

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BISHOP DOUGLASS SCHOOL**

East Finchley, London

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101365

Headteacher: Miss A Murphy

Lead inspector: Dr Calvin Pike

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 November 2003

Inspection number: 259208

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: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 11 – 18 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 945

School address: Hamilton Road  
East Finchley  
London  
Postcode: N2 0SQ

Telephone number: (020) 8444 5211  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr P Leatherland

Date of previous inspection: 9 February 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bishop Douglass RC High School is located on a relatively small site in East Finchley in the London Borough of Barnet. It is a mixed comprehensive for student's aged 11-18. Pupils come mainly from inner-city areas, including from those that are less advantaged socio-economically. The school has a multi-cultural intake with 35 per cent of its pupils from ethnic minority groups. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased since the last inspection to 25.3%. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than that at the last inspection but still below the national average. 26 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language. The intake reflects the full range of ability but with a relatively small proportion of higher attaining pupils. Boys outnumber girls. Pupil mobility during the recent period is relatively high with pupils 49 joining and 55 leaving. The school describes itself as 'priding' its Christian ethos and, with other faiths represented, makes clear that it 'celebrates the cultural diversity within the school'.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> form the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language grew from 10 to 40 per cent in the four years to 2001. The proportion of students with special educational needs in 2001 was in line with the national average and the proportion of those with statements was also similar to that nationally.

Last year the school was led by a seconded-head and a new chair of governors took over after a period of declining standards. From September a new but experienced headteacher was appointed who has set a clear and appropriate focus on raising standards by improving teaching and learning.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9502	R Hall	Lay inspector	
27411	H Butensky	Team inspector	English
10679	M Aston	Team inspector	Mathematics, Mathematics (sixth form)
22370	P Harwood	Team inspector	Science
8159	K Wright	Team inspector	Art
2735	P Burton	Team inspector	Design and technology, Design and technology (sixth form)
32297	C Martin	Team inspector	Geography, History (History) sixth form
6364	G Strack	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, Information and communication technology (sixth form)
11754	J Broadbent	Team inspector	Modern Languages
31673	J Gwyer-Roberts	Team inspector	Music
22601	L Devine	Team inspector	Physical Education
2731	P Holden	Team inspector	Art (sixth form)
2686	B Oppenheim	Team inspector	Business (sixth form)
12003	A Marfleet	Team inspector	English (sixth form), Drama (sixth form)
3258	D Bain	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form)
23402	B Singh	Team inspector	Biology (sixth form)

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>10</b>
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>15</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREA SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>53</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Bishop Douglass RC High school is **ineffective** overall despite some satisfactory features and recent changes introduced to make the school more successful. The new headteacher has already shared priorities and begun to prepare staff to address them, leading to some positive outcomes. However, refinements in teaching are not well enough embedded in practice to secure consistent improvements in learning. Some subject results rose in 2003 but from a low base following four years of declining standards. Consequently, attainment is below national averages. Day to day support for pupils' personal needs is satisfactory but they do not get enough feedback about how to improve their work. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- GCSE results have fallen for the last four years but there were clear improvements in end of Year 9 tests in 2003;
- teaching is unsatisfactory overall: too much teaching is just satisfactory; there is too little good teaching to compensate for the characteristics that make learning unsatisfactory overall;
- the new headteacher has shared her clear vision and already begun to introduce important changes to address major weaknesses in the school but the long-established senior management team has been ineffective in highlighting the needs of the changing intake of the school then ensuring that these are addressed by all staff;
- governors are supportive and have begun to become better informed about the school to provide appropriate challenge but some aspects of their work are unsatisfactory;
- pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory, especially outside lessons. Recently improved systems that expect all teachers to take responsibility for improving behaviour are not implemented consistently enough;
- the school has identified some key priorities for development but the monitoring of teaching is not yet robust enough to ensure consistent or sustained improvement;
- the day to day care for pupils is satisfactory and the changing response to pupils who find it difficult to cope with the school's rules means that the extremely high numbers of fixed term exclusions in the last academic year have been reduced significantly;
- there is a limited range of out of school activities and few are designed to cater for gifted and talented pupils.

The school has made poor improvement since the last inspection as the needs of its changing intake have been neither anticipated nor addressed well. Standards have dropped markedly. Although the Year 9 national tests showed improvements in 2003, they remain below average. Teaching has deteriorated since 1998. Fewer good qualities are evident and the quality of too much teaching is only satisfactory, leaving it unsatisfactory overall. The school has failed to tackle a number of the last inspection's priorities or some subsequently emerging ones satisfactorily. Overall the school provides poor value for money.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	D	D	C
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	N/A	N/A	

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

From a low starting point **pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory** across the school as many can do better, especially those with highest prior attainment and others with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. In Years 7, 11 and in the sixth form achievement is broadly satisfactory but even here some unsatisfactory teaching means that in a few lessons pupils do not do as well as they should. However, pupils do not make necessary progress throughout the school. Achievements are unsatisfactory in Years 8, 9 and 10. Standards in the 2003 tests in English improved significantly and are just above the national average but they are well below them in mathematics and science as are the GCSE results. This is confirmed by what inspectors saw in lessons. GCSE results are rising more slowly than in schools nationally, showing the school has not been improving its performance consistently. Students in the sixth form achieve satisfactorily compared with their starting point despite standards that are well below average.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are unsatisfactory.** Their attitudes to school are unsatisfactory and sometimes poor. Behaviour is also unsatisfactory overall, but varies across the school and depends on the quality of teaching and supervision during break and lunch times. Sixth form students have good attitudes and behave well. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides an unsatisfactory quality of education.** Teaching is sound in Years 7 and 11 and in the sixth form. There is some strong teaching, particularly in drama and English, which is spread across subjects and years. But, teaching is not consistently satisfactory in Years 8, 9 and 10. This hampers the learning of the majority of pupils. Although, including the sixth form, just over 90 percent of teaching observed was at least satisfactory, the extent of good teaching is not enough to compensate for the combination of unsatisfactory teaching and of satisfactory teaching that does not challenge pupils to improve standards well enough in the main school. As a result **teaching is unsatisfactory** overall. Good relationships, teachers' thorough knowledge of their subject and high expectations mean that in good lessons pupils are involved in their work and develop their understanding well. However, inconsistencies in marking, work that is insufficiently challenging, and the lack of use of information about pupils' prior attainment to set demanding enough work for pupils across the range of abilities result in lessons where learning is minimal and behaviour unacceptable.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is organized satisfactorily to meet pupils' choices but there is no clear rationale for the range of courses available. This results in some inconsistencies in the way classes are arranged and some classes that are too small. The requirements for teaching Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and citizenship are not met. A weakness is the lack of sufficient opportunities in all years for pupils to use computers in subjects other than information and communication technology. Time given for teaching is less than recommended. However, careers education and guidance in the sixth form is good. The school offers a limited range of cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities outside school hours but few cater for higher attaining pupils. Links with parents are satisfactory and improving but links with local businesses and community are underdeveloped. The day-to-day care and support for pupils has some good features but procedures to ensure the care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are inefficient making this aspect of the school unsatisfactory overall.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL**

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall.** The new headteacher leads the school well but well-established senior members of the leadership team have been ineffective in highlighting pupils' needs and pushing up standards. Middle managers are underdeveloped, particularly in using data to raise standards and monitor the work of departments and year groups. The school's focus under the new head is set appropriately on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement but although new initiatives have been introduced they are not embedded in the practice of all staff and it is too early for them to have a significant and consistent impact on standards. The school has

recently identified areas for improvement and begun to evaluate its performance realistically, but these are not driven on rigorously enough by all senior and middle managers and this results in inconsistencies. In the last year governors have made great strides to become clearer about the school's strengths and weaknesses. But, as they have not been able to provide enough challenge or take sufficient steps to avoid the negative impact on learning of some aspects of the curriculum that do not meet statutory requirements, governance of the school is currently unsatisfactory overall.

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

From the very high percentage of questionnaire responses it is clear that most parents support the school but some have concerns about behaviour and homework. The great majority of pupils enjoy school but feel that behaviour is not good.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things to improve are linked to the school's central priority of raising standards and achievement. Some are already identified in the school's newly developing plans:

- ensure that the drive to improve teaching and standards is more rigorously and consistently addressed so that the good practice in some subjects becomes more widespread;
- take further action to improve the behaviour of pupils especially in the life of the school that is outside lessons;
- use data about pupils' prior attainment to improve learning so as to match teaching and curriculum provision better to the needs of pupils across the school;
- address the underdevelopment of senior managers and resulting ineffectiveness of the team, establishing roles that more appropriately reflect leadership responsibilities and accountabilities for improving the school as a whole and for standards in particular;
- ensure that plans for improvement are followed through thoroughly and monitored effectively by the leadership team;

and to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that requirements for ICT and citizenship are met;

## **The Sixth Form**

## **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**The sixth form is broadly effective but not cost-efficient.** Since the last inspection the sixth form has made limited improvements but this year more students are choosing to move into the sixth form than in previous years. Standards are rising and although they remain below the average, students' achievements are satisfactory. This is because teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good and this means that most students learn well but in a few courses teaching is insufficiently demanding as students are not encouraged to become independent in the learning;
- standards are rising but slowly; although they are below average students' achievements are sound;
- some teaching groups are very small which is inefficient and means that students do not have the opportunity to learn through group work and the exploration of ideas that otherwise would be possible;



## 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	<b>Good in English.</b> Standards are improving and achievement is satisfactory because of staffing now more stable. Satisfactory in French
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Comprehensive programme. Teaching is very good. Achievement is good overall.
Science	<b>Satisfactory in biology.</b> Resources good. Guidance good. Teaching satisfactory with some good but limited in a range of strategies used to develop independent learning.
Information and communication technology	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Standards are below average but achievement is good. Good teaching, small groups and effectively used resources.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory in history.</b> Teaching is generally good; students take their learning seriously and their achievement is satisfactory. <b>Good in politics</b> where teaching is good overall but varies. <b>Good</b> in sociology. Teaching is satisfactory in geography. <b>Satisfactory in psychology.</b> Excellent subject knowledge. Provision only for AS. Standards below national averages.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Good in design and technology.</b> The quality of teaching is good and the curriculum resources available are helpful and supportive. Improved as a result of increased teacher confidence.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory in art.</b> Standards are above because teaching is good and curriculum provision. Good in drama and theatre arts.
Business	<b>Satisfactory in business studies.</b> Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because the good practice is not widespread enough. Standards well below average. Achievement satisfactory.

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

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

**The quality of personal support and guidance is good.** Induction arrangements are recognised as good by the students who feel that they are consulted about their views and listened to. The relatively new head of sixth form and the team of experienced tutors provide a good level of care. Students choose from a range of A-levels but alternative course provision is too limited.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

**Leadership and management are satisfactory** overall. The sixth form is managed effectively and the good support and guidance ensures that students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds are treated fairly. Day-to-day management is good but the way the timetable is organised means that some teaching groups are too small. As for the rest of the school, teaching in the sixth form has not been monitored well and this means that the best practice is not as widespread as it might be.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and feel that they can go to their teachers for advice. They confirm that all students are treated fairly and with respect. Students reported that their work is assessed well and feedback from teachers helps them to improve.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, achievement in Years 7 to 11 at Bishop Douglass School is unsatisfactory but most students in the sixth form do as well as can reasonably be expected. As there is insufficient good teaching to compensate for that which is unsatisfactory or just satisfactory, pupils do not always achieve as well as they should particularly in Years 8, 9 and 10. GCSE results are below average and standards in most subjects are below the national average at the end of Year 11. Standards achieved in Year 9 in 2003 tests were just above average in English but below them in mathematics and science. These results showed improvement after four years of decline. A/AS and A level results are below average but examination and test results are improving in some subjects.

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

- Pupils achieve well in English and drama where standards are higher than in other subjects;
- GCSE results improved slightly in 2003 but achievement is uneven and standards have risen more slowly than in other schools;
- sixth form standards are below national averages but are improving because the quality of teaching is rarely unsatisfactory and more consistently good than in the rest of the school;
- Almost all pupils gain at least one GCSE pass but the proportion achieving at least five is below the average for schools in England;
- The proportion of boys gaining the higher grades A\*-C is higher than girls, the reverse of the trend nationally;
- Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should particularly in Years 8, 9 and 10 and in some lessons in mathematics, Spanish, geography, music and business studies because there is too much teaching that is either unsatisfactory or makes too few demands on pupils when learning;
- ICT is not used effectively in subjects across the school and this limits pupils' learning and achievement: this is partly because, until recently, ICT resources were insufficient;

#### **Commentary**

1. The school's performance in the national tests and examinations is below average overall. The 2003 Year 9 national tests based on levels are above the national average in English but well below them in mathematics and science. All subjects showed improvement, especially English. Although the school was close to meeting its targets, these were low as attainment had fallen over a four-year period to well below national averages in 2002. Moreover, attainment of the pupils in 2002 was also very low considering their prior attainment and in comparison with that of similar schools. A strong push to improve standards of behaviour led by an interim headteacher in the last academic year had a positive impact on achievement overall but at a cost of a very high number of fixed term exclusions. The newly appointed headteacher is focusing appropriately on improving the quality of teaching so that pupils are more effectively engaged in learning but it is too early to see the impact of this approach in all lessons and, as a result, standards in subjects overall are not as high as they could be.

2. The 2003 GCSE results are also below the national average. Results improved marginally from 2002 but over the last four years, at a much slower rate than they have done nationally. Whilst the results were in line with those predicted, targets were not as ambitious as they might have been. There are differences between boys and girls. The school's record of GCSE results shows that a higher proportion of boys achieved more of the higher grades at GCSE than girls in 2003: this was a reverse of the position in 2002 when girls out-performed boys in the majority of subjects. The increase in the proportion of pupils gaining at least five grades A\* - C is therefore mostly the result of improvements in boys' results. Considering the overall performance of boys and girls, boys'

performance is closer to girls' than in other schools. This suggests that the school's efforts to improve standards of behaviour had more of an impact on boys' achievements than girls'.

3. Another important piece of data shows that Black Caribbean boys achieve less well than other pupils in school. The school has not used the analysis of this data effectively in determining provision to improve standards. However, the new head has extended the senior team to include one member of staff whose responsibility will be to focus on the needs of different groups of pupils.

4. Based on available information about performance in Year 6 tests when pupils were in their primary schools, overall standards are below average when pupils enter the school in Year 7. However, standards observed in Year 7 lessons were most often in line with expectations and some pupils were attaining above them. The school makes insufficient use of available data to ensure that all teachers refine their plans to make suitable demands of pupils with different levels of prior attainment.

5. Pupils with special educational needs do not achieve as well as can be reasonably expected given their starting point. This is because provision for pupils with special educational needs is poor. Changes have been made from September but it is too early to have made a difference to the provision. Special educational needs pupils and those learning to speak English as an additional language are now dealt with separately. There have been problems with the administration and provision for special educational needs in the past and not all of these irregularities have been resolved. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is not as effective as it should be in supporting their learning and consequentially they have not achieved as well as they should.

6. Similarly, the school does not support pupils who speak English as an additional language effectively as teachers do not know how to plan suitable work to meet their needs. This is due to the fact that teachers' understanding of the different stages of English language acquisition of bilingual pupils is not good enough and this limits their ability to give good support and guidance in lessons. Consequently, pupils speaking English as an additional language have not had their needs accurately identified in the past and very little specialist provision has been made for them. Since September their skill in English has been accurately identified but they have not achieved as well as they should as this has led to little improvement in teaching. A few individual pupils who arrived in school speaking no English have achieved well through their own strong motivation and the support of the English as an additional language co-ordinator. The school has monitored exam results according to ethnic minority groups and these show that black Caribbean boys and girls are not doing as well as others in the school. But, the new head has involved the school in a selected DfES project for the 'Aiming High' strategy for African Caribbean students. The school does not separately check the exam results of pupils' who are bilingual or learning to speak English.

7. What all this shows is that while standards are below average this is only partly related to pupils' levels of attainment prior to their arrival. More importantly, pupils do not achieve as well as can be reasonably expected throughout the school because challenges made of them in lessons are not sufficiently or consistently demanding. Recent results indicate that the decline in standards over a period of four years appears to have been halted; comparing the 2003 examination and test results to other schools, they are nearing national averages in Year 9 and in line with similar schools in Year 11. Targets set under the direction of the new headteacher for the 2004 examination cohort are much more and appropriately demanding.

8. Pupils' achievements, and the school's performance in tests and examinations, are not reflected as consistently in lessons across the school. In Years 8, 9 and 10 especially learning is not good enough and achievement is sometimes weak because there is too much unsatisfactory teaching or too many lessons that, although satisfactory, do not challenge pupils well enough. This was most notable in some lessons in ICT, geography, business studies and music and there is a lack of emphasis on citizenship. In ICT some teachers do not have sufficient expertise and the curriculum is not well enough based on the National Curriculum to enable learning to be effective. In geography, teacher expectations are often too low so more able pupils have few opportunities to

achieve at a higher rate. In business studies common weaknesses that reduce the impact of teaching are a lack of challenge in work set or questioning. In music achievements are not as high as they should be because teaching is focused on too narrow a range of experiences for pupils. Whilst the school has conducted an audit of areas in which aspects of citizenship are taught, these are insufficiently focused and there is no provision to assess achievement as required. This means that the school has not yet established how it will identify how well pupils have learned the subject or how to help them improve.

9. On the other hand, achievements in English and drama are good compared with other subjects. This is because good teaching encourages pupils to be interested and involved in their work. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils in their work as well as their behaviour, pupils are most often engaged productively and, as a result, they are willing learners.

10. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in the current Year 11 and, particularly, in Year 7. In Year 7 this is because teaching is less inhibited by disruptive behaviour and teachers are more ready to challenge pupils in their learning at a level that better suits their needs. In Year 11, although standards attained are below averages, pupils achieve satisfactorily more often than those in Year 10 because they rise to the higher expectations of them set by teachers.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.26 (29.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	30.55 (31.9)	35.4 (34.7)
science	29.66 (29.8)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 166 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

#### 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	38.8 (37)	52.6 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94.8 (79)	86.3 (90)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94.8 (89)	94.6 (91)
Average point score per pupil	34.2 (34.4)*	34.7 (34.6)

*There were 164 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. \*These figures are for all GCSE subjects by pupils.*

#### Sixth form

11. Sixth form standards are well below average: in 2003, there was a slight improvement since the previous year. However, considering the prior-attainment of the range of pupils entering the sixth form, achievement is satisfactory overall. The best subjects are science, art and drama where students do well. Standards in art are in line with average. Although drama is a newly introduced course and standards are not yet reaching national averages, students are achieving very well. Attainment in science is in line with averages nationally, representing an improvement in examination results in the last three years. Written course work varies in quality. Practical activities are usually of a good standard. Students accept criticism well and achieve well because teaching in particular is good. The significant point here is that in these subjects students are doing well in the sixth form.

12. Although standards in other subjects are less secure, students are achieving well because improvements have been made in teaching and learning in recent years. In English the good command of subject and use of appropriate teaching methods by a largely new team of teachers is having a positive impact on achievement. Similarly a new head of department in mathematics has

begun to improve provision with the result that achievement over time by most students is good. Written work of many students studying psychology for the first time shows clear evidence of improvement and good achievement over the course of the term.

13. In contrast, although standards are improving in some subjects students are not achieving as well as they might in others because they are not being encouraged to develop effectively as independent learners. In French, standards of written work are improving but there is a lack of challenge to explore independently. In business studies standards are not as high as they might be because there are too few opportunities for students to contribute to their learning through discussion and question and answer sessions, leaving them insufficiently challenged. In ICT, whilst students apply themselves well, teachers' knowledge and expertise is limited inhibiting their capacity to meet the demands of the GCE AS course.

**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	90 (N/A)	N/A
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	20 (N/A)	N/A
Average point score per pupil	10.2 (10.0)	(17.4)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets not available for the previous year*

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

Pupils' attitudes overall are satisfactory but their behaviour is unsatisfactory and, for a significant minority, it is poor. There are significant variations across the school in pupils' behaviour but the incidents of fixed term exclusions have fallen from the very high levels last year. Students in the sixth form have good attitudes to their work and the school. Attendance has improved due to the implementation of tight procedures and is now satisfactory. Punctuality to school and lessons is poor. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory.

**Main Strengths and Weaknesses**

- The majority of the pupils attend regularly and have a positive attitude to their lessons but a significant minority of pupils have a negative attitude to learning and this has a negative influence on the progress of lessons;
- In a number of subjects, pupils engage fruitfully with the learning and take on responsibilities and roles in group activities yet in too many lessons, continual low level disruption adversely affects with the learning;
- The school has implemented effective monitoring procedures in relation to attendance and punctuality;
- Sixth formers contribute well to the life of the school as a community;
- Behaviour of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is generally poor. The lack of self-control of a significant group of pupils absorbs much teaching time in quelling off-task behaviour;
- Many pupils conduct themselves in a manner that shows little regard for those around them;
- Many pupils see the school as a place to meet friends rather than somewhere to involve themselves in learning;
- The school lacks an ethos that stimulates pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**Commentary**

14. Attendance has improved in the last year. Levels are now over 90% for all year groups. Some year groups' attendance is over 95%. This trend has continued under the leadership of the

recently appointed headteacher. The school has in place an effective system of monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality. Electronic registers allow the school's attendance officer to gather information quickly and to take action where needed. Parents respond well to the contact arrangements regarding attendance. The school draws its population from a large number of London boroughs. Punctuality is generally poor. Poor punctuality at the start of the school day can sometimes be determined by the school journeys that pupils must undertake on public transport. Punctuality to lessons throughout the day is poor. Many pupils do not see punctual arrival at lessons as an important responsibility. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall, but they vary across subjects and year groups. In some lessons pupils are very co-operative and involved in their learning. However, in other lessons low level continual disruption by some pupils impedes the learning for all. A significant minority of pupils have a negative attitude to learning and this can influence the progress of lessons.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10.7	School data	2.6
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

15. The behaviour of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory overall and sometime poor. Many pupils see the school as a place to meet friends rather somewhere to involve themselves in learning. The outcome of this is a relentless emphasis on socialising not only at break times and lunchtimes, but also in movement between lessons and, not infrequently, in the lessons themselves. The lack of self-control of a significant group of pupils absorbs much of the teachers' time in quelling off-task behaviour. Too many pupils show little respect for their teachers or their peers. Unacceptable language is used between pupils. There is much thoughtless behaviour on corridors and on stairs with pupils jostling and barging into one another and into adults. There is a lack of structure in terms of expectations of behaviour and general conduct around the school. Where a rule does exist, for example keeping to the left on corridors, it is ignored. Behaviour among sixth formers, however, is generally good and reflects well upon the school.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### **230 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	210	32	3
White – Irish	59	11	0
White - any other White background	110	17	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	37	14	0
Mixed - White and Asian	14	6	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	23	6	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	8	1	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	129	50	4
Black or Black British – African	205	59	2
Black or Black British - any other Black background	29	10	1
Any other ethnic group	28	6	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	26	5	0
Information not obtained	7	3	0

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

16. The school has made progress in reducing the number of exclusions in the current academic year compared with the previous year where the rate was high and a significant proportion of exclusions related to a particular ethnic minority group. The policy of inclusion has meant reducing exclusions and the development of the use of a 'time out' facility to withdraw pupils from specific lessons in the short term.

17. Generally the school lacks an effective ethos. The rich cultural diversity within the school is not developed into a positive aspect that informs the identity of the institution. Pupils have a limited understanding of the cultures of others. There is little provision within teaching and learning for pupils to reflect upon spiritual issues. However, within the broader provision, Year 7 pupils spend a day in reflection on retreat at a local parish hall and there are masses for Years 7, 8 and 9 and Years 10 and 11. The school has been looking at ways to improve the social development of the pupils, but at present this remains unsatisfactory. Sixth formers do take an active role in the life of the school where permitted. The 'buddy' reading arrangements are effective in putting together sixth formers with Year 7 pupils. In addition, the in-lesson support provided by sixth formers in Years 7, 8 and 9 lessons, for example in art, contributes greatly to the sense of the school as a community.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because in too many lessons they are not good enough in helping pupils make sufficient progress. Although two-fifths of teaching seen was good, the proportion of satisfactory and good teaching has dropped since the last inspection in 1998. Work seen in books confirmed that satisfactory teaching is not sufficiently consistent to have the positive impact on learning that is necessary. There is more unsatisfactory teaching in lessons in Years 8, 9 and 10 than elsewhere; teaching is sound in Years 11 and in the sixth form.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in English and drama is most often good and pupils achieve well;
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are most often good, encouraging learning;
- Pupils are willing to learn when work is made interesting;
- The turnover of staff in recent years has made it very difficult for new initiatives and school policy to be applied consistently and this has affected the quality of teaching;
- Teachers do not always employ a sufficient range of strategies to enable all pupils to achieve well;
- Insufficient use is made of information about pupils to ensure lessons help pupils of different levels of prior attainment to make progress;
- Pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and those for whom English is an additional language are not learning well enough because most teachers do not plan lessons to accommodate their needs;
- Work is not always marked regularly and much marking does not help pupils understand what they need to do to improve;

## Commentary

18. There is some good teaching across subjects and age groups particularly in drama and English. In drama teaching is never less than satisfactory, most often good and sometimes very good. This is why standards in the subject are high and why in English where teaching is now good standards are rising. In psychology and sociology teaching is never less than satisfactory and one excellent lesson in sociology in the sixth form was seen. However, unsatisfactory teaching is also found across the school. This variation means that although teaching in individual lessons is mainly satisfactory overall, teachers do not consistently show high expectations for pupils of the full range of abilities. Teaching does not, therefore, provide sufficient challenge to raise standards enough and the combination of satisfactory and good teaching is not enough to compensate for that which is unsatisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory and learning is limited when teachers have difficulty controlling disruptive behaviour or employ only a narrow range of approaches in the classroom that deny pupils opportunity to learn from each other and to take growing responsibility for their progress.

19. Part of the unsatisfactory teaching is due to the number of teachers who have left for promotion and the difficulties the school has faced in recruiting their replacements, resulting in a relatively high number of inexperienced teachers. However, the teaching of some experienced teachers is also not good enough. As a result of timetabling decisions, the ability range is wider in some lessons than in others even within the same subject. Teachers do not always take enough account of differences of abilities between pupils leading some pupils to lose interest or be disruptive because the work expected of them is either too difficult or too easy. This is exacerbated as too few teachers use the extensive range of information about pupils' prior-attainment to plan individual lessons. As a result, whether in streamed situations or otherwise, too few pupils are appropriately challenged to do as well as they might and achievement over time is limited.

20. Pupils who have special educational needs are keen to learn when they have work that they can do. They can behave badly when work is inappropriate because it is too easy or too hard for them and this leads to disruption and confrontation where teaching is unsatisfactory. A characteristic of many of the pupils with special educational needs at Bishop Douglass School is their quick dejection and lack of self confidence when they struggle with their work. They have low self esteem and find it very difficult to persevere when tasks are too hard.

21. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. A general weakness in teaching in many lower sets is that teachers give pupils with special education needs too many worksheets to fill in. In some lessons pupils use worksheets to such an extent that their literacy skills for example, are neither challenged nor developed. Support teachers too often sit in lessons just reading words for pupils or asking individual pupils questions whilst the subject teacher does the teaching. Individual education plans are too vague to help teachers plan suitable work for



pupils with special educational needs. Sometimes pupils with English as an additional language are placed in the same sets as those with special educational needs or those of lower ability which does not meet any of their needs particularly well. Pupils are taken out of class for special reading groups when appropriate and care is taken for this not to happen too often.

22. In the lessons where teaching is good or very good pupils with special educational needs do well because:

- their needs are carefully assessed and planned for;
- the work is clearly mapped out in manageable stages and just the right amount of support and challenge is given;
- activities are selected to allow pupils who learn in different ways to get the most from the lesson.

23. Assessment of pupils' work in order to plan the next step of teaching and learning is not a regular part of teachers' work. This is particularly disadvantageous to pupils with special educational needs who need help in developing their understanding step by step.

24. The teaching and learning of bilingual pupils is poor. Teachers are now given the information about each pupil's ability to speak English. However, teachers are unclear about the difference between different stages of fluency. Some bilingual pupils perform well in conversational English and teachers assume this means most will cope with all the work. Teachers do not plan work that is specially adapted for pupils learning English. This leads to times where pupils do not understand new vocabulary or ideas and consequentially make poor progress. The English as an additional language co-ordinator works with students in the early stages of learning English and helps them make quick steps forward. However, she is only one; and there are nineteen early stage learners out of 26 per cent of the pupils who speak more than English. Subject teachers do not plan appropriately for these pupils in many lessons and this slows up their learning.

25. The new headteacher has begun to introduce systems to monitor teaching and learning more effectively as a key focus for the school's improvement. The development is ably led by a new assistant headteacher. Whilst this has brought some success in reducing characteristics of unsatisfactory teaching it has not been in place long enough to have a lasting impact and the evaluation of teaching and guidance given for improvement is not yet consistently sharp enough. The turnover of staff across the school also explains in part why some new initiatives that would improve teaching are not well embedded in practice. For example, the Key Stage 3 strategy, which includes useful teaching methods and ideas, was introduced but is not being followed consistently in every department.

26. Good relationships between staff and pupils in most lessons contribute to pupils working effectively and teachers showing concern for pupils to learn. Another feature which contributes to the quality of teaching where it is good is teachers' knowledge of their subject and the way they convey this to pupils. In these good lessons teachers treat the pupils with respect that, in turn, encourages pupils to consider their work to be important. In good lessons pupils are fully involved in their work and make good progress in response to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and of the pupils' capacity to learn.

27. One common weakness in teaching that is symptomatic of underachievement where it exists is that teachers do not take enough account of how well pupils are understanding new information and ideas or applying their skills during lessons. Informal assessment is not sufficiently well used to reinforce learning where necessary or to change the pace of work so as to stimulate or respond to the needs of individuals, groups or the whole class. Consequently, pupils do not always get enough feedback about the work in class or written work at home so that they know exactly why they have done something well or what they need to do next to improve. As a result, the cumulative picture of progress being gained by teachers is not clear enough to add strength to the formal assessment process and data concerning achievement overall is not well used to inform individual lesson planning or longer term plans for raising standards of pupils of all abilities.

## Sixth Form

28. Teaching in the sixth form is better than it is for younger pupils. One of the reasons for this is that most teachers are more secure in the knowledge of their subject and they expect the students to be mature in their work. Students most often respond well to these expectations and try hard to achieve the more demanding work set. They are most often involved in the tasks required of them although these do not sufficiently well encourage them to become independent learners.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons (Sixth form)**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
[1] (2.27%)	[4] (9.09%)	[14] (31.81%)	[24](54.54%)	[1](2.27%)	[0](0%)	[0](0%)

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

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 108 lessons (Main school)**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
[0] (0%)	[8] (7.4%)	[35] (32.5%)	[53] (49.0%)	[10](9.26%)	[2](1.85%)	[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.*

## The curriculum

Overall the curriculum is unsatisfactory because it does not cater well enough for all the school's pupils so that their learning is supported.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's arrangements to provide an alternative curriculum for some pupils who are at risk from disaffection;
- Curriculum time is less than that which is recommended;
- There is no clear rationale or coherence for the curriculum that guides decisions about the range and balance of courses offered;
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils and this limits their achievements;
- The range of out of school activities is limited;
- Requirements for teaching ICT and citizenship are not being met;
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall, although there have been improvements in recent years;

### **Commentary**

29. The curriculum provides most of the national curriculum subjects but the requirements for teaching ICT and citizenship are not being met. Moreover, decisions made towards the end of last term in order to create opportunities for staff developments has reduced the overall time available for teaching, bringing it to below the number of hours recommended.

30. In Years 7, 8 and 9 the curriculum is not as broad enough because of these weaknesses. There is little use of ICT to support learning in other subjects and although all pupils now have one hour of ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 the programme does not cover the requirements of the national curriculum. However, music uses ICT effectively to support pupils' learning.

31. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is organised satisfactorily to meet pupils' choices for GCSE courses. However, there is no clear rationale for the range of courses available. This results in some inconsistencies in the way the classes are arranged: some classes are too small and some courses do not run. This is not only inefficient but means that it is very difficult to plan how to deploy teachers and make the best use of their expertise. There are some vocational opportunities for pupils but the range is limited: as a result the school is not meeting pupils' needs effectively.

32. Some developments have been made to the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to provide a broader range of courses to meet the needs of those who are not suited to traditional GCSE subjects. Pupils can choose one of two ICT courses: a vocational course or a non-examination course. For this year, other non-examination courses were also available in manufacturing and literacy and numeracy. However, the school's policy of meeting the wishes of pupils means that these choices create some anomalies. The non-examination ICT course is very small, raising questions about the deployment and efficient use of teachers. In order to avoid this in manufacturing, pupils choosing the non-examination course, work in a class alongside pupils studying for GCSE. The question here is whether all pupils in such a mixed class gain equal access to the subject. Too few pupils chose the literacy and numeracy course and thus it is not taught.

33. Provision for pupils with special education needs is poor. Pupils' needs have not been identified well in the past and procedures for completing individual education plans, and annual reviews are not secure. The new special needs coordinator started at the school this term and whilst experienced at working with pupils with special needs is new to the coordinating responsibility. The school cannot be assured that pupils with statements of need are supported appropriately as the paper work for their statements is not up to date or in order.

34. Other forms of support for those with identified needs are not effective. There are several reasons for this, some of which are historical. The funding the school receives for special educational needs is partly used to provide smaller sets for less able pupils. Teachers who have comparatively light teaching commitments are also given some timetabled periods in which to support other teachers teaching these lower sets. The teachers offering support are not trained to take this role and seldom play an active teaching role. Often, they do not know the content of the lessons they are supporting in until the pupils are told. In addition, subject teachers do not take enough account of pupils' individual needs to provide work that is both accessible and demanding so for pupils being in a small set is not a particular benefit. Individual action plans are now in place for all pupils where required, but the targets in these are too broad to be useful to help pupils or teachers. As a result of all these weaknesses the school is not supporting its pupils with special educational needs appropriately.

35. The school has limited provision for pupils who are bilingual. In the past special educational needs and English as an additional language were the responsibility of one person and the needs of pupils with English as an additional language were not a priority. There is a recently appointed coordinator, a qualified English as an additional language teacher, who has drawn up a more accurate record of bilingual need and is supporting pupils effectively in and out of class. Subject teachers do not understand the part they need to play in ensuring bilingual pupils progress as well as possible. There are no dual language books in the library and only a very small number of dual language dictionaries.

## **Sixth form**

36. As with the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, the school endeavours to meet the wishes of sixth form students. Again, however, this results in inefficiencies and some classes are very small with four students while others, such as English, have numbers over 20. The school's policy to enable all pupils to benefit from moving into the sixth form has advantages and disadvantages. Students who have not done well in their GCSE subjects are able to move to the sixth form and study a vocational course such as AVCE. Some of these students stay in the sixth form for three years - which they feel is an advantage, particularly in relation to their personal development.

However, the open access to the sixth form in some subjects means that some courses are not appropriate.

## **Accommodation**

37. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, mainly as a result of an extensive rebuilding program. New music and science areas house high quality teaching rooms and preparation spaces. This has made it possible to relocate several subject departments to bring their classrooms together in the same area of the building, notably English and modern languages. Although this is also the case for mathematics, some of these classrooms are too small to accommodate some teaching groups, and noise from adjacent classrooms disrupts the flow of lessons.

38. The upgraded reception area provides a welcoming and secure entrance to the school. Available funding has been well used to improve dedicated ICT rooms. There are now four and a number of departments have enough computers to allow classes to improve their learning using new technologies. The improved hard standing area, used for teaching physical education, provides a much-needed extra space, however, accommodation for this subject is still poor. The gymnasium floor is unsuitable for barefoot work. The hall is well used by the physical education department, although there are problems associated with its multiple use for dining. Changing rooms are dingy and in poor repair, and pupils have no access to showers, which are currently used for storage. The planned new sports hall will be very welcome, and will impact positively on the physical education curriculum.

39. There have been improvements to some design and technology (DT) rooms, for example where pupils are taught resistant materials courses. The food technology room has old fittings, which have cracked and peeling areas where dirt and food particles could be harboured, and maintaining hygiene is difficult. Design and technology resources have been limited but the new rooms opened in September provide access to computers to support learning by individuals and groups, promoting independent learning.

## **Sixth form accommodation**

40. Sixth form accommodation is satisfactory, the classrooms and the student common room are adequate. Delivery of the sixth form science curriculum is supported by good new facilities, and student study areas are well equipped with computers.

## **Enrichment**

41. Extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are unsatisfactory in the school. Lunchtime activities provide the main opportunities for pupils because of problems experienced by pupils after school as they live within a very wide catchment area. These are not always well attended and they do not cater for higher attaining pupils.

42. The range of opportunities offered by the physical education department at lunchtime and after school is a strong element of provision. Well-supported ICT sessions are provided at lunchtime. The school also offers GCSE booster classes after school on Mondays and Tuesdays in a range of different subjects but these are not fully co-ordinated. Saturday booster classes for targeted pupils from Years 7-9 and 10-11 in science and English have had a positive impact on results.

## **Resources**

43. Resources are adequate but apart from the recently installed computer equipment, they neither excite nor inspire pupils or motivate them to develop their ideas. The ratio of computers to pupils is better than one to five, exceeding the national average and there are also 19 interactive whiteboards. Access to computers for many subjects including English, geography, history and modern foreign languages (MFL), is unsatisfactory. The provision of textbooks is unsatisfactory for

art, humanities and MFL. The library has recently been extended but is still relatively small. Much of the non-fiction stock is outdated and tired looking. Unlike most secondary school libraries today, there are few computers available.

### **Sixth Form resources**

44. On the whole, the sixth form is not adequately resourced. There are not enough books to support the study of the range of subjects and the library is not sufficiently well resourced to be able to provide help with this. Access to computers in lessons is limited but there are an adequate number for sixth form study purposes.

### **Staffing**

45. Staffing for most subject areas is adequate but there are weaknesses in mathematics with long-term supply staff, in ICT where there are too many non-specialists and in geography and history where too few people teach the subjects full time. Staff deployment is unsatisfactory since a significant number of staff teach a relatively light timetable. There is an effective induction programme that ensures newly qualified and other new members of staff are properly supported on their joining the school. Staff training this year is focusing on teaching and learning and there is also a well-planned programme for middle managers.

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

The school's procedures to ensure the students' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory but there are some concerns about the implementation of the health and safety systems. Each student is supported by an efficient pastoral structure but within this academic guidance is less effective. Students have a limited voice in the running of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The procedures to ensure that health and safety issues are addressed within the school are inefficient;
- Students receive appropriate pastoral guidance although the poor assessment procedures mean that academic support is less secure;
- The induction of Year 7 pupils is good and enables them to settle in quickly;
- The advice given to students to prepare them for further study or the world of work is good;
- The school council is not yet effective in ensuring pupils' views are considered within the management of the school;

### **Commentary**

46. A health and safety policy is in place with risk assessments for subject areas and educational visits but the number of issues raised by the team with the headteacher demonstrates that the implementation of the policy is ineffective. Staff are trained in Child Protection and procedures here are effective. A new Student Services office has been established this term to handle students' day-to-day queries and this is working efficiently. Staff in this busy room also handle any First Aid or medical incidents and there is little privacy for students who are feeling unwell during the school day. Appropriate records are kept.

47. The tutor system is effective in supporting students individually and there are regular meetings between tutors and Heads of Year and with the educational social worker so students' pastoral care is assured. The poor arrangements for assessment in the school means that the academic guidance given is unsatisfactory. There is a number of new initiatives to support students and ensure better social development and learning. These include the introduction of the Achievement room, which will support small groups of identified students who have difficulties controlling their behaviour. A Time Out room was introduced at the start of this term to allow

disruptive students to be excluded from lessons. Subject Clinics have been introduced for each GCSE subject; these are extra sessions run by staff after school and while open to all, targeted underachieving students are particularly encouraged to attend. In setting up these initiatives staff have built in monitoring systems for them but the activities are too new to assess their effectiveness.

48. The induction of Year 7 students is planned carefully and strengths include a retreat day to build teamwork within the tutor groups, a buddy system between Year 12 and Year 7 students and a Ceremony of Enrolment when parents and students are welcomed formally.

49. Students are supported well as they research opportunities for the future. Connexions staff support the school well and the Careers Room is full of interesting information attractively displayed. The school runs events such as the ACE day for all Year 10 students at the University of Hertfordshire and an Interview Skills day for all Year 12 students, which involves 40 outside agencies. Local businesses support this work, for example, the initiatives that focus on gifted and talented students in the borough, Barnet Boys' Branch Out and Barnet Girls' Go Global.

50. The school council met during the inspection and discussed topics such as vending machines, behaviour and transport with the headteacher. Several proposals were made that were to be taken back by council members to their peers. The current council is too new to be an effective tool for communication between students and the management of the school and as minutes from last year's meetings were not available and students were unclear as to how regularly the council had met this area is judged as unsatisfactory.

### **Sixth Form**

51. Arrangements for pastoral care are effective and are supported by assessment arrangements which are better here than in the rest of the school. There are good arrangements for the completion of UCAS applications and students receive good careers advice. There are limited opportunities for students in the sixth form to have a voice in the development of the school.

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

The relationship the school has developed well with parents remains effective overall. Links with the community and with other schools are underdeveloped.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are supportive of the school and receive good information about its work but unsatisfactory written information about their child's progress;
- There are too few links with the community and other schools to support pupils' academic and personal development;

### **Commentary**

52. During the last few years with changes of headteacher the parents have remained loyal to the school. They are given good information in the prospectus and the newsletters about its work. There are regular meetings about curriculum issues such as an Options evening in Year 11. This term parents were invited to attend a target-setting day with their child for the first time and the attendance to this was very good. Parents' Consultation evenings are also well supported. The reports to parents about the progress of individual students are unsatisfactory. They do not meet legal requirements as there are no reports for ICT, there is confusion about the use of letters to establish levels of attainment and as the assessment procedures are insecure in the school, reports cannot accurately pinpoint achievements.

53. This term the school has linked with the local police to ensure a police presence in the school for two days a week thus extending the link between the school and the community. Other links with the community are currently underdeveloped. Similarly, links with other schools at both

secondary and primary levels are underdeveloped although some initial discussions, for example, to increase curriculum provision in the sixth form have taken place.

### Sixth form

54. Relationships with parents continue to support students' work as they study in the sixth form and parents are involved in discussions about students' progress. Parents receive ongoing assessment cards as well as formal annual progress reports. There are useful links with businesses within the community to support career choices but, as with the rest of the school, community links are underdeveloped and initiatives involving other schools are at the initial planning stage.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good but management is unsatisfactory overall. The new headteacher is leading the school well. Some new aspects of senior management are showing positive outcomes, but the leadership team has been ineffective and middle management is underdeveloped. Although the work of governors has improved considerably in the last year, their impact in helping to improve provision remains unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is well led by the new headteacher who has shared her appropriate focus on improving teaching and learning and already begun to take effective steps in doing so;
- Some long-standing senior managers in the leadership group have worked co-operatively but some key roles are inappropriate and they have been ineffective in meeting their own responsibilities or in working together as a team to address the key issues of teaching and learning that have led to declining standards;
- Some staff new to senior and middle management have begun to concentrate well on improving standards but plans for improvement are not driven forward consistently or rigorously enough;
- Governors support the school well and have been instrumental in encouraging improvements in the last year but aspects of their work are unsatisfactory;
- Evaluation of the school's performance is under-developed and information available is not used sufficiently well by staff to enable improvement;
- Performance management and professional development is not used robustly to improve practice and raise standards;
- The management of some daily routines and behaviour is not tight enough;

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,868,188
Total expenditure	3,824,666
Expenditure per pupil	4026

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	293,876
Balance carried forward to the next	43,522

## Commentary

55. Leadership of the school is satisfactory overall. The school is being led well by the new headteacher as she already made clear the new focus necessary to improve teaching and learning and shared this vision with staff and, through some targeting meetings, with parents. This has given the school a new sense of purpose and begun to shape its strategic and operational planning. There has been an important analysis of strengths and weaknesses including an interrogation of available data leading to a strong emphasis on what needs to be done to make the most difference. This was evident in the in-service training sessions provided for all teachers in the first two weeks of term when the school remained closed to pupils because of lateness in completion of the building programme. The training highlighted underachievement and introduced new approaches to planning lessons to begin to improve teaching quality. Whilst not embedded fully in practice, it has influenced thinking about teaching and helped to raise awareness about pupils' potential and the pace of learning. In turn the training was followed by observations of all teaching staff to enable support to be given to teachers who most need to improve their practice.

56. Practical steps to realize this vision are also evident in the senior team's review of the existing school development plan leading to more demanding shorter-term objectives for teachers and tighter approaches to monitoring the extent to which they have been reached. However, whilst these intentions are appropriate it is too early to see clear and sustainable evidence of improvements in teaching that have brought about a significant improvements in learning or in raising attainment.

57. To begin to address the evident weaknesses in the school the leadership team has also been expanded with some of its members taking on new responsibilities. However, whilst the team has expressed its commitment to the new direction in which the new headteacher is leading the school, some previously existing roles are inappropriate as they do not use the professional teaching expertise of senior managers in ways that most effectively or efficiently help to improve learning or raise standards. Important issues in remodeling the workforce of the school have yet to be considered fully or grasped. One assistant headteacher is responsible exclusively for the management of the building and site and plays a limited part in planning or practice which focuses on raising attainment; another manages assessment, collating and providing assessment data but the interrogation of this data to highlight underachievement, trends in learning or opportunities to improve achievement is limited. Moreover, the monitoring of use of this data has been weak; few staff use the information well enough. In other cases, some responsibilities of three deputy headteachers have not been met well leading to significant weaknesses in the management of the curriculum, deployment of staff, provision for pupils with special educational needs and others for whom English is an additional language, and in the efficiency of the school as a whole. As a result, although working cooperatively and sometimes hard, they have not separately or collectively been aware of the omissions in their roles, and not been able to operate inter-dependently to take sufficient action to improve teaching and learning.

58. Subject leadership and that of heads of year are satisfactory overall and good in some areas. However, an important weakness that has contributed to the decline in standards over a period of years is related to the lack of rigorous monitoring of departments by senior managers and within departments by most heads of department. Consequently, middle managers have not benefited by the learning possible from senior management's guidance nor have they had sufficient opportunities to gain insight into the work of senior managers in order to enhance their own careers and perspectives. The use of data to target under-performance of pupils and staff is underdeveloped. Performance management is not used robustly to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, achievement has been unsatisfactory.

59. Current governors of the school are committed to its development and supportive of the headteacher and staff. However, they have begun to gain a sufficiently clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school only in the last year. As yet they are not well enough informed to challenge the school effectively or to help set the school's overall direction. Although they are learning quickly to meet their responsibilities, statutory requirements for the ICT and for



citizenship as well as some reporting requirements to parents are not met. In these areas, governance is unsatisfactory.

60. Financial controls are in place but the management of the budget overall has weaknesses. These are evident in the deployment of staff; funding to support pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language; the use of support staff; and, some key decisions concerning teaching salaries and other allowances. Spending per pupil is well above the London average. The school has a substantial budget deficit but current plans do not identify costs to show how a balanced budget will be established in due course. Best value principles are followed in relation to purchasing and premises but not in the school's evaluation of its performance.

### **Sixth form**

61. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The head of sixth form is relatively new to the role but not to the school. The sixth form is effectively managed and the much-valued support and guidance ensures that students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds are treated fairly. This has resulted in more students from minority ethnic backgrounds choosing to continue in the sixth form and they are well represented.

62. Day-to-day management is good but the way the timetable is organised means that some teaching groups are very small and not cost efficient. This means that students are not able to enjoy the benefits of learning that is possible in groups and teachers too often do not encourage students to become independent learners. The lack of monitoring of teaching in the sixth form has been similar to that in the rest of the school. As a result, the best teaching practice is not as widespread as it might be and some students are not sufficiently well challenged. Although information about pupils' prior attainment is monitored regularly it is not used enough to raise standards in all subjects and no annual report of progress was provided for parents last year.

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

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

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

#### **English**

Standards achieved by pupils in English are **good** by the end of Year 9. Standards by the end of Year 11 standards are **satisfactory**.

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

- Achievement shown in Year 9 national curriculum tests;
- Marking and assessment including moderation are effective;
- Management and leadership of the department are good;
- Teaching where good;
- Limited use of ICT;
- There is a need to raising attainment at Year 11;

#### **Commentary**

63. In the Year 9 national tests in 2003, 71 percent of pupils reached level 5 or above which is above national average and above the average for similar schools. This is a 31% increase from 2002. 36% percentage of pupils reached level 6 and above. 51% of girls reached level 6 and above and 27% of boys. The percentage overall achieving higher levels and, therefore, the average point score per pupil, was below the national average. In 2003, 46% per cent attained A\*-C grades in English Language, 40% per cent attained A\*-Cs in English Literature. In 2003, 46% per cent of boys and 46% of girls attained A\*-Cs grades in English Language. 37% per cent of boys attained A-Cs in English Literature, and 44% of girls. All results are a drop from the previous year. There were no A\*s in English Language and 3% in English Literature.

64. Standards in speaking and listening are average overall. Most pupils listen well, but fewer have the confidence to take part in oral work. Standards observed in the classrooms and in pupils' work indicate that their writing is at the expected standard. Pupils express their ideas fully and imaginatively but some find it difficult to develop their ideas and write long sentences. In a Year 10 lesson on World War 1 poetry, after slow beginning, pupils are able to refer to the language and structure of the text to convey meaning.

65. Pupils of mid to lower abilities make some basic errors in spelling grammar and punctuation. Most benefit from either support and/ or use of literacy strategies which help them to structure their writing. In one lesson a teacher used a writing frame effectively to support writing on persuasive language. Some lower attaining pupils produce imaginative work and manage to change their style for particular tasks. Pupils' reading is average. By Year 9 most pupils can refer to textual evidence as seen in a lesson on persuasive language in which pupils referred to textual evidence in an Oxfam advert. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils read with understanding but their reading lacked expression and intonation. The library has limited fiction. More books are needed for the less able readers.

66. Teaching is good overall. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Where teaching is good, teachers demonstrate, good planning and assessment good subject knowledge, expectations of pupils are good, and planning is good and homework set regularly. Pupils respond well in lessons, in a mature and responsible manner, whether providing feedback after discussions or answering questions. Co-operative relationships that enhance learning were demonstrated in a Year 7 lesson where a teacher reinforced the classroom rules and kept pupil focus on the poetry lesson. Inclusive environments were seen in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and English

as a second language participated equally. For example good English as an additional language support was observed in a Year 7 lesson because the teacher had good relationships with the pupils and she worked towards meeting the needs of the pupils well. Teachers generally use good questioning techniques. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on recording information probing questions were used to provoke thought and drive progress.

67. Constructive marking and assessment and good target setting was seen in all books.

68. The head of department provides good leadership and management. There is a pleasant collegiate atmosphere where the head of department gives clear guidance and good support to the other teachers, including the three newly qualified teachers. Good monitoring systems are in place, including a regular inspection of work books. All members of the department attend ongoing Key Stage Strategy training. The department uses data to track pupil attainment. There are future plans to track C/D borderline pupils to raise attainment at Year 11. The department analyses its results by gender and ethnicity. ICT is not used enough. No work with ICT was seen during the inspection week. Although the department has timetabled some use of the school's ICT facilities, there is insufficient access to and use of ICT overall. The department organises some extra-curricular activities. This includes Saturday classes and homework clinics. 90% of pupils who attended the Saturday schools last year achieved a level 5 in their national curriculum tests. The head of department has managed to procure a new suite of rooms for the English department but two more are required to house all members of staff.

69. Resources in the department are satisfactory but are well organized. Resources, particularly texts reflect the multi cultural nature of the school. The department intends to be involved in a forthcoming school initiative to improve standards of African Caribbean boys.

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

70. There is a literacy policy statement but this is not implemented across the school. The head of English has identified the need for more work in implementing this strategy but is uncertain regarding the co-ordination across the school. An audit took place in 2002 and whole school training was provided but this has had limited impact on standards overall.

71. Practice in departments is uneven and of variable quality. Some departments identify key words and most have them displayed in classrooms. In a modern foreign languages year 7 lesson literacy objectives were achieved in the starter activity. In a Year 9 history lesson on life on the western front key subject vocabulary was on display but needed to be more focused on the topic. Some literacy strategies are being used in English and design and technology. In design and technology there is evidence of good use of key words. In textiles for example, there is evidence of a good use of speaking and listening skills and a good emphasis on technical language. In maths misspelling and grammatical mistakes are not revised. In English, pupils are helped by their teachers to read and extract information and use referencing skills. There is evidence of redrafting and manipulating text in English. In general pupils are aware of audience and appropriateness of style in their writing. However, much work is therefore required by the school to develop literacy across the school.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French and Spanish**

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is now **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- good features of leadership and management facilitate the ongoing analysis of pupil performance and help to improve previous poor practice in the department;

- outcomes for GCSE candidates in French in 2003 were particularly low in relation to national averages;
- not all staff are sufficiently involved with the developmental work currently undertaken by the head of department and second in charge to ensure continued improvement;
- accommodation, ICT facilities, video, audio and book resources need to be expanded;
- computers and access to the internet need to be accessible in the department to allow more consistent use of word-processing for drafting and redrafting written assignments, and to French and Spanish media for research activities;

72. The results achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations have fluctuated over the past three years. In French in 2003, they were particularly low in relation to national averages, even taking into consideration the falling profile of pupils' performance on entry to the school and the relatively high proportion of the pupil cohorts entered for the exam. In Spanish, overall results have been more acceptable, but relate to a much smaller group of pupils who take the subject from Year 9 onwards. This year pupils whose family connections have brought them into contact with a language other than English have done well in GCSE examinations in Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Polish and Portuguese as well as in French and Spanish.

72. Standards of written work seen in exercise books and in lessons are improving in Key Stage 3, and especially in Year 7, but differences in the quality of presentation are still heavily dependent on the varying expectations and quality of marking by individual members of the department. Achievement overall, for all but the incoming Year 7, is unsatisfactory. In French whilst teachers encourage pupils to contribute in speaking and listening activities but many remain reluctant to do so. However, boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 worked hard to acquire techniques for greater success under examination conditions.

73. The six well-qualified teachers in the department have good subject knowledge of French and more limited capacity overall in Spanish. Intervention by the head of department and her second in charge has resulted in some improvements to the quality of teaching in French over the past two years. Teaching in French is now satisfactory overall but some practice is unsatisfactory as improvements are needed in order for some staff to manage behaviour, use assessment information and plan lessons more effectively. Although teaching of Spanish has been improved, too much remains unsatisfactory and current approaches need to be more carefully evaluated by the practitioners.

74. Pupils with special educational needs, including hearing impairment and emotional and behavioural difficulties are generally well catered for, but their provision was on occasion offered in conjunction with attention for pupils for whom English is an additional language, and this combination is inappropriate.

75. Analyses of the strengths and weaknesses in departmental and pupil performance are rigorous. Considerable attention is being given to improving pupil performance that at present is low. Some extra-curricular activities, including a French club, are helping to raise pupils' achievement.

76. The department's accommodation and resources have expanded over the past year, but ICT facilities in the department or use of them elsewhere in the school are too limited to enhance standards in modern language overall. Whilst the department has worked well in beginning to improve teaching this has had only a limited impact on raising standards overall to date.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is just **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A significant number of pupils underachieve in all years due to ineffective teaching.
- Standards are below national averages but the appointment of the new head of department is beginning to make an impact.
- Some teaching is good, but this is offset by some being ineffective.
- Prior attainment in primary schools is being taken into account in Year 7.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is developing well.
- The new leadership of the department is firm, competent and committed.

### **Standards and achievement**

77. Results in the Year 9 tests exceeded the school's target but are still below the national average in 2003. Results in the GCSE examinations were well below the national average. There is not a significant difference between boys and girls at the higher grades, but boys underachieve significantly more than girls at the end of Year 9.

78. Pupils throughout the school are not acquiring good numeracy skills. The use of mental arithmetic in solving problems is limited. In Years 8 and 9, many pupils lack confidence in responding to teachers' questions about mathematical ideas. In Years 10 and 11, pupils do not readily apply their knowledge to unfamiliar problems and are not developing investigative skills. Many pupils were seen to be working below National Curriculum level expectations. Much of the learning is process-based rather than through the gaining of a deepening understanding. In general, the levels of achievement at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11 have declined since the last inspection.

79. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall though there are some examples of good teaching in the department. Some lessons are well planned with a brisk pace and pupils make good progress with absorption of new mathematical ideas. Others are poorly planned, with teachers lacking basic classroom control and pupils making little or no progress. Much of the teaching lacks variety and little use is made of visual resources, such as models of regular solids, to aid pupils' understanding of difficult concepts. The use of ICT by some teachers is beginning to address this lack of variety in the teaching methods. Marking and assessment is inconsistent. Weak teachers are not sufficiently well supported by the more experienced teachers.

80. Pupils with special educational needs progress at a rate that matches other pupils in the class. More able pupils, when placed in un-setted classes, are not sufficiently challenged by their teachers. The ineffectiveness of some teaching has contributed significantly to the decline in standards and achievement over the last five years.

81. The new head of department has set priorities for improvement which include bringing consistency to the quality of teaching, reorganising the setting of pupils in all years and developing a positive strategy for marking and assessment. The new leadership of the department is firm, competent and committed.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

82. Although a numeracy strategy is in place for Years 7, 8 and 9, it is yet to be implemented by teachers in areas of the curriculum other than mathematics. Examples of numeracy being used in general curriculum subjects are generally incidental rather than planned. As a result mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Most departments give insufficient emphasis in their schemes of work to identifying and providing opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills.

Consequently, numbers skills are not enhanced across the curriculum consistently or well-enough with the result that pupils' skills are underdeveloped.

## SCIENCE

Overall the provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- teachers' sound subject knowledge and commitment aiming to raise standards;
- teachers are working well together as a virtually new science team;
- clear development of tracking and target setting systems designed to raise attainment;
- the slow pace and passive nature of some lessons;
- the lack of assessment to inform teachers' planning and to inform pupils of how to improve;
- more pupils should reach the target levels, particularly at key stage 3;

### Commentary

83. In 2003 the national curriculum test results at age 14 were below average nationally and for similar schools. However there has been a significant improvement when compared to 2002. In 2003 the GCSE examinations at age 16 were slightly below average nationally and for similar schools. Tracking and target setting data currently being used by the department indicate that results are likely to improve. In addition there is no significant difference in attainment between different gender and ethnic groups.

84. The standards in work seen are those expected according to age, but teachers do not always plan to provide appropriate work for lower attaining pupils. Nonetheless, pupils achieve satisfactorily because the quality of teaching is sound overall. This is because strengths of teaching most often outweigh areas for improvement, having a positive impact on learning. One such strength is the extent to which teachers support individuals effectively in class. Another is the effective ways teachers use starter-activities to ensure a clear focus for the lessons. Although these were often recall activities, one starter activity using a glass of water with card over the top then turned upside down without spilling, for example, generated great enthusiasm and encouraged pupils to offer ideas for the lesson which could then be explored further. Higher ability pupils are set particularly challenging work. In a lesson about inheritance, for example, pupils used data about themselves to explain ideas about inherited characteristics and combinations dominant and recessive genes.

85. Pupils achieve satisfactorily through ages 15 and 16. This was evident, for example, in a lesson on waves and radiation the teacher used a combination of group practical work with a slinky spring to gather evidence from observation, then they discussed each group's observations and finally used a good ICT resource from the internet to model the behaviour of waves. The clear focus by parameters set was effective in helping the pupils make progress, confirmed by a written exercise. Pupils at this ability level can link experimental results with theory to explain scientifically what is happening as in an activity on prevention of corrosion of steel.

86. However, in some lessons pupils were simply copying written work and completing questions. The slower pace and the passive nature did not generate enthusiasm or develop pupils' thinking. Learning was taking place, but the restrictive nature prevented challenge appropriate for particular groups of pupils.

87. The new head of department has quickly developed a co-operative team of committed teachers and is setting procedures in place that will raise attainment. However the head of department needs to instigate more rigorous monitoring procedures so that teachers can develop their teaching skills and provide lesson activities that will develop a more child centred approach. The department should develop further its assessment procedures so that it influences teacher planning and tells pupils how to improve.

88. Standards since the last inspection have declined significantly but underachievement in previous years has now been halted and attainment according to 2003 results is improving. However, behaviour has also deteriorated generally and this is having effect on pace in some lessons. The department is working hard to rectify this in science lessons.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards overall are unsatisfactory;
- The quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory;
- An absence of leadership of ICT has meant that developments in this subject have been unsatisfactory as its management has not been addressed effectively by others in the school;
- National Curriculum requirements are not being met and assessment is not in place for pupils in Years 7 – 9;
- Development in the use of ICT by other subjects is unsatisfactory;
- Good resources that are being used well;
- A new head of department who has started to address shortcomings;

### **Commentary**

89. Standards overall are unsatisfactory. Evidence indicates that by the end of Year 9 the standards attained by most pupils are below national expectations. This is because the National Curriculum is not being used. No examination course has been available for several years and the standards seen for pupils following ICT courses in Years 10 and 11 are below average. Achievement is satisfactory in relation to where the pupils start from but pupils do not cover the range of applications that would be expected. There is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

90. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy ICT lessons and apply themselves well but teachers have to expend undue amounts of energy getting the pupils to respond in the way that they want them to. The school now has a good number of high quality computers that are used well and the technician and teaching assistant provide good support for learning. Some teachers do not have sufficient depth of knowledge or expertise required to teach ICT. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is not based on the National Curriculum programmes of study. This has resulted in pupils neither collecting, analysing and evaluating quantitative and qualitative data, nor using ICT to measure, record, respond to and control events. All this indicates little change from the previous inspection. However, teachers in some lessons now make good use of the Key Stage 3 ICT strategy materials, which is resulting in an improvement in learning.

91. As in the previous inspection, assessment is unsatisfactory. This is because the National Curriculum level descriptors are not being used. Opportunities to enhance learning through the use of homeworks are missed because they are not always set and often they are of a low quality. There is little emphasis on developing pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy.

92. Management and leadership are unsatisfactory and although there is now a new head of department there has not been time to affect the shortcomings that have been identified. These include a scheme of work on which teachers can base their planning and monitoring of teaching. Reports to parents do not meet statutory requirements by including the required information on ICT.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

93. There is some good use of ICT in music, science and business education, but overall the school has failed to address the lack of use of ICT across the curriculum, as reported in the previous inspection.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher subject knowledge is sound having a positive effect on learning;
- Pupils are underachieving at all key stages
- More pace and challenge is needed to raise pupil expectations;
- Local fieldwork and geographical skills are underdeveloped;
- More differentiation of tasks is needed to allow all groups to achieve fully;

### Commentary

94. Standards overall are well below average at the end of all key stages. There was a dramatic fall in examination results in 2002-3 resulting from staff turnover. Standards in lessons and in pupils' work are below average and there are few opportunities provided to enable pupils to achieve at higher levels as standardised worksheets are used. There are significant differences in the standards attained by students of different ethnicity in Years 8 and 9.

95. Teaching overall is satisfactory. When teaching is most effective teachers are knowledgeable and have an enthusiasm for the subject so motivating pupils to learn. Teaching is less effective where teacher input dominates lessons with little opportunity for individual pupil initiative. Some lessons lack pace and challenge and the work is superficial with too much stress on content rather than developing specific geographical skills. Marking is up to date and there is sufficient informative feedback with clear directions on how pupils can improve their work.

96. Learning is satisfactory for the average pupils but teacher expectations are often too low and so more able pupils have few opportunities to achieve at a higher level. Pupils show geographical knowledge and understanding in lessons, and appreciate a wide range of physical and human geography interactions such as, weather features in year 11. A greater range of data sources and practical fieldwork would encourage more independent thinking and further develop geographical skills including numeracy and the use of ICT. When given such data pupils can interpret patterns effectively. This was evident, for example, in the way Year 7 used information concerning migration patterns. When given the opportunity in discussions most pupils are confident in oral work and contribute well. For example, a pupil in Year 8 gave a very clear summary of the causes of acid rain. There are few strategies to support pupils with poor command of English.

97. Pupil attitudes and behaviour in lessons are variable often reflecting the teaching approach. Pupils find it difficult to listen attentively and concentrate for extended periods of time so behaviour is better when teachers break up the work into short varied tasks. In the majority of classes pupils are keen to learn and respond well to the demands made on them.

98. There is a newly appointed Head of department who is clear about the priorities and is working hard to raise standards but it is too early to see an impact. Assessment is being developed to track pupil progress. Since the last inspection standards have fallen dramatically and many of the positive features noted, such as group work, are now missing. Many of the problems previously identified persist such as the heavy reliance on worksheets.



## History

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective use of a variety of learning styles;
- Clear development of historical skills and empathy;
- Sound classroom management;
- Limited use of visual teaching resources;
- More local fieldwork and research are needed;
- More differentiation of work is needed to allow all groups to achieve better;

### Commentary

99. Standards overall are well below average at the end of all key stages. There was a fall in examination results in 2002-3 resulting from staff turnover. Standards in lessons and in pupils' work are in line with expectations but there are limited opportunities provided to enable individual pupils to achieve at higher levels as tasks are insufficiently open-ended. The range of ability in some of the upper forms is wide and teachers need to develop strategies to allow all pupils to achieve fully and progress.

100. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory but more effective in the upper school where pupils are more willing and confident to discuss complex issues. The most effective teaching has pace and challenge which combine to engage the pupils' interest. This is reinforced by well-structured approaches to written work including the use of writing frames. Much of the work is in a visual form, such as spider diagrams in the Year 10 study of factors causing changes in medieval medicine. Teachers carefully plan lessons to structure the work into small chunks that can be easily absorbed by the pupils and then use these as foundations for further learning experiences. Learning is less effective where teacher input dominates lessons, or excessive worksheets are used, with little opportunity for individual pupil initiative or independent work.

101. Pupils make progress and the majority achieve satisfactorily. Pupils can empathise with a variety of historical situations, such as life in the trenches in Year 9. There is a good development of historical skills especially the analysis of evidence sources and cause-effect relationships as in a discussion of the reasons for the invasion of Britain by the Romans in a year 7 lesson. Local fieldwork needs to be better developed to increase the pupils' research skills. Effective marking provides useful feedback to help pupils improve their work.

102. In the majority of classes pupils are interested in the subject and are keen to learn. This is reinforced by encouragement and praise from the teachers.

103. There is no current head of department but the teacher in charge has started to develop the basic systems needed to raise standards and these are beginning to impact on the quality of learning in lessons. The department has been re-located in one area and this has helped to develop an effective teaching and learning culture. The department is currently developing the tracking and targeting of pupil progress but evidence of the impact of this work is limited. Since the last inspection standards and results have fallen but many of the positive features remain in place such as the production of well structured written work by pupils.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

The quality of provision overall is **satisfactory** with some good features.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' secure subject knowledge and good levels of competence in the practical skills and techniques they convey to pupils;
- a wide range of design and making experiences;
- Pupils display enthusiastic attitudes and safe working practices when they have the opportunity to make things;
- Assessment of pupil performance and how this can be used to track the progress of individual and targeted groups of pupils is insufficiently rigorous;
- There is an imbalance between the designing and making stages in pupils' learning experiences;
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their technical vocabulary and written explanations of technological processes;
- There are limited opportunities and depth of experience in control technology to ensure regular exposure to the use of computers for programming input and output systems;
- The food teaching areas do not meet the requirements for basic food hygiene standards;

#### Commentary

104. Standards attained at the end of Key Stage 3 in teacher assessment is below national expectations. However, evidence from lessons and a review of pupils' design folders, exercise books and practical work show that standards are now broadly average. This is partly due to the consistent approach to teaching the design process across all the subject areas using a common framework, combined with a variety of making task which develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils. Both boys and girls do equally well. At Key Stage 3, pupils gain experience in designing and making in a broad range of materials and are confident in using hand and machine tools. Although most pupils obviously enjoy the challenge of practical work, their depth of experience is limited by the nature of tasks that have a pre-determined outcome and the quality and range of curriculum support materials. In the case of a "CD Rack" in Year 8, an insufficient range of support materials was restrictive and this was reflected in the standards of pupils' design work.

105. Where curriculum support materials are well produced, differentiated and with clear expectations, the pupils respond extremely well to the demands placed upon them. This was the case in an "underwater theme" for a textiles project where pupils make a cushion cover incorporating individual designs. More open-ended work is explored in food technology through additional curriculum materials produced by the department in collaboration with a national food retailer and a Design and Technology Association which awards pupils certificates of achievement from bronze to gold. The general standard of pupils' competency in literacy and numeracy was satisfactory and evident in their regularly set homework assignments, but less well developed was their use of information and communication technology skills. They do not experience control technology and only limited computer aided design. The recent addition of a new computer suite is helping to retrieve this situation. Pupils are aware of the assessment criteria but not always of what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers review the progress of pupils regularly, mark books and course work. However, it is only recently that sufficient detail about individual pupil based data has been made available across the school and not all teachers view this information as having implications for their classroom practice. Few good examples were evident where teachers effectively used pupil average point scores or thirds of level to track the relative performance and progress of individuals or groups. A significant majority of pupils were just becoming secure in the knowledge of what level they are presently achieving.

106. The reasonably firm foundation at the end of Year 9 in designing and making is extended into the work of pupils in the early stages of Key Stage 4 but not maintained throughout. As a

consequence the GCSE examination results have not followed consistent patterns over the last few years and this is continued in the grades for 2003, for which figures are unvalidated at present. The results in textiles, were well above the national average with three quarters of the pupils entered obtaining higher grades. Approximately a third of pupils reached the higher grades in resistant materials and just under a third for food and graphics which is well below the national average. Girls do less well than boys in resistant materials and graphics. Although design folders are of a satisfactory to good standard, a disproportionate amount of time at Key Stage 4 is being devoted to the theoretical analysis of the design process and graphical presentation techniques. Some groups have had very few relevant practical experiences and have produced few artefacts since the start of the course. Their confidence and skills in using tools and equipment for making and manufacturing are not well developed.

107. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from just satisfactory to occasionally good and overall promotes positive achievement in pupils. The strengths of teaching in these better lessons included good planning; clear learning objectives; good rapport with pupils, good balance of theory and practical work, appropriate pace, rigour and challenge in the tasks provided. In these better lessons teachers had a firm grasp of aspirational standards both in terms of their own practice and what the pupils could do. They provided pupils with an increased range of techniques, processes and resources which were used with greater independence and confidence. In those lessons which were only satisfactory, a number of common characteristics and weaknesses were observed. These included hurried plenary sessions and planning which did not make sufficient allowance for the range of learning abilities in the class. The delivery of the lessons did not show sufficient awareness of the pupils' differing needs and there was a lack of planned assessment activities. Pace was often slow and too much time was spent on copying work sheets, In some lessons the teacher tended to tell the pupils everything, rather than using skilful questioning to lead pupils on their own path of discovery.

108. The leadership and the management of both the design technology and food departments are satisfactory. Both heads of department have a clear view of how the subjects should develop and are fully aware of the need to continue the collaborative planning and support pupils in the form of monitoring and assessment of achievement. The workshop technician and the food technology assistant provide a good level of support and make an effective contribution to the smooth running of the departments.

109. There is a shared commitment to improvement and a capacity to succeed. The majority of areas identified for improvement since the previous inspection have been addressed. There have been some good improvements in the refurbishing of resistant materials workshop accommodation, but none in the food or textiles areas. The poor quality of provision in the two food technology rooms means that requirements for basic food hygiene are not being met.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art**

The provision in art is **satisfactory** with some good features.

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

- The leadership and management of the subject are good;
- The assessment practices and monitoring arrangements are effective in helping to raise achievement;
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good;
- Assessment and marking practices are good;
- The course materials and resources for GCSE three-dimensional design are not adequate for the teaching of the subject;
- There is insufficient use of ICT for creative work in the art studios;

## Commentary

110. Standards currently are satisfactory. GCSE results declined in recent years and fell below the national average. However, a teaching programme has been developed that is beginning to address the previous shortcomings and consequently pupils' work is now in line with national expectations. Year 10 and 11 pupils develop work confidently from first-hand visual research. They make satisfactory use of studies of artists' work to inform their own practice. High attaining pupils are able to reflect on and write about their practice and outcomes. They annotate their work in journals/sketchbooks to explain aspects and include studies of art movements and artists. This practice has yet to be extended to pupils of all ability levels. Most pupils show an awareness of the need for work to be presented well and they design their sketchbook/journal pages satisfactorily to bring together sketches, gathered images, diagrams and notes. Pupils use a good range of dry and wet drawing and painting media in a competent manner. They produce well-designed two-colour block prints. Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils use a satisfactory range of basic techniques and processes. Around 60 per cent of Year 9 pupils achieve Level 5 and above. They apply learnt techniques and methods to new tasks in an effective way. For example, Year 7 pupils developed their use of tonal cross-hatching for modelling form by applying colour using a similar method. Pupil achievement generally is satisfactory. Pupils are systematically acquiring a satisfactory range of knowledge, skills and techniques, with the exception of ICT. Although pupils now use ICT effectively to word process critical studies and art research, ICT has only a minor role in creative studio work. There is, as yet, no digital equipment or relevant software in place for this type of work.

111. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to demonstrate techniques clearly and effectively. This emphasis on the acquisition of skills and working methods means that pupils learn to handle competently a range of media. SEN pupils are able to achieve satisfactorily within this learning model. Teachers' good knowledge of art history extends and informs pupils' appreciation of art and artists from both European and non-European sources. Teachers manage pupils well, keeping them focused and stimulating their interest. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work effort is sometimes tried by individual pupils who have a negative attitude to learning. Assessment and marking practices are effective in helping to raise pupil achievement by providing pupils with direct guidance on how to improve their work. The Year 7, 8 and 9 and Year 10 and 11 courses are well planned and cover a good range of key learning areas in the subject. The recently developed GCSE three-dimensional design course, however, does not yet bring together the visual resources and course materials to support pupils' understanding of the subject. Teachers' good knowledge of the demands of the GCSE examination assessment model ensures pupils cover the range of skills and practices required.

112. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Since the appointment of the head of department there has been a focus on raising pupil achievement and addressing the shortcomings of the previous period. The Year 7, 8 and 9 courses have been developed to provide a good foundation and to link more effectively to the demands of Years 10 and 11. Good assessment and marking practices have been put in place.

113. Performance in art & design has fluctuated considerably since the previous inspection. However, standards seen in the current academic year show them to be close to those indicated at the previous inspection.

## Music

The overall provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Encouragement of pupils to work well and good quality of relationships in the department;
- Good quality of the accommodation and resources available to the department;
- The lack of clarity in the planning and assessment of pupils' work within the department;
- The limited range of opportunities offered to pupils to experience music in a wide range of styles and contexts;
- Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory;
- The limited extra-curricular provision available;

### Commentary

114. Standards of pupils on entry are broadly average. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessments for 2003 showed that pupil attainment was well below average. Pupils' attainment in Year 11 for 2003 was well below national averages for A\*-C grades and below for those pupils gaining an A\*-G grade.

115. Pupils in a Year 7 lesson could memorise and clap rhythmic phrases with the teacher successfully, hum short melodic phrases echoing the teacher and build and maintain rhythmic ostinati whilst individual pupils improvised melodies effectively on a glockenspiel. Pupils worked in pairs practising and recording their improvisations onto computers. Pupils are not given the opportunities to develop their performing and composing skills in a wide range of different styles and contexts required by the National Curriculum in Years 7-9. Achievement therefore is limited by the narrowness of the curriculum presently on offer that is mainly centered around notational skills and music drawn from the Western Classical tradition. The curriculum does not celebrate the pupils' wide and diverse cultural heritage.

116. In a Year 11 lesson pupils were able to listen to and identify compositional devices such as drone, ostinato, ground bass and sequence in music. Their compositions and performances reflected the wide range of ability found in both Year 11 classes.

117. Teaching and learning in the department is unsatisfactory as it is focussed on too narrow a range of experiences for pupils. The breadth and range of musical experience required by the National Curriculum, together with the opportunities to perform and compose in a wide range of styles is lacking. Too much work is notation based. Planning in Years 7-9 should be closely linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study and assessment opportunities need to be clearly identified and recorded. Where teaching was good it had pace, challenge, it caught the pupils' imagination and gave pupils a variety of different types of activity within a lesson. This, together with work that was better matched to pupils' different abilities minimised problems with pupil behaviour. Pupils' work at all key stages should be clearly matched to their abilities, stretching the more able and engaging the least able.

118. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The schemes of work in Years 7-9 is too narrow and does not give pupils opportunities to compose, perform and listen to music taken from a variety of different styles. Opportunities should be provided for pupils to work in different situations, as whole class, groups and individuals using a balanced blend of acoustic and electronic instruments. Assessment opportunities should be clearly identified with pupils appraising their own and others' music.

119. Accommodation and resources are good. The department has made little progress since the last inspection other than meeting requirements for ICT in Years 7-9. The peripatetic and extra-curricular provision is limited and standards have declined in curricular music.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are taught to evaluate their work well, and this helps them improve it;
- Pupils attitudes to physical education (PE) are positive, enhancing pupils' learning;
- The PE department is an enthusiastic, cohesive team, keen to make improvements;
- Too little time is given to PE in Key Stage 4, and this is a factor in pupils not attaining higher standards;
- The curriculum followed by Key Stage 3 pupils is not clearly mapped out, and this means that not all pupils who choose GCSE PE have received the same preparation;
- Pupils in all years are not receiving their entitlement to ICT in PE;
- Planning for development in PE lacks focus, and does not clearly identify how targets will be met;
- Accommodation for PE is still not adequate, but the planned new Sports Hall will address this;

### Commentary

120. Pupils' performance in the end of Year 9 teacher assessment in 2003 shows attainment lower than national expectations overall, with boys' attainment above average, and girls' well below. Attainment in Year 9 lessons observed during the inspection was in line with expectations; girls reach similar standards to boys. This difference is partly due to teachers' judging girls too low in assessments, because of insecure knowledge of requirements.

121. In PE lessons, pupils' work well in gaining the skills needed for the activities studied and in evaluating their own and others' work; this is true from Year 7 onwards. They arrive in Year 7 with lower standards in body management and knowledge of health related fitness, although by the end of Year 9 this ground has been made up, and standards of work are satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11, the work of pupils not studying GCSE PE remains satisfactory. The Year 10 pupils who have begun the GCSE course are beginning to achieve higher standards as they link theory and practical aspects and make links between activities they are studying.

122. By Year 9, pupils develop skills, practise and use them successfully to play games or perform sequences. Those who are more able work well independently and lead successfully while in group work, those for whom English is an additional language are helped to contribute. In all years, attitudes to physical education are positive, pupils are keen to improve and most make progress through practising and accepting guidance from each other and their teachers. In Years 10 and 11, greater accuracy and more fluent work is achieved, although there is not enough time to make links and think deeply about further improvement except in Year 10 GCSE where pupils analyse situations, and plan well for success, as in football; girls and boys achieving equally well in creating scoring opportunities.

123. In over half the lessons seen, teaching was good or better, although there was some unsatisfactory teaching. In a very good Year 7 trampolining lesson, pupils set learning targets for themselves and were helped towards meeting them by a 'buddy'. The teacher then gave focussed support so that all made good progress. By contrast, in a less successful Year 8 games lesson, learning was less structured and teaching allowed inactivity. In most lessons, pupils know what they will learn, are supported and challenged well and take appropriate responsibility for their learning. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson, the teaching encourages thinking creatively to achieve success. This same level of expectation is not evident in GCSE theory work, where demand is too low for pupils to demonstrate their capabilities.

124. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department's commitment supports this motivated team, and day to day management is good. Vision and development

planning however are not sharply focused enough to lead to improved achievement. The curriculum is very games focused and, including the 'Wider Horizons' week in July, broadly meets national curriculum requirements. From Year 7 to Year 9 however, the programme is not consistent for different groups, so their preparation for GCSE is not necessarily equal. Year 10 and 11 pupils follow the number of activity areas, though time constraints, except for the GCSE group, prevent study in depth. Pupils in all years are not receiving their entitlement to ICT in PE. The extra-curricular programme extends learning and gives opportunities to represent the school in teams. Year 11 pupils can choose to follow a Junior Sports Leader Award (JSLA) course after school.

125. Since the last inspection, the department has made satisfactory progress. The development of body management skills has improved and GCSE and JSLA accreditation opportunities are available for older pupils. The curriculum remains very games focused for girls and boys. Accommodation and gymnastics apparatus remain poor, although progress is being made towards building of a new Sportshall, which will impact very positively on the department's work.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results are above average;
- Teachers have a good command of, and enthusiasm for, their subject, know the examination requirements well and have good relationships with pupils: this ensures that pupils behave well and are reasonably well motivated;
- There is a lack of demand in too many lessons which means that some pupils do not make enough progress;
- There is a limited range of teaching methods which means that the pace of learning in lessons is often too slow;
- IT resources are used well to aid teaching and learning;

### **Commentary**

126. Standards in business and communication studies GCSE are above average and have been strong over the past few years. However, GCSE results dropped last year. This is partly explained by one class being taught by a non-specialist last year but evidence from lessons indicates that pupils' achievements are only satisfactory and that some are working at too low a level, particularly in relation to their ICT skills. This is because teaching is not consistently good and does not demand enough of pupils. The reason that examination results are good is that teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects, pupils are reasonably well motivated as a result and examination skills and content are taught well. However, many pupils lack the confidence to discuss ideas and there are gaps in their understanding of business. In one Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils looking at home shopping and computer systems of a large high street retailer, found it difficult to apply what they had copied from the board. Some pupils did make progress in their understanding by the end of the lesson but this remained fairly limited.

127. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are common weaknesses in teaching which reduce the impact of those lessons that are good. This is why achievement is only satisfactory overall and why some pupils are working at too low a level. Too often the level of challenge is low and the work not demanding enough: getting pupils to copy work from the board is an example of this lack of challenge. Similarly, questions are rarely used to challenge pupils' thinking. Lessons are only sometimes planned to take account of pupils' different abilities and capabilities. In many lessons learning objectives are insufficiently sharp: sometimes they are the teaching aims and do not set out clearly enough what pupils are to learn by the end of the lesson. What all this means is that the pace



of learning is often too slow and undemanding: by the end of the lesson pupils have not produced enough work.

128. Some of the teaching is good. Where this is the case teachers are better at matching work to the needs of different pupils. Often this is achieved by organising the lesson so that there is time to target help to individual pupils, learning objectives are specific and shared with pupils and the work is demanding. In a good Year 11 lesson for example, pupils were clear about what they had to complete by the end of the lesson and were given good support in constructing their spreadsheets. There are also some common strengths in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm, and good relationships with most pupils. They most often plan the use of IT resources well so as to aid teaching and learning. As a result behaviour is usually good and most pupils are motivated.

129. Business studies is satisfactorily managed but there are weaknesses in leadership because there is no clear information about whether pupils are doing as well as they should. Examination results are analysed reasonably well but this is not related clearly enough to pupils' past history of learning. Business studies was not reported on in the last inspection.

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

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

The school operates a timetable which extends over a two-week cycle. PSHE was not taught in the week of the inspection. Therefore no judgement concerning provision was possible.

As no evidence of the outcomes of the PSHE programme was available, it is not possible to evaluate the quality of learning or of provision.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the very few opportunities to observe, teaching which related to Citizenship was satisfactory;
- Although the school has completed an audit of teaching intentions in subjects that might contribute to the Citizenship curriculum, these are not explicitly related to the main Citizenship strands, there is no monitoring of the extent to which practice meets plans, the attainment targets for Citizenship do not feature in any planning documents and the requirements to assess pupils' achievements in this area have not yet been considered;

### **Commentary**

130. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should and standards are well below average overall.

131. There was no separate formal teaching of any aspect of Citizenship during the inspection. Plans for pupils' personal, social and health education of pupils to be taught in the week following the inspection period did not identify Citizenship.

132. An audit of schemes of work for each subject has been conducted which provides senior managers with an overview of where aspects of Citizenship might be taught. However, the subject is not monitored either by senior managers or within subjects where aspects of Citizenship are planned to take place. The attainment targets set for Key Stage 3 and 4 do not feature in the planning or any department or the PSHE programme. There are no systems in place or planned to assess pupils' achievements in Citizenship.

133. As a result teaching is unsatisfactory overall. What this means is that pupils' progress and learning has not been established which, in turn, results in underachievement.
134. The subject is not management effectively across the school.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

### *Level 3 GCE AS level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Music	1	0		0		0	
Music Technology	2	50		0		20	
Sport Studies	3	33		0		10	
D&T: Product Design	11	100		36		36.4	
Mathematics	8	50		0		13.8	
Biology	4	75		0		17.5	
Chemistry	2	0		0		0	
ICT	9	100		0		31.1	
Business Studies: Single	8	38		13		18.8	
Art & Design	3	0		0		0	
Geography	5	60		0		16	
History	3	67		0		20	
Religious Studies	2	100		0		25	
Government & Politics	2	0		0		0	
Psychology	5	60		0		16	
English Literature	2	100		0		30	
Performance Studies	5	100		20		38	
Media/ Film/ TV Studies	2	100		0		25	
French	5	60		20		20	
* Italian	1	100		0		40	
Spanish	2	0		0		0	
Sociology	10	100		10		33	

### *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
English Literature	23	100		13		70.4	
Music Technology	1	100		0		60	
Design Technology	9	78		33		60	

Mathematics	7	100		43		82.8	
Biology	10	90		10		64	
Chemistry	4	100		25		80	
Physics	2	100		50		90	
Science: Environmental	4	100		0		40	
Business Studies: Single	6	100		16		73.3	
Fine Art	5	80		60		80	
Geography	19	95		16		56.8	
History	9	100		11		62.2	
Religious Studies	3	100		0		66.6	
Government & Politics	3	100		0		73	
Sociology	4	100		25		75	
Performance Studies	3	100		0		73.3	
Media/ Film/ TV Studies	12	100		17		68.3	
French	1	100		100		100	
* Modern Greek	1	100		100		120	
Spanish	1	100		0		80	
* Polish	1	100		100		120	

**Level 2 vocational qualifications**

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Intermediate Business Studies	27	70		0		0	

\* Course not taught in BDS

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

### **English Literature**

Provision in English Literature is **good**.

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

- Results and standards are below average, but achievement is satisfactory;
- Students are currently learning well because of good teaching;
- The timetable provides some obstacles to success;
- The subject is well led and managed;
- Key Skills do not feature in the curriculum;

#### **Commentary**

135. Results in AS and A2 examinations have fluctuated in recent years. They have been below the national average for at least the last three years, although very few students fail to achieve at least a grade E. A2 results in 2003 showed an improvement, but AS results were disappointing in that too many candidates passed with lower grades. These same students are, however, making progress in Year 13; their work is still below average but standards are improving. The current Year 12 includes some very capable students, and standards at this stage are at least average overall. Achievement in the sixth form as a whole is satisfactory; good progress is made by those sixth formers who are retaking GCSE English.

136. Students are now learning well, thanks to a largely new team of teachers this term. They have a good command of the subject and are helping their students to make progress through the use of appropriate teaching methods, good planning and good organisation. Relationships are good, and students from a range of ethnic backgrounds are given equal support. For some, the nuances of the language in their set texts are a real challenge, but the teachers are more than able to help them come to grips with this. They are not afraid to use structured writing frames to ensure that appropriate notes are made.

137. The head of English provides continuity with the past, and sets a good example of professionalism to his less-experienced colleagues. He has deployed his team well, and is concerned about their professional development, for example he is giving a newly qualified teacher the opportunity to take responsibility for aspects of the A level work. The timetable has provided obstacles to success: it has resulted in two uneven sets in Year 13 (one with only one student) and one large set (of 25) in Year 12. Such imbalances do not lend themselves easily to good teaching methods; it is to the credit of the staff that they are minimising the effect of these. Students in Year 13 were hampered last year by not being properly prepared for their AS coursework, the primary cause of their underachievement. Teachers this year are helping them make up lost ground. Good subject leadership and the positive impact of English now having a suite of rooms and a good base from which to operate mean that there is more optimism about the subject. Although standards are still below those being attained at the time of the last inspection, there is now more good teaching and real capacity for improvement.

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

138. Key Skills do not feature in the curriculum. The open entry policy means that students in the sixth form do not always have sufficient language skills to access their chosen subjects, which impacts achievement in some areas, although it is possible for those who obtained a low grade in GCSE English to retake the subject.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The focus of the inspection was on French, but work in Spanish was also sampled. Overall, the quality of provision of modern languages in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is carried out by well-qualified colleagues with good subject knowledge of French and Spanish;
- Examination outcomes are weak in relation to other subjects in the school;
- Groups need to be larger to ensure positive interactions between the learners;

139. The low level of entries for GCE Advanced examinations over past years has reduced the potential for positive interactions between candidates. The outcomes have been weak in relation to other subjects in the school and to national averages.

140. Students benefit from the fact that teaching is carried out by well-qualified colleagues with good subject knowledge of French and of Spanish and the sixth formers appreciate this fact. Materials are well chosen and contribute to positive interactions with pupils, when the topics relate to issues which students are concerned about – such as drug abuse, pollution and criminality. Many of the topics chosen for discussion in the sixth form relate to the Citizenship curriculum. The native speakers of French on the staff are particularly useful in maintaining a high standard of spoken French in lessons in the sixth form and in having sophisticated questioning techniques in their languages.

141. Standards of written work in the sixth form are improving, but there is little opportunity for or evidence of independent learning. Sixth formers do have access to a study area in which they may make ample use of computers and this is helping them to be more self-sufficient.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below national averages but raising the grade levels for intake should improve results;
- Students' access to ICT resources are very good, but there is little in the way of quality software to support learning mathematics at an advanced level;
- Teaching is effective but there are too few opportunities for students to develop independent learning;
- Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good.

### Commentary

142. At AS Level, the results for 2003 were very poor. Comparative data for 2003 is not available, but there are indications that a number of students were entered for the examination but failed to take it.

143. The results at A2 Level are below the national average. The data samples are too small to draw any firm conclusions about gender differences in average points scores.

144. The poor results obtained at the end of the last academic year are not reflected in the standards of work seen in the current year, which are judged good. This is due to the better quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form.

145. Achievement over time by most students is also good and expectations for better results in 2004 are high. One student, who was under-achieving significantly at Year 9, is currently expected to obtain a high grade at A2 Level.

146. The quality of teaching is good, and in one lesson observed, very good. Lessons are well prepared and a brisk pace is maintained. Teachers have a good positive relationship with students. Teachers' subject knowledge is good but some students do not fully recognise changes in learning practices in Sixth form studies as teachers do not encourage students towards independent learning, other than fulfilling homework requirements.

147. The new head of department has yet to delegate specific responsibility for leading and managing sixth form mathematics studies. The range of courses in Years 12 and 13 is such that it needs a teacher with specific responsibility to track and monitor all students as they progress through GCSE, AS Level and finally A2 Level. There is a need to consider provision for a vocational mathematics course in Year 12 for the less academic students remaining.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Biology**

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

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

- A level results have improved in the last three years; Teachers provide good guidance and support in preparing coursework and for examination preparation;
- Assessment is weak and does not inform planning sufficiently, this limits students' achievement;
- Marking of practical coursework is helpful;
- Resources are managed well.

#### **Commentary**

148. Teaching is sound and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress.

149. Current attainment in A-level is in line with the national average. This represents an improvement on examination results over the last three years, largely as a result of improvements in teaching. Teachers provide good guidance and support in preparing coursework and for examination preparation. Assessment is weak and does not inform planning sufficiently. There are few opportunities for students to discuss questions relating to how and why biological processes happen.

150. Pupils' performance in A-level biology has been below or well below national averages. The attainment of current Year 13 pupils is broadly in line with national expectations, with about a quarter of pupils on course to gain the higher grades. This is a considerable improvement on the 2003 results of 0 per cent A-B and 80 per cent A-E grades. Pupils have acquired good experimental skills and are able to carry out procedures requiring the careful handling of apparatus and materials. This was evident in a lesson in which pupils prepared sterile nutrient agar plates. In another Year 13 lesson pupils understood the effect of an electrical impulse on the permeability of the nerve fibre membrane but were unable to explain how the impulse causes the permeability to increase.

151. In Year 12 the current attainment is below the national average, as has been the case in previous years. The results in summer 2003, with 8 per cent A-B and 80 per cent A-E grades, were well below attainment nationally for the higher grades, and only a few pupils continued on to the A-level course. Current Year 12 pupils are able to set up experiments and carry out simple measurements as evident in their work on the effects of temperature on amylase, for example. They are less able to plot accurate graphs and interpret results. They are unable to describe patterns in

the results of their investigations or describe relationships between factors under investigation using scientific vocabulary. Their understanding of independent and dependent variables is limited.

152. The overall quality of teaching and its impact on learning are satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and cover the syllabus adequately. This helps pupils to become familiar with the course material. Resources are used well. Teachers provide appropriate textbooks, worksheets, past examination papers etc. These resources support pupils' own efforts well. Marking of practical coursework is helpful and points to what needs to be done to improve. This helps pupils develop their experimental skills well.

153. Assessment does not fully inform planning and little diagnostic use is made of the results of assessment. As a consequence, teachers are not fully aware of what pupils know and understand and what they do not know and find difficult to understand. As a result, some lessons are pitched inappropriately and explanations needed to secure learning are omitted or only partially discussed. This adversely affects pupils' achievement and limits progress. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss concepts and principles and to develop their thinking through dialogue. This hampers pupils' progress generally and higher attaining pupils particularly.

154. At the time of the last inspection attainment in A-level biology was at the national average. After a period of decline since then the current standards are again in line with the national average. The curriculum is appropriate. The field course in Year 13 provides good opportunities for learning. Teachers work very hard and provide good examination guidance and support. Resources are managed well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have remained well below average over recent years;
- The quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory;
- Lack of teacher experience or depth of knowledge to meet the demands of the GCE AS course.
- Insufficient analysis is made of previous examination results to improve current practice;
- Developments in the use of ICT by other subjects is unsatisfactory;
- Good resources that are being used well;
- Teachers provide good individual support for the students and relationships are good;
- A new head of department is beginning to address shortcomings;

### **Commentary**

155. The 2003 examination results for the GCE AS level course show that standards are well below average. This has remained unchanged over recent years and is confirmed by students' work and in their responses. In the 2003 examination girls performed better than boys. Achievement is satisfactory since many pupils commence the course with either low or no previous qualifications in ICT.

156. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Students apply themselves well and make good use of the new computers. As in the previous inspection, teachers provide good individual support for the students and relationships are good. However, the teachers' depth of knowledge and expertise of IT is not sufficient to meet the demands of the GCE AS course. This is not as good as in the previous inspection. Work is assessed in line with the course requirements but insufficient analysis is made of previous examination results which could be used to improve current practice.



157. Management and leadership are unsatisfactory and although there is a new head of department there has not been time to put right the shortcomings identified. These include a plan to change to a vocational course that is better suited to students at this school. There has been a loss of more than a third of students this term because they have found the course work requirements too demanding. The school does not meet statutory requirements for including the required information on IT in reports to parents.

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

158. There is some good use of ICT in music and business education and satisfactory use is made in art, but as in the previous inspection, the school has failed to develop the use of ICT for post-16 students.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

### **Design and technology**

Provision in Design and Technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment in examinations in Year 12 and 13 are good
- Design folders and presentation work are of a good standard
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which have a positive impact on learning.

### **Commentary**

159. Standards in A1 in Year 13 for A2 Levels in Product Design were good with all pupils achieving a pass mark and over half reaching higher levels. In Year 12 just under two thirds of pupils achieved a pass grade and half of these reached the higher levels. A concern for the department is that well over a third of pupils for a variety of reasons do not complete this course and are classified ungraded. The work seen during the inspection shows that attainment is in line with and in many cases above the national expectation. Design folders and presentation work are of a good standard and there is much evidence of attractive and innovative design work coupled with a considerable depth of research and analysis.

160. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is mainly good, enhancing learning well in the sixth form. The strengths of teaching include good planning linked to learning objectives that match the students' needs; good relationships between staff and students; and, a good balance of theory and practical work.

161. The leadership and the management of design technology for the sixth form are satisfactory. There is a clear and shared view of the way in which the subject is to be developed and the importance of supporting students in order to enhance their design skills and experience at this stage of their studies.

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

### **Art and design**

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership of the department is good and has ensured staff have developed a good programme for students to follow that covers the AS level and A2 requirements well;
- Students develop their drawing and painting skills in a logical and sequential way as part of their studies and this gives their practical work a good start;
- Marking is very good and tells students what they are doing well and why and what they need to do to improve;
- Students are happy to discuss their work but are not as good at writing down their creative ideas or writing up their research into other artists and their work;

### **Commentary**

162. Standards in art are about average and not as good as they were in the last inspection but are improving now with the new head of department. Relatively small numbers of students select art as a sixth form subject but there are more in the first year than the second so this trend may be ending.

163. The standard of students' practical work is good and they achieve well using a wide range of materials and technique. They also learn about other artists across time and cultures and get very good opportunities to apply this information in their own work. This wide range of ideas and experience in a good selection of media gives students a broad base of knowledge from which to draw out themes and ideas. Their completed sketch books demonstrate this well. Written work is not as good as the practical work students produce and teachers have to spend a great deal of effort planning opportunities for students to build up their written work.

164. Leadership and management is good and the department is well-organised with appropriate schemes of work in place that ensuring students progress well from GCSE to AS and the A2 level exams. Teaching is good because the teachers who teach sixth form art understand the requirements of the courses well. Their technical art knowledge and the way they use this to teach students to use a wide variety of media and materials is good. For example, students have a very good introduction in life drawing leading to their use of a professional life model. Teachers use assessment, particularly marking, very well to support pupils' progress. It helps students understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The good course they follow and the good teaching they receive helps students develop good habits. This means that they concentrate hard and become totally absorbed in their work, often working in silence without being asked to. Students do not use computers and other technology as a tool for producing or developing art although they do use the internet to research and to produce essays. The three dimensional work students do at AS and A2 level is relatively small and unchallenging because it uses readily available media such as clay rather than more demanding resistant materials.

## Psychology

Provision in psychology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at AS level are well below average;
- The quality of teaching is enhanced by the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and lively presentations;
- Few opportunities are provided for students to work collaboratively, to carry out research and to present their findings to the class;
- The standard of students' written work has improved in response to good quality marking;
- Students' attitudes to learning are generally good;
- Students wishing to carry on to A2 in Year 13 have to make arrangements to do so at another school or college;

### Commentary

165. This is the third year that psychology has been offered as an option at AS level. Results in the first two years were well below average, with around 40 per cent entered failing to achieve a grade and only one candidate attaining a higher grade. Psychology is a completely new subject for all students in Year 12. The subject is growing in popularity and this year there is one large teaching group. Standards in this group are generally in line with those nationally at this early stage of the course. The written work of many students shows a significant improvement over the term, with students responding effectively to the teacher's good quality marking. They are developing the facility to synthesise short cohesive responses to questions, referencing research as appropriate. These students are achieving well. However, there are a minority of students, mostly boys, who have to be reminded to pay attention throughout lessons and who, therefore, hinder the progress of the majority. Thus, overall, students' achievement is currently only satisfactory.

166. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teacher is a psychology specialist, who is studying for a higher degree for part of the week, as well as teaching science part-time. He has excellent subject knowledge, but no previous experience of teaching the AS level course before introducing the subject two years ago. Lesson planning is sound, with clear objectives for each lesson. A real strength of lessons is the lively style of presentation adopted by the teacher. He uses a good range of techniques, often acting out the point he is trying to convey. He has a good rapport with students, who appreciate his energetic approach. Some students respond well within effective question and answer sessions, with the teacher checking understanding carefully. However, too little emphasis is placed on students' active involvement in lessons. Limited use is made of structured group work and the opportunity for students to make presentations is not a regular feature of lessons. Time and resources are not used as effectively as they could be. The lessons observed lacked pace. The majority of time was spent listening to the teacher's presentations. In one lesson, about a third of the time was given over to silent reading. This was followed by a hurried group activity, which was the most effective part of the lesson. Students are encouraged to carry out research using the Internet, and some do so. Students would benefit from regular opportunities to share the findings of their research. ICT is used effectively within the teacher's presentations.

167. Although the teacher is in contact with colleagues at university, within school he has received limited support about teaching AS level. Teaching could be improved by regular discussion of effective learning strategies with teachers of psychology in other schools and with other social science teachers, such as sociology, within school. Psychology is currently only offered at AS level. Higher attaining students are left at the end of Year 12 with the choice of either dropping the subject or arranging to follow the A2 course at another school or college. With a number of students indicating that they wish to pursue the subject at university, this curricular provision is unsatisfactory.

## **Drama and theatre arts**

Provision in drama and theatre arts is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average but students achieve well;
- Very good teaching is leading to very good learning;
- The subject is managed well, with very good leadership;

### **Commentary**

168. This course was only introduced this year in the sixth form. Standards are not yet reaching the national average, but students are achieving well because very few of them have much experience of the subject: only two out of the nine Year 12 students took GCSE drama.

169. Students are currently learning very well because of the very good teaching they receive from their two specialist teachers. These teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan very appropriate tasks for their students. They organise the time so that key aspects of the syllabus are given sufficient attention, and are keen to develop students' skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Some students are a little reluctant to throw themselves fully into the work; carefully chosen warm-up activities would help overcome their reticence. But the students are very committed to the course and already have a good working knowledge of their set texts and a basic understanding of Brechtian methods. The teachers assess their students effectively and encourage constructive peer evaluation.

170. The head of department leads very well, and has a clear vision for the future of the subject at this level. Her management is good, which is evident from the way she is taking on this new challenge. The introduction and development of the course will require further monitoring and evaluation, and this is recognised. At the same time, extra-curricular drama is being re-introduced in the school. There is good accommodation for drama, including a specialist studio recently equipped with good lighting rigs. More use could be made of ICT, however. The subject contributes well to the personal development of the students, whose confidence is bound to grow through taking this course.

## **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A-Level results are rising but those for AS-Level remain well below average;
- Teachers, have a good command of business studies and of the examination requirements;
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and have positive relationships with students: as a result students are well motivated;
- The range of teaching techniques is quite narrow: as a result students are too often passive learners and have too few opportunities to develop their learning skills;

### **Commentary**

171. A and AS level standards of attainment are low but, given their starting points students achieve as well as can be reasonably expected. Pass rates in the GNVQ intermediate course are satisfactory. The advanced VCE course is being followed by Year 13 students only because it is being discontinued after this year in favour of AS and A-Level. A-Level results have improved over the last three years but AS-Level results remain low. Business studies was not reported in the last inspection.

172. Students have a good understanding of the examination requirements and this is one of the reasons for the improving results at A-Level. Their understanding of the key ideas of business studies is satisfactory overall and some are able to apply these appropriately to real life examples. In a Year 12 AS-Level lesson looking at marketing mix, for example, most students could apply their knowledge to the marketing of tea. There are, however, weaknesses in students' understanding and too many are over-dependent on the teacher to explain and analyse information and research.

173. Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory and although most lessons seen were satisfactory, there are some important weaknesses. This is the reason for students' lack of independence and only satisfactory achievement. There are three important weaknesses:

- the range of teaching techniques is limited;
- there are too few opportunities for students to contribute to their learning through discussion and question and answer sessions;
- some of the work is low level and lacks challenge;

174. Most lessons are led by teachers and students have few opportunities to contribute. When they are asked questions these tend to require short answers mainly based on their ability to recall technical terms or definitions. There are also few opportunities for discussion and even where students are asked for their views or comments, only a small number contribute. In many lessons, there is a group of students who contribute little to whole class discussions. Another important weakness is that some of the work is undemanding. In a number of lessons, for example, worksheets required students to complete sentences by writing in the missing words. What all this means is teaching does not push forward students learning at a fast enough pace.

175. The strengths in teaching are teachers' enthusiasm for business studies and their knowledge of the subject often gain from first hand experience. This is why students are well motivated: they trust and respect their teachers' knowledge and are motivated by their enthusiasm.

176. Business studies is satisfactorily managed but there are weaknesses in leadership because there is no clear information about whether students' are achieving as well as they should.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

