have fallen to just below average in the last two years. However, pupils have performed better in GCSE physical education than in their other subjects. The dip in results was caused through staff absence due to secondment, illness, and training involved in setting up the sports college. Girls perform better than boys at GCSE level, because the boys' ability range is wider and only the more able girls take physical education.
111. The learning of all pupils is very good as teaching is very well planned, challenging and engaging. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, use a wide variety of styles and use ICT very well to develop learning. Very good teaching is ensured by lesson observations, team teaching and sharing of good practice. All teachers set clear objectives and check learning through probing questions and constructive summaries. In some lessons, teachers set work that does not ensure that the more able pupils are stretched enough.
112. The department is very well led, so that there is a clear and shared vision for the school and sports college. There is a strong team spirit and support for each other, and a caring attitude for the pupils. The management is also very good. There are very detailed self-evaluation procedures in place, monitoring the quality of provision, but many are new and so their impact has been limited.
113. The department is very good at integrating the use of ICT into lessons to enhance learning, and a work related BTEC course has been introduced to cater for those pupils wishing to go into the sports industry. The school has achieved a great deal in its first year as a sports college in raising participation levels, creating links with clubs, other schools and the community. Extra-curricular activities are a real strength, as clubs are well attended, recreational and educational, and school teams do very well locally and at county level. Since the previous inspection the department has made good improvement, as teaching and learning are now very good, hard play areas are now safe and facilities have been refurbished and increased.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

### Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards show improvements on recent examination results.
- Good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes ensure good achievement.
- The subject is well managed.
- Pupils are not always given the opportunity to engage in their own learning.
- Links with local business are undeveloped.

## Commentary

114. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average, but improved in 2004 and most pupils attained the standards they were expected to. Standards in work seen by current Year 11 pupils are average and pupils achieve well as they have no prior knowledge of business terms or concepts at the beginning of the course. This good achievement is due to more structured teaching. Pupils have a sound understanding of business concepts. More able Year 10 pupils gave satisfactory business reasons for their designs of a shopping centre. Pupils develop satisfactory skills of research and recording, often using the Internet and computers. However, although pupils produce accurate spreadsheets on cash flow forecasts, for example, except for the most able, pupils' analytical skills are undeveloped. A significant minority of pupils have weak writing skills, which hamper accurate and detailed presentation of their findings.
115. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is used well to plan lessons thoroughly with sharply timed and focused activities with clear learning objectives. Pupils are stimulated to learn well through a wide range of tasks using good resources, which meet the learning needs of all pupils. ICT is well used and much emphasis is placed on developing numeracy. Marking is good and provides pupils with sound advice about how to improve. There is good analysis of assessment results and the regular tracking of pupils' progress. Target setting based on this information has started. Good learning is helped by the pupils' positive attitudes to the subject and their good co-operation in collaborative work. This is promoted by the teacher's good relationships with pupils and effective classroom control. However, the engagement of the pupils is less effective when the teacher dominates too much and restricts the pupils' oral responses.
116. The head of department has a strong commitment to improvement and manages the subject well. A critical evaluation of standards in Years 10 and 11 has prompted a positive response and the raising of standards and achievement of current pupils. Assessment procedures are being improved, with more emphasis on assessing pupils' learning skills as well as their knowledge and understanding. The impact of this has yet to be seen in GCSE results. Leadership is satisfactory, but there is a lack of initiative to use the local business community to enhance pupils' work experience and for visits and speakers to enliven the subject. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

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

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

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

- Good teaching makes a clear contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The curriculum is very well planned and organised.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in community-based activities.

### **Commentary**

117. In Year 9, standards are similar to expectations. Given pupils' below average standards on entry to the school, this represents good achievement. Pupils are developing well in their knowledge and understanding of responsible citizenship. By Year 11, current standards are average. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of concepts such as rights and responsibilities, justice and fairness and can relate these to their own and others' experiences. They show a good ability to structure ideas in relation to citizenship concepts and values. Achievement is satisfactory.

118. Good teaching challenges pupils to develop their own attitudes towards citizenship. Teachers' good knowledge and confidence enable pupils to develop important citizenship skills of analysis and evaluation. The good use of questions and range of styles enables pupils to think about their own responses to issues, enabling them to develop skills, attitudes, values and independence of thought, feelings and actions. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are provided with work that matches their needs. These activities provide a good basis to enable pupils to develop a clear awareness of what it means to be responsible citizens.
119. The school is committed to the provision of citizenship education and sees it as integral to pupils' personal development. The programme has been developed very well and significant steps have already been taken to deliver this aspect of the curriculum. Citizenship education is supported by related themes and topics covered in other subjects, although delivery in these areas is variable. Pupils have additional opportunities to develop an understanding of responsible citizenship and the democratic process through activities such as the school and year councils. Not enough opportunities are provided within the wider community for pupils to participate fully in active citizenship.
120. The very good leadership and good management of the subject make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement in this area. The teaching of citizenship is very well supported by a comprehensive scheme of work and clear assessment procedures that enables the coverage of topics to be recorded. Monitoring of the work of the subject is established. Citizenship makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils both in terms of the curriculum on offer and teaching styles that encourage pupils to develop attitudes and values. The good progress being made in the development of citizenship provides a firm base for further improvement.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, five 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.

### *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	1	100	80.1	0	23.7	30	29.9
Biology	1	100	65.2	0	11.1	20	20.6
Business Studies	4	100	76.4	0	16.3	22.5	26.2
Communication Studies	3	100	86.4	0	23.8	20	32
English literature	1	100	85.9	0	19.1	40	30.2
General Studies	8	75	73.9	0	17.8	18.8	25.7
Geography	5	100	74.3	20	19.8	28	26,5
German	1	100	81.5	0	19.3	20	28.9
History	1	100	80.7	0	19.5	20	28.6
Mathematics	6	66.7	61.9	16.7	17.1	23.3	22.1
Other Languages	1	100	82.6	0	42.9	20	36.2
Other Social Studies	4	100	69.7	25	16.7	32.5	24.1
Sports/PE studies	1	100	73.2	100	11.4	50	23.1

**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
Biology	1	100	96.4	0	39.2	40	78.6
Business Studies	14	100	98.7	7.1	36.8	61.4	80.1
Chemistry	4	100	97.6	25	49	65	84.9
Communication Studies	7	100	99.4	0	37.8	67.5	82.1
English/English language	1	100	99.4	0	36.3	60	80.9
English literature	7	100	99.5	14.3	46.5	65.7	86.5
General Studies	22	95.5	94.7	22.7	31	67.3	73.1
Geography	5	100	98.7	20	44.5	64	84
History	2	100	99	0	44.6	40	84.6
Information Technology	1	100	95.6	0	24.6	40	69.5
Mathematics	4	100	96.7	50	55.6	85	88.8
Music	1	100	98.8	0	38.9	60	81.1
Other Languages	2	100	96.9	0	64.5	60	93.8



Other Sciences	2	100	97.3	0	41.5	60	80.3
Other Social Studies	2	100	97.4	100	42.7	120	81.8
Physics	2	100	96.7	50	44.6	80	81.7
Sociology	1	100	98.2	0	44.3	80	83.6
Sports/PE studies	6	100	98	50	30.9	86.7	75.2

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature was the focus subject for the inspection. No subjects were sampled.

### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge.
- The department has not identified what it needs to do to raise standards.
- Students do not have a focused induction on the skills required for the course.

### Commentary

121. Results in 2003 for A-level examinations were well below average. All students passed the examination but the number of higher grades was small. School analysis for 2004, which is based on prior attainment, shows that results are in line with predictions for individual students and that, overall, results have improved. Work seen in Year 12 during the inspection confirms that the trend is one of improvement. Achievement in Years 12 and 13 is satisfactory. The course attracts students with a wide range of ability and most join with standards which are below average. During Year 12, students find the difference in content and approach between GCSE English literature and A-level disconcerting, but are appreciative and benefit from the support and guidance they receive from the Year 12 teachers. The written work of Year 13 students showed underdeveloped skills in organising their note-taking and written assignments.

122. Teaching in Years 12 and 13 is good, but there are inconsistencies between Years 12 and 13, which were apparent in the work seen. Teachers know their subject well, demonstrating a good balance of knowledge and awareness of students' learning needs. Teachers introduce a range of background information to support reading of the text, and where possible link new material to previous study. Lessons are well planned and structured and provide a range of activities in which students engage in detailed analysis of the texts. Students are challenged as in a lesson where Year 12 students were studying the structure of a passage in *The Tempest* and considering how the structure related to mood and tone. Working relationships between teachers and students are good. There are students in both Year 12 and Year 13 who require and receive a significant measure of teacher support to achieve satisfactorily. The poor organisation of some students' work in Year 13 is a barrier to satisfactory achievement. Less able students in Years 12 and 13 respond well in groups when supported directly by the teacher or in class in response to skilful questioning. The assessment of written assignments is good and gives clear feedback to students on their progress, but in Year 13 there is no evidence of assessment of work carried out in class.
123. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The day-to-day management of the course is carried out effectively by the teachers of the course. However, there has been no identification of priorities for raising standards, informed by detailed analysis of examination data. The sixth form is not subject to the self-evaluation practice, which is developing well in English in the main school.
124. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

### **Language and literacy in other areas of the curriculum**

125. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are satisfactory and enable students to cope with most of the reading and writing elements of their sixth form courses. Those students who are identified as having low literacy skills on entry to the sixth form are included in the communications key skills course and the majority receive accreditation at Level 1 or 2. Teachers in A-level subjects support students in the collection of evidence of communication skills for the students' portfolios. The contribution of subject departments to raising literacy standards generally is less marked in the sixth form than it is in the rest of the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The school offers AS and A-level mathematics, which was the focus of this inspection.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership creates high expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good. Students' conscientious attitudes have a positive impact on their learning.
- Emphasis upon teacher-directed learning provides insufficient opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills.
- Students' limited skills in note taking and presentation inhibits learning.

### **Commentary**

126. A-level examination results in 2003 were in line with the national average. The results for 2004 have maintained this position. Results in the AS level examination in 2003 were above average. The results in 2004 indicate a significant improvement on previous results with an increased proportion awarded the higher grades. The overall achievement of students is good.

127. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are skilled and well-qualified with a strong enthusiasm for the subject. There is impressive use of ICT through the interactive white board to enhance teaching. The mathematics curriculum is good but the considerable emphasis placed upon teacher-directed learning inhibits the development of collaborative and independent learning skills amongst students. Students' behaviour is very good. They demonstrate very conscientious attitudes that have a positive impact on their learning. However, their limited skills in note-taking and presentation result in work appearing confused and disorganised. This inhibits some aspects of learning. Students have confident relationships with their teachers. This encourages them to seek clarification or assistance when confused or unclear. To support their learning and understanding further, the head of department provides regular opportunities for them to meet with her for individual tutorial sessions to discuss their progress. The marking and assessment of students' work is good.
128. Very good leadership by the head of department has created an ethos of aspiration, achievement and high expectation amongst students and teachers. Her effective teaching skills set high standards for her colleagues and students feel secure in a confident teaching environment. Management of the department is good.
129. There has been a good improvement in provision for mathematics in the sixth form since the time of the previous inspection. The number of students currently studying the subject at advanced level in Years 12 and 13 is significantly greater than previously.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

130. Satisfactory provision is made for sixth form students whose standards in mathematics are below average to develop their numeracy skills. This is done through an effective and specifically designed key skills programme that also includes English and ICT. A specialist mathematics teacher is responsible for teaching the course. This is supported by a portfolio of evidence gathered by students from other areas of their studies that contribute to the development of their numeracy skills.

## **SCIENCE**

The focus was on physics but one Year 13 lesson of biology was sampled. The very good teaching was enthusiastic and had a brisk pace. Although mainly based on a seminar style, there were ample opportunities for students to contribute to the lesson. Very good relationships were evident. The teacher was confident and knowledgeable and pitched the material at a level suitable for the wide range of abilities present. A variety of reading material and supplementary questions was particularly well used to stimulate and develop independent learning skills. As a result, learning and achievement were good overall.

### **Physics**

Provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Collaborative arrangements between schools ensure that viable group sizes can be obtained and this promotes students' achievement.
- Shared teaching between schools provides greater learning opportunities.
- Some students have yet to manage their study requirements effectively.

### **Commentary**

131. This year is the first occasion that this course has been taught at the school. In recent years, a few students have successfully studied A-level physics at a neighbouring school where they have obtained a 100 per cent pass record.
132. The Year 12 group consisted of students drawn from two participating schools. This arrangement enabled the group to be a reasonable size. Prior to the inspection, students had only received a few lessons at this school. In the lesson seen, students were consolidating their previous learning on the topic of dynamics and resolving vector quantities. Students were making slow progress with calculations and their levels of confidence reflected this. The teacher showed good knowledge of examination requirements and was able to successfully impart the ideas of structured answers to the students. As a result, progress was made and by the end of the lesson students' felt more confident in their ability to cope with additional homework examples. Relationships were good and during the lesson students were participating in class discussions after suitable encouragement from their teacher. In homework exercises set, work was marked appropriately. On the basis of this lesson and future planning, including opportunity for data-logging work, teaching and learning are satisfactory. At this early stage of the course students are broadly showing satisfactory levels of achievement based on the broad ability range of the group.
133. Leadership and management of the course are shared by the two contributory schools. Respective teachers liaise closely and are establishing an Internet link to help with the level of communication needed. This joint teaching arrangement provides students with a variety of teaching styles, which enhances the learning provision. At present, it is too early to comment on the effectiveness of this joint arrangement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Suitable vocational courses are extending students' experiences in ICT.
- Students' positive attitudes contribute to their learning.
- The policy to allow any student to take ICT is depressing standards.
- Not all students have the opportunity to participate in ICT key skills.
- Assessment does too little to help students improve.

### **Commentary**

134. In external examinations, there was only one candidate in 2003 and none in 2004. Currently, a small group in Year 12 follow the GNVQ vocational course and a group in each of Year 12 and 13 follow the advanced vocational course. However, when these students were in Years 10 and 11 the provision for ICT was very limited. None of the Year 13 students had followed an ICT examination course.
135. Currently standards of work are below average in Year 13. Students use basic ICT techniques, but have difficulty in applying simple principles in specific applications. Year 12 students who follow the GNVQ vocational course create documents for use in a small business. They combine text and graphics satisfactorily. They do not always consider how the contents of the documents should impact on the reader. As a result, they do not format them effectively. Year 12 students on the advanced vocational course use basic techniques to import, edit and format documents, but their skills are not sufficiently developed to allow them to use more advanced features to cut out parts of pictures which are not relevant. Year 13 pupils work well collaboratively to create visual presentations. They do not appreciate why it is important to consider using a consistent style. Presentations do not include advanced

features such as action buttons and hyperlinks. Given students low standards at the start of the course, achievement is satisfactory.

136. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use good knowledge of the subject to plan lessons that provide tasks, which match examination requirements. Students have a positive attitude and work well individually. They concentrate on their work and teachers support them so they make some progress. Assessment procedures track progress, but there is not sufficient discussion with students about how they can improve their skills and understanding. Homework is used well to consolidate and prepare students for lessons. There is no specific extension work to stretch the higher attaining pupils.
137. Leadership is good and there is a clear vision for the development of ICT. Vocational courses suited to the needs of students are now offered. Any student is allowed to follow the advanced courses, but this policy is keeping standards below the national average. The courses are managed well and team-work enhances learning. Resources are good and students all have their own textbooks so they can work at home. There is confusion over the selection of students to follow ICT key skills courses. It is not offered to all those students who do not take an ICT examination course.
138. ICT in the sixth form was not reported in the previous inspection, but the progress in courses and resources in recent years is good.

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

139. The development of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Some subjects use ICT as a tool to enhance teaching, though its use to extend learning is less well developed. In physical education, ICT effectively broadens students' understanding of movement analysis. In other subjects, teachers use the interactive white boards to make teaching more interesting. Students make good use of ICT resources to improve their course work.

### **HUMANITIES**

140. No courses were inspected in this area. Geography was sampled. In the Year 12 lesson seen, teaching and learning were good and students achieved well. The lesson was well planned and moved at a brisk pace, questioning was challenging and extended students' deeper understanding. Students responded well to the quality of teaching. Their standards were as expected for this early stage in the course.

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

141. No courses were inspected in this area. One art and design lesson, to a mixed Year 12 and 13 group was seen. The teacher's expectations were high and students strove to meet them. In consequence, teaching and learning were good. Students were well-motivated and showed good independent learning skills. Standards were at expected levels.

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

#### **Physical education**

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

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

- Very good teaching is well planned, engaging and challenging, leading to very good learning.
- Very good use of ICT aids teaching and learning.
- Good use of target setting and mentoring informs students of their progress.

- Very good facilities aid independent learning.

## Commentary

142. Achievement of all students is very good, so that results in 2002 and 2003 were above average, and students performed better in physical education than in their other subjects. The 2004 results maintained these high standards. Current standards are above average.
143. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is very well planned, using a variety of styles to challenge and engage students. Teachers have very good relationships with students and have very good subject knowledge, so are able to enhance discussion within the classroom. Lesson observations, team teaching and sharing of good practice all ensure the consistency of very good teaching. All teachers set clear objectives, check understanding through probing questions and provide constructive summaries. Accommodation and resources have improved considerably with the introduction of two dedicated classrooms, one with an interactive white board and the other with 15 networked computers. These facilities, along with a refurbished weights room, allow the students to develop independent learning techniques and do specialist fitness work for their personal performance profiles. The department is very good at integrating the use of ICT into their lessons to enhance learning, with PowerPoint presentations by staff and students, and the use of evaluation software to improve students' analytical skills.
144. The department is very well led. There is a clear, shared vision for the development of sixth form provision within the sports college. Management is very good, as students' progress is closely tracked with three individual mentoring sessions a year and specific targets informing students of their current levels, and what they must do to improve. The school, as a sports college has achieved a great deal in its first year with many sixth form students gaining nationally recognised awards and helping run clubs and festivals for The Grange and primary school pupils. Many students participate in the physical education option lessons and in extra-curricular activities as well as representing the school at a variety of sports.
145. Since the previous inspection the department has made good improvement as teaching and learning are now very good, and standards have remained high. Facilities have been refurbished and increased.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Sixth form grade	School grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		4
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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>4</b>
Attendance	4	3
Attitudes	3	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	4	3
The effectiveness of management	4	3

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