

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BAVERSTOCK FOUNDATION SCHOOL AND  
SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103547

Headteacher: Mr D Green

Lead inspector: W J Powell

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 259250

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

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#### *Terms used in this report*

*Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests **in core subjects** of English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).*

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievements** reflect whether they have done as well as one might expect. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.*

*In the inspection, **focus subjects** are those inspected in depth; others are sampled.*

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Foundation  
Age range of pupils: 11 to 18  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 1360

School address: 501 Bells Lane  
Druids Heath  
Birmingham  
Postcode: B14 5TL

Telephone number: 0121 430 7924  
Fax number: 0121 474 5313

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Miss S Howes

Date of previous inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This larger than average mixed comprehensive school is located on the southern edge of Birmingham and has 1360 pupils aged between 11 and 18, of whom 179 are in the sixth form, which is of average size. The school has been a specialist sports college since 2001, and holds the Artsmark Gold, Schools Achievement and Sportsmark awards. The area served by the school has markedly more disadvantage than average. The school plays an important part in the regeneration of the surrounding area, not least because of its wide-ranging community role as a specialist college. The standards at entry to Year 7 are below average overall; some of the year groups contain substantial proportions of pupils who have wider social, educational and behavioural problems. Standards at entry to the sixth form are also below average; approximately half of the pupils in Year 11 continue into the sixth form. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average; however, the proportion with a Statement of Special Educational Need is below average. The ethnic mix of the school reflects that of the surrounding area, being mainly white or of mixed race. No pupil has English as an additional language, and the school has no pupils from travelling or refugee families. A total of three per cent of pupils joins or leaves the school other than at the usual times of the year. The school appointed a new headteacher in April 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3174	W J Powell	Lead inspector	Business education 11-16
11575	C Fish	Lay inspector	
11508	C Griffin	Team inspector	English 11-16; special education needs
15849	P Buzzing	Team inspector	Music 11-16; English 16-18
27719	P Metcalf	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-18
22691	R Woodhouse	Team inspector	Science 11-16; physics 16-18
15320	A Penn	Team inspector	Art and design 11-18
3555	C Emery	Team inspector	Design and technology 11-16; health and social care 16-18
32178	J Shears	Team inspector	Geography 11-18
10759	L Bappa	Team inspector	History 11-16; religious education 11-16
22491	L Small	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-16
21975	A King	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages 11-16
20395	C Rowe	Team inspector	Physical education 11-18; citizenship 11-16
11913	M Howard	Team inspector	Psychology 16-18
30973	G Hancock	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 16-18

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

*The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Standards overall in the main school are average, representing good achievement. This comes from good teaching and learning. Standards in the sixth form, although below average, represent satisfactory achievement, from satisfactory teaching and learning. The application of the school's assessment arrangements is unsatisfactory overall, and its work is hampered by poor accommodation and learning resources. Value for money is satisfactory in the main school; the sixth form is cost effective.*

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

- Achievement in the main school is good, so that, overall, pupils who entered with below average standards work at average levels when they leave.
- Teaching is good, particularly in terms of specialist knowledge, relationships with pupils and the shared expectation that pupils should do well.
- The pupils' personal development is very good; attitudes and behaviour are good.
- As a specialist school, enrichment activities and partnership with the wider community are very good.
- The new headteacher shows very good leadership and is tackling a range of problems facing the school, with the support of senior colleagues and the governors.

But...

- Assessment does not play a sufficient part in raising standards and supporting learning within subject teams.
- Accommodation is poor, and there are too few computers to allow pupils to benefit from information and communication technology (ICT) in their work
- Teachers need more help when working with pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.
- Achievement is not high enough in modern foreign languages and citizenship in Years 10 and 11, and in art in the sixth form.

Progress since the previous inspection has been **satisfactory**. The school was very slow to respond to the findings of the previous report, and significant progress occurred only after the arrival of a new headteacher four terms ago. However, since then, progress has been rapid, although more remains to be done to tackle fully all the issues raised in 1998. Standards have risen in the main school since 1998, and strengths in areas such as pastoral care, community partnerships and behaviour have been maintained.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

13	examinations				
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*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.*

**Overall, achievement is good.** In Years 7 to 11, standards are average and achievement is good. In the sixth form, standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory. Standards in mathematics and science have risen in the recent past, and are now, like English, average for the ends of Years 9 and 11. The gap between the standards of boys and girls is narrower than usual; pupils from minority groups achieve as well as other pupils. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 11 in English, mathematics, design and technology, history and ICT. It is also good in Years 7 to 9 in science and music, and in Years 10 and 11 in religious education and business studies. Achievement is very good in religious education in Years 7 to 9. In all other cases, achievement is satisfactory, except in modern foreign languages and citizenship in Years 10 and 11, where achievement is unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, achievement is good in English and health and social care; it is unsatisfactory in art, but satisfactory in other focus subjects.

**The pupils' personal qualities are good overall.** Attitudes, behaviour and attendance are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good in all four areas. The strengths noted at the previous inspection have been maintained.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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

*In the main school,* teaching is **good** overall in all years. Teaching is very good in Years 7 to 11 in religious education. It is good in Years 7 to 11 in English, mathematics, design and technology, history, ICT, music and physical education, and also in Years 10 and 11 in science and business studies. It is satisfactory elsewhere, apart from modern foreign languages and citizenship, where it is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Learning is enhanced by the relatively generous pupil to teacher ratio, the widespread use of subject specialist staff, the good expectations that most teachers have, and by the good relationships that they have with pupils. Learning is limited by the poor accommodation and ICT facilities, and by unsatisfactory aspects of assessment.

*In the sixth form,* teaching is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in English, physics, physical education, health and social care and psychology, and satisfactory in the other subjects seen, apart from art and design, where it is unsatisfactory because students are not helped to develop more advanced critical skills. The causes of the main strengths and weaknesses of teaching are the same as in the main school.

The **curriculum** is satisfactory overall, although more courses for work-related learning are needed in Years 10 and 11. The arrangements for **welfare, care and guidance** are good, as **are links with parents and other schools**. Links with the wider community are very good, reflecting the school's specialist sports college status.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory.** Arrangements for governance are satisfactory, as is management, although further improvements are possible at middle management level. Leadership is good overall. The new headteacher and the senior team, giving very good leadership; they took timely action when the school faced a substantial financial deficit in the spring of 2002.

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

Over 90 per cent of parents who responded said they liked the school's induction arrangements, the way that it encourages pupils to become mature and responsible, the expectations that staff have of pupils, the quality of teaching and the approachability of the school. The only area of significant doubt concerned behaviour. Although inspectors found that behaviour in Year 9 was less good than in the rest of the school, overall, they judged behaviour to be good.

Pupils in the main school were very strongly positive about the school in almost all areas where questioned. They, too, saw the school as a place which expected them to do well. Two areas of significant concern were identified: behaviour and staff treating pupils fairly. Further discussion and observation did not reveal major problems in either area.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that all members of staff work in a consistent manner to maximise the effect of assessment on standards, including using the large amount of data already gathered on the pupils' performances.
- Provide better facilities for ICT so that the pupils are able to use ICT to promote learning in all subjects.
- Improve the arrangements for supporting all teachers in their work with pupils who have special educational needs, both through providing more learning support assistants, and through monitoring and advising teachers.
- Improve achievement in citizenship and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.
- Continue to seek substantial improvements in the school's accommodation.

In the sixth form, pay particular attention to the first two issues above, and

- Ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to demonstrate independence in their learning.

## THE SIXTH FORM

### OVERALL EVALUATION

*The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Although standards are below average, students are achieving satisfactorily given their generally modest GCSE grades. Completion rates on advanced courses are good at over 90 per cent. Teaching, leadership and management are satisfactory. The limited ICT facilities present a barrier to promoting independent learning. Although some groups are small, the cost effectiveness is satisfactory overall; the school seeks to improve this by joining with other sixth forms locally.*

#### The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve satisfactorily on most courses, and completion rates are good.
- There are good relationships between students and their teachers.
- There are very good links between courses and the local community.

But...

- Students could have a clearer picture of targets in their subjects, and how well they are doing towards meeting them.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT in their work.
- Students could be more independent in their learning styles.

### 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> because marking contributes well to students' achievements.
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory in mathematics</b> although higher attainers could be better challenged.
Science	<b>Good in physics</b> , where teaching is thoroughly planned. In <b>biology</b> and <b>chemistry</b> , achievements are satisfactory.
Information and communication technology	<b>Satisfactory in ICT</b> because of the rigour of the schemes of work, although students could be better challenged by having targets.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory in geography</b> but the pace of work could be more challenging and greater independence could be promoted. <b>Good in psychology</b> because of enthusiastic and effective teaching.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Unsatisfactory in art and design</b> because students need to have more opportunity to develop creative and evaluative skills.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	<b>Good in physical education</b> with particularly strong participation in extra-curricular sports.
Health and social care	<b>Good in health and social care</b> because of well-planned teaching and

good marking.

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

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

There is good advice given to students planning to enter the sixth form, backed by good academic and pastoral support once they are there.

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

**The leadership and management of the sixth form are both satisfactory.** The school is now looking to see whether the sixth form can become more cost effective by working jointly with other sixth forms. The monitoring of performance data, to identify strengths and weaknesses, could be better.

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

Students enjoy being in the sixth form, and regard the teaching as demanding. Most are happy with their choice of courses. However, students would like to be more involved in how the sixth form is run. Inspectors agree that they could have a greater say in their own learning.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

*Pupils show good achievement in Years 7 to 11, entering the school with below average standards and reaching average levels by the ends of Year 9 and Year 11. Standards in **the core subjects** are rising sharply in Years 7 to 9. Standards in the sixth form are below average but achievement is satisfactory, given the below average standards at entry.*

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

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are rising, and are now average, with improvements in mathematics and science now evident following the earlier rise in English standards.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are now average.
- Pupils of all levels of prior attainment and backgrounds now show good achievements overall, performing better than their earlier standards would suggest. This reflects a greater focus on teaching and learning in the recent past.
- Lower attainers tend to do better than expected in the sixth form.
- Boys at the school tend to be doing better than girls in relation to their respective national pictures.

But...

- Achievement should be higher in citizenship and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11, and in art in the sixth form.
- Standards of numeracy and general ICT use are lower than they should be at all levels.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Main school results***

1. The standards of pupils at entry to the school vary considerably from year to year. The school supplements the data supplied by primary schools with further tests. Overall, boys have tended to do less well than girls in English, whilst girls tend to do less well in mathematics and science; however, this is not the case for all years. The variations in intake character mean that the starting point for judgements on achievement can vary considerably from year to year.
2. In 2002, standards at entry were below average in English, mathematics and science; the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in tests was lower than in most schools. Boys and girls gained broadly similar results to their peers nationally in English and mathematics; in science, girls did less well than girls nationally, whereas boys performed much as boys in the country as a whole.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.9 (31.3)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	32.8 (32.8)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	32.0 (31.5)	33.3 (33.1)

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*There were 232 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. At the end of Year 9, the trend in standards in recent years has been one of performance below the national average, but rising at a similar rate to that seen nationally. In 2002, the average points score was average in English but below average in mathematics and science. In 2003, there has been a sharp rise in standards, particularly in mathematics and amongst higher attainers in science. English results have also improved further. In all subjects, overall results are now average; the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 or better in English is now above average. In 2002, pupils did not do quite as well as expected when compared to their Year 6 test scores in 1999, but the 2003 performances show improved achievement on previous years. The school met its targets for Year 9 results up to 2002; the expected fall in results in the 2003 targets did not happen, and pupils did better than forecast.
4. In recent years, boys at the school have performed at broadly similar rates to their peers nationally in the Year 9 tests. In contrast, girls have done less well overall than girls nationally. This reflects the pattern of standards at entry in most years. The school's own analyses of results by ethnicity show no statistically significant differences between pupils from different backgrounds. The same analyses show that lower attainers tend to add the best educational value across Years 7 to 9.
5. In other subjects, the teachers' own assessments of performance at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed variations from subject to subject; in some cases, this reflected undue pessimism. The picture was more even in 2003.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	45 (40)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (91)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (95)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.4 (n/a)	n/a (n/a)

*There were 216 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. The trend of GCSE results at the end of Year 11 in recent years has been broadly average, and rising at a similar rate to that seen nationally. In 2002 the measures in the table above were all average apart from the proportion of five or more passes at grade C or better, which is well above average. In 2002, pupils did much better than would be expected from their Year 9 test scores in 2000. Although there are no national data available yet for 2003, the school's results fell from the 2002 level. This was expected, and targets for this year group were lower than those of the recent past. This reflects the nature of the entry profile of the pupils in question, and the fact that a much higher than usual proportion of them had special educational needs. In some key subjects, such as science, ICT and mathematics, there were also significant short-term staffing problems; these have now been resolved.
7. In 2002, GCSE results were significantly above average for boys in physical education. They were significantly below average for boys and girls in mathematics and French, and for boys in science. In other subjects, results were broadly average. When subjects' results are compared, boys tended to do significantly better in ICT, and girls in design and technology, than in the other subjects that they took.

Boys did significantly less well in mathematics, science and French, whilst girls did less well in French and German. Again, analysis shows that there are no evident variations of results by ethnicity.

### ***Sixth form results***

8. The standards required for entry to the sixth form are similar to those in most schools, but relatively few students perform at levels much above the minimum. A local sixth form college has also attracted a significant number of pupils onto A-level courses in the past at the end of Year 11. These factors, along with the relatively high proportion of students following one-year GNVQ Intermediate courses, mean that overall, standards at entry are below average for sixth formers.

### ***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	[n/a ] ( n/a )	[n/a] ( n/a )
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	[n/a] ( n/a )	[n/a] ( n/a )
Average point score per pupil	189.4 (175.3)	263.3 (n/a)

*There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

9. The proportion of students completing courses is good for AS, A-level and AVCE, but unsatisfactory for the one-year GNVQ Intermediate courses, which contain many students whose previous attendance rates had been weak. The points scores of students in the table above are below average, as they have been for some years. However, in relation to the students' GCSE profiles, they achieve at satisfactory levels. Lower attainers tend to do better than expected, and males perform at higher levels than females. The ethnicity of students is not a significant factor in their results. The numbers following individual courses are often too low to draw statistically reliable conclusions about performance against national averages.

### ***Main school work inspected***

10. Standards of work at the end of Year 9 seen during the inspection reflect the greater emphasis now being given to teaching and learning in the first three years of the main school. Standards are average overall by the end of Year 9, representing good achievement when compared to the below average standards when the pupils started at the school. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science, with all three subjects now showing good achievement.
11. In all other subjects, standards are average for the end of Year 9 apart from religious education and ICT, where they are above average, and in art, where standards are below average. However, the art results still represent satisfactory achievement in relation to the pupils' modest standards at entry. Achievement in citizenship, geography and modern foreign languages is also satisfactory; that in religious education is very good, the result of very good – often inspired – teaching. In other subjects, achievement is now judged to be good.
12. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are average overall. Standards are somewhat higher in Year 10, because of the greater focus on learning in the past year. Standards in Year 11 are still affected by an earlier period of some turbulence in staffing in some key subjects. Standards in English and mathematics are average for the end of Year 11, representing good achievement. The improvement in how mathematics is taught over the past year has caused a sharp rise in standards, reflected in the improved test performance in 2003. Standards in science are below average, reflecting some staffing instability in recent years, but also the fact that teaching could still be better. Because of this, achievement is no more than satisfactory.

13. In other subjects, standards at the end of Year 11 are below average in modern foreign languages, representing unsatisfactory achievement. This is because the work that pupils are doing at this level is not always challenging enough. Below average standards and unsatisfactory achievement are also features of citizenship, because the subject has too little time, and is being taught by form teachers, who have inadequate subject knowledge. Standards in art are below average, but achievement is satisfactory. Standards are above average for the end of Year 9 in ICT, music and business studies. Achievement is good in ICT and business studies, with pupils making substantial gains, and satisfactory in music as the pupils following the course began it with above average standards. In all other subjects, standards are average, with good achievement, apart from geography, where achievement could be higher than the current satisfactory level. Some work in geography could be more demanding.
14. Standards of literacy in the main school are average, but the contribution of other subjects to the development of literacy skills is inconsistent. There are some areas of strong practice, but these are not being built upon sufficiently well. The use of numeracy outside mathematics is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a policy to promote numeracy across the curriculum, so that other subjects do not benefit from the pupils' rising mathematical skills. Whilst the standards in the main taught lessons in ICT are above average, the shortage of computers and other ICT equipment in the school means that ICT is not being developed further through work in other subjects. Departments know where they would like to use ICT in their courses, but simply cannot get enough access to computers to realise their plans.
15. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need make good progress in the improvement of basic reading and spelling skills. In subjects across the curriculum, their achievement is satisfactory because teachers have good general classroom organisational skills which benefit the pupils. However, achievement is higher when there are learning support staff working alongside teachers in the main school. At present, this is not often the case. Whilst the overall performance of higher attainers is much as expected, given the school's intake profile, their needs are not always fully met in some lessons. In part, this is because there are relatively few such pupils, even in upper sets.
16. The school analyses test and examination results carefully by sex and ethnicity. Pupils from different backgrounds perform in a similar manner. In general, the difference between the standards of work by boys and girls is narrower than in most schools. These views were confirmed by observation of work during the inspection.

### ***Sixth form work inspected***

17. Standards of work seen are below average overall, although in some subjects numbers are small. In relation to the students' prior attainments, achievement is satisfactory, with most working at levels to be expected from their earlier GCSE results. There are no evident differences between the work of pupils from minority backgrounds and those of their peers. In the focus subjects inspected, achievement is good in English and in health and social care. This is because teaching in these subjects demands that students understand what they do; the good use of open questions in English is a good example of this process at work. In other subjects, achievement is satisfactory, except art, where teaching could demand more of students, who lack sufficiently well developed critical skills. In GNVQ Intermediate work, performance in class is better than at examination; too many students fail to complete coursework.

18. There are no formal courses to teach the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT. Standards of communication are average, but application of number and ICT skills are below average because students have too few opportunities to demonstrate them.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

*The level of attendance is well above average; punctuality is generally good. The pupils and students have good attitudes to school and want to learn. Most pupils show good behaviour throughout the day. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.*

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils and students enjoy what the school offers and so attendance levels are high.
- The good attitudes the pupils and students have to lessons and learning help them to achieve well.
- Underpinned by the school's very positive ethos and care for the individual, relationships between pupils and with staff are very good.
- The school fully meets the requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship, enabling pupils to reflect, and to think beyond the obvious.
- The school prepares pupils very well for life in a culturally diverse society.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

But...

- The behaviour of some pupils, particularly in Year 9, detracts from the good behaviour of the majority. The number of exclusions is higher than average.

### Commentary

#### Main school

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	1.2
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.*

19. Attendance is above average because both the pupils and their parents set a high value on education. The school is not complacent, however. It rigorously follows up reasons for absence, monitors punctuality and the taking of holidays in term time, and makes very good use of support from outside agencies when needed.
20. The pupils enjoy what the school has to offer them. They work hard in nearly all lessons and want to do well; attitudes towards work are good. In physical education, particularly, pupils show very high levels of commitment, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Where lessons are lively and stimulating, pupils become actively involved, listening attentively and asking and answering questions enthusiastically. Occasionally the pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory or poor. This is usually because teachers are new to the school or are not able to capture the pupils' imagination and co-operation.
21. A very strong characteristic across the school is the sense of pride and belonging, shown through the pupils' neat appearance, their developing confidence and their politeness and friendliness. This is greatly enhanced by their very good relationships with the staff, together with the high level of pastoral

care provided for the individual. The pupils say they feel supported in all aspects of their personal development and know that all members of staff are very willing to help through advice and support. Although almost all pupils were born in the UK, the school is very sensitive to the needs of those from minority groups, for example providing positive role models to help boys from Black Caribbean families to achieve well.

22. Behaviour by nearly all pupils is good throughout the day. There are no signs of racial tension or harassment. There are a small number of pupils in Year 9, mostly boys but sometimes girls, who misbehave in some lessons. This is often due to inadequate behaviour management by the teacher, sometimes not following the school's very clear guidance on what is required. Where the expectations and the sanctions that will be applied are set out immediately, and it is clear to the pupils that these will be carried through, inspectors noted that the same pupils behave satisfactorily and work well. The level of fixed period exclusions is higher than in similar schools; there is no space where pupils experiencing difficulties can to be supported. Exclusions have tended to reflect a relatively small number of pupils. A key target in the current school development plan is to cut the use of exclusion sharply. The school monitors exclusion patterns, and has provided additional support for pupils in vulnerable groups.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1130	111	1
White – Irish	24		
White – any other White background	21		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	34	11	0
Mixed – White and Black African	10		
Mixed – White and Asian	3		
Mixed – any other mixed background	14		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	30	8	2
Black or Black British – African	3		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	10		
Any other ethnic group	7		
No ethnic group recorded	10		

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

23. Although bullying is perceived as a concern by a number of pupils and their parents, the overwhelming view of pupils is that cases are handled well. The pupils are reminded regularly, for instance, in assemblies, of their responsibilities to each other and the need to tackle any such concerns quickly.
24. The school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, in spite of the obvious pressures on space. Governors and senior staff take their statutory responsibility seriously. Pupils are given some excellent opportunities to reflect, pray and sing; the school, for example, has its own prayer with which pupils clearly identify strongly. The school chaplain is a highly

active member of both the school and the local community and, with other staff, particularly in the religious education department, teaches pupils to develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. As a consequence, pupils are genuinely reflective, can clearly think beyond the material world and show respect and tolerance for all members of their community.

*The role of the school chaplain exemplifies the excellence of the school's commitment to the values of self-knowledge, respect, tolerance and life beyond the material world. These values are shared by the whole school. The chaplain, known by all as 'Rev', is clearly valued by all members of the school community and the results of his work are visible wherever one goes. During the bombing of Iraq, for example, he led a lunchtime period of reflection and prayer in the school's Millennium Garden. This garden, which is an oasis in the busy playground, is respected and valued by pupils who sit in it when they want a quiet moment away from the noise and bustle of the playground. Similarly, pupils read out the names of victims of the Nazis on Holocaust Remembrance Day. This is done on a rota basis in a highly visible part of the school. Pupils clearly value such opportunities provided by the school.*

25. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a very good understanding of their local culture as well as that of others. During the week of the inspection, for example, a group of pupils rehearsed a production of *Romeo and Juliet* which they were to perform in a well-known Birmingham theatre. The school makes good use of the cultural diversity of its pupils. For example, aware of its links with other countries, the school raises money to help a school in Malawi. In history lessons, pupils discuss the consequences of the slave trade for British cities such as Bristol and ask whether compensation should be paid to the African countries affected.

### ***Sixth form***

26. Most students attend well. The rate of course completion, especially amongst those taking A-level courses, is high, showing a commitment to their studies. However, completion rate for the Year 12 GNVQ courses is less good, often because of unsatisfactory attendance. The school keeps a close watch on attendance, seeking reasons for absence and the parents' support when needed.
27. The students have positive attitudes towards their learning. Many have high aspirations and know they must work hard to achieve what they want. The students cope well in most lessons with the brisk pace required to complete courses; this is made easier by the good relationships established between staff and students.
28. Sixth formers regard themselves as part of the whole school community. They volunteer to take on roles, such as support for younger pupils, including being peer mentors and working with pupils in form time sessions, and through involvement in the school council.
29. Students in the sixth form are provided with similar opportunities to those of younger pupils for personal development. Students show tolerance and respect for each other and towards others in the school. Year 13 students in sports science, for example, look at the impact of faith on athletes like Jonathan Edwards.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils and students. Teaching is good in most cases, although more use could be made of data on academic performance to be sure that pupils are properly stretched. The curriculum is satisfactory, but with very good enrichment opportunities. However, accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Work with parents, the wider community and partner schools is also good.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching in the school is **good**, as is learning. Teaching and learning are both good in the main school; in the sixth form, they are satisfactory. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory across the school, mainly because the good work being done at senior levels is not yet reflected in the work of most subjects.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is done by subject specialists.
- Teachers encourage pupils to do well, and most pupils respond to the challenge.
- Pupils and students enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, creating a good ethos for learning.

But...

- Insufficient use is made of data analysis as a diagnostic tool and as a motivational device by teachers.
- The school's assessment arrangements need to be implemented more consistently within departments.

### Commentary

*Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 139 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	22 (16%)	60 (43%)	43 (31%)	9 (6%)	1 (1%)	0(0%)

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

### Main school

30. There are differences in the quality of teaching and learning, both by subject and by the stage of learning. There is a greater proportion of very good or excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. This is not surprising, given the early timing of the inspection in the new school year, and the fact that many teachers in the early years had only seen their new classes on one or two previous occasions. In contrast, the fact that Year 11 produced almost one-third of the best lessons says much for how well the teachers get to know their pupils, as this year group had only just returned to school after work experience. At the other end of the scale, there is a similar proportion of unsatisfactory teaching across all years of the main school.
31. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 11 in religious education, and good across the main school in English, mathematics, design and technology, history, ICT, music and physical education. Pupils show good achievement as a result. They are also good in Years 10

and 11 in science and business studies. Elsewhere they are satisfactory, apart from in citizenship and modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11, where teaching is unsatisfactory. In the case of citizenship, part of the problem is that the subject is being delivered by form tutors, whose expertise to do so varies greatly. Some teaching in citizenship is excellent, but the lack of teachers' subject knowledge and the limited time available in the daily tutor period are major barriers to effective learning in most cases. In modern foreign languages, teaching in Years 10 and 11 lacks sufficient challenge and variety, particularly for higher attainers.

32. Although there are some areas of weakness in teaching, these are offset by the many strengths. Most teachers are specialists, able to extend what is being taught, or to approach topics, in a variety of ways. Another major strength is the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils; the pupils often demonstrate a great deal of trust in their teacher, and a liking for them. This ensures that in most classrooms, there is a good and productive working atmosphere, leavened by good humour. In most cases, teachers also demonstrate good classroom management and control, so that the learning environment is positive.
33. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. Good specialist teaching, including contributions from teaching assistants, helps pupils to make good progress in basic reading and spelling skills through well-structured learning programmes. In subjects across the curriculum, their progress towards personal targets is satisfactory, but there is not enough systematic guidance on joint planning between subject teachers and learning support staff to help the pupils learn as effectively as they could. Despite recent increases, the amount of in-class support is still lower than in most schools. No pupil at the school has English as an additional language; pupils from minority backgrounds were seen to be learning in a similar manner to their peers. There are no significant differences between the learning of boys and girls in the classroom.
34. Where teaching is at its best, high expectations of work and behaviour lie at the centre of what is done. Thus a very good Year 11 Spanish lesson with lower attainers succeeded because the teacher's classroom management and control were absolutely secure. The task, reading estate agents' advertisements from Spanish newspapers, was demanding, but the teacher's very high expectations were vindicated; the pupils showed very good gains in their ability to work with the language. The best teaching also targets work well to the needs of the pupils. A Year 11 business studies lesson worked well because the teacher knew a considerable amount about the pupils' prior attainments, and thus what they should be able to do. She also had an excellent knowledge of examination mark criteria, and was able to ensure that pupils maximised the value of what they wrote.

*Two excellent lessons seen were delivered by the same teacher in two very different subjects. A Year 7 mathematics lesson on multiplication took place in a room which was far removed from the typical mathematics classroom; it was a riot of colour, images and sculptures. The pupils were lower attainers, yet within a short time, they were able to carry out multiplications such as  $63 \times 67$  or  $35 \times 35$  as quickly as one could write the problems because the teacher has taught them, thoroughly, rules – and tricks – of multiplication. She encouraged competition yet nurtured every pupil to succeed by having a wide range of graded worksheets. The pupils thrived in this atmosphere of praise, encouragement, support and, above all, challenge. As one pupil said: "I didn't like maths, but in this class, it's FUN!" The pupils rose to every challenge with excitement; achievement was excellent.*



*Achievement was demanded, nurtured and celebrated; pupils who made substantial gains recorded the fact on leaves on the "tree of success", a feature of this classroom.*

*A Year 9 citizenship lesson was also dynamic, challenging and all-involving, using captivating delivery and storytelling to promote study skills. The inspirational teaching resulted in outstanding learning and achievement because in this atmosphere, trying was the important thing; pupils knew that getting it wrong wouldn't hurt.*

35. Unsatisfactory teaching is not spread evenly through the school. It is most common in Year 9, the year in which attitudes and behaviour are least positive. There are three main weaknesses: inadequate class control, undemanding or slow tasks, and work that is not well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils. These factors combine to various degrees to limit achievement. Pupils become bored, the pace of their learning falls and misbehaviour follows. Even in lessons that are satisfactory overall, relatively few teachers share learning objectives with the pupils. They tell them what will happen in the lesson, but not what they will be able to know, understand and do as a result of it. Thus the focus is on teaching input rather than the outputs of learning and progress. This contributes to the view that pupils could be greater partners in their learning in some lessons.
36. A significant barrier to improving teaching quality is the fact that assessment is not well rooted at all levels of the school, particularly in the classroom. There are islands of good practice in some subjects, for example English, religious education, business studies and music, but overall, assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory. This is largely because the school has only now begun to set out clearly what is expected of teachers, and to begin to make more effective use of the data that are held centrally about the pupils' standards as they move through the school. A limited target setting programme is in place in Years 10 and 11, but the targets do not form the basis of regular monitoring of academic progress. There are only limited targets for pupils in Years 7 to 9. However, the many other strengths of teaching, for example the relatively advantageous pupil to teacher ratio, the teachers' good subject knowledge, good expectations and the good relationships, offset this shortcoming to a significant degree in the short term.
37. Although the senior management team distributes the relevant national and school data to middle managers, they now need training in how to analyse value added factors in order to monitor progress, and to organise work effectively to be sure of meeting the needs of groups and individual pupils.
38. The pupils' understanding of how they can improve is unsatisfactory. The school fulfils the statutory requirements to assess and report on individual pupils' achievements and progress annually. Overall, the quality and regularity of marking are unsatisfactory. Good practice exists in religious education, where work is described clearly in terms of levels, and in business studies, where teachers make explicit reference to course criteria. However, in the main, teachers provide insufficient detail to help pupils understand how their work compares to national standards, and what they need to do to improve.

### ***Sixth form***

39. The overall quality of teaching and of learning in the sixth form is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in the sixth form, and teaching and learning at this level are good in English, physics, physical education, health and social care, and psychology. In other focus subjects examined, teaching is satisfactory, apart from art, where unsatisfactory teaching reflects low expectations and too great a reliance on individual learning styles. Some students need more support in acquiring higher level skills such as analysis and evaluation.
40. In the sixth form, class management and control are good. The pattern of strengths and weaknesses is similar to those in the main school. Unusually, teachers have no clear idea of what targets their students should aim towards, given their GCSE results. Only recently has the school started to assess educational value added in the sixth form; class teachers are not always aware of the findings. In general, sixth form students lack initiative in their learning. In part, this reflects the limited access that they have to ICT resources. But in many cases, teaching does not encourage them to develop more independent styles of working, in particular, developing the ability to analyse and to evaluate what they do. These skills are essential for higher grades.

### **The curriculum**

*The curriculum is **good** for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and **satisfactory** for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form. All curriculum requirements are met. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation is poor overall. Resources are poor throughout the school, mainly because the provision for ICT is inadequate.*

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is broad and balanced.
- There is a wide range of enrichment activities, available to, and popular with, all pupils.

But...

- The quality of provision for citizenship in tutorial time varies too much.
- There are few courses offering work-related education in Years 10 and 11.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Whole school***

41. The school senior management team carries out regular reviews of the school curriculum to ensure that it is up to date, and that it provides appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils and students. Provision for careers education and guidance is good. There are very good opportunities for enrichment both within the taught day, and in out-of-school hours, particularly in sporting activities.
42. Enrichment opportunities across the school are very good, and excellent in sport. The level of participation is very high in a wide range of sporting activities. Sports College status has raised the already high level of provision. Facilities are well used, from early in the day to late evening. The Artsmark award has not yet made a significant impact on provision or the level of participation. There is a good number of interesting educational visits to enhance learning. These include history visits to Chedworth Roman villa and the Black Country museum, a geography course to Dovedale, and the science department visit to Jodrell Bank. The modern foreign languages department arranges visits to France and Germany. Pupils comment favourably on the value of such visits.

43. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs across the school is satisfactory. Structured basic skills programmes enable pupils to make good progress. The pupils are well known to their teachers. All pupils have equality of access to the school's curriculum opportunities. However, the range of curriculum opportunities for pupils with special educational needs is too narrow in Years 10 to 11. There are not enough opportunities to follow accredited vocational and other work-related courses. There is not enough structured support for pupils who are better suited to a lighter examination load to help them cope successfully with tasks such as coursework assignments. Pupils with special educational needs do not have enough support in the main school from learning support assistants. Where they do, the pupils' achievements are noticeably improved. The school identifies its more able pupils, with a view to seeing what additional provisions might be required.

### ***Main school***

44. The overall allocation of time for the school day is about average. There are 35 minutes of tutorial time each day. There is proper provision for collective worship within this time, including well-planned assemblies. However, provision for citizenship and for personal and social education, also done in these lessons, is extremely variable. Many of the tutors are non-specialists in these areas, and this, together with the limited time available, contributes significantly to the unsatisfactory achievement of pupils in citizenship in Years 10 and 11.
45. The taught day consists of four 70-minute lessons; this is helpful to practical subjects, but is much too long for most other subjects, particularly for the substantial number of pupils with special educational needs.
46. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are included; there is good provision for drama, and discrete ICT lessons for all pupils. Curriculum links with primary schools are increasing as a result of specialist school status, helping teachers to plan for continuity in learning, for example by working within the primary schools.
47. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Parents and pupils receive clear guidance about the courses available, to assist in their choice of subjects. Other than the two weeks of work experience in Year 11, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to follow work-related courses. This limits the number of curriculum pathways available for pupils as they move towards the sixth form.
48. In spite of the school's attempts to maintain good decorative order and tidiness, the accommodation is poor. The very crowded site has many weak features including narrow stairs and corridors, and a lack of up-to-date facilities for physical education. The games fields are several miles away, and the gymnasia are dated. Other shortcomings include insufficient science laboratories, technology rooms which are difficult to work in, and classrooms which are too stuffy or too small to support a range of different teaching styles such as group work. Disabled access is all but impossible to most parts of the school; there are no lifts and few ramps to cope with the many flights of steps and changes of level. Most toilet facilities are also very old, although further refurbishment is planned; pupils are right to express concern at the state of the facilities. The pedestrian approach to the school, through a cramped car park, is hazardous.
49. The school lacks sufficient learning resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. In particular, its facilities for ICT are wholly inadequate, with fewer than half the number of computers expected in a school of this size, creating major access problems. Moreover, they are old, unreliable and deployed in way that means that pupils have to share computers. This is having a substantial adverse effect on the opportunities that pupils have to use ICT as a learning tool. The library accommodation is inadequate,

being too small, and with insufficient and dated books, for independent learning. The school is about to undertake a rebuilding and refurbishment programme to improve this.

### ***Sixth form***

50. In the sixth form, curriculum arrangements are satisfactory. The school has introduced a number of relevant vocational courses, including sports studies, business, and health and social care. Numbers on courses are generally good in Year 12, but there is little demand as yet for AVCE courses in Year 13. There is also a good range of more traditional AS and A-level subjects. The school maintains a wide range of choice, although a number of these courses are not cost-effective because of the small take-up by students. The school is discussing possible consortium arrangements with nearby schools and colleges in order to improve the efficiency and take-up of provision, whilst catering for the wide range of students' aptitudes and abilities.
51. Accommodation in the sixth form is unsatisfactory and, although the sixth form has its own dedicated area, timetable requirements mean that the sixth form has to share its requirements with the main school. The common room and library in the sixth form provide a positive ethos and sense of identity for the students, but are too small to support opportunities for independent learning. The building is unsuited for physically or visually handicapped people because of the lack of lifts, restricting access to the first floor. As in the main school, many library books are old, and although there are some computers in the sixth form area, overall, facilities for ICT are inadequate.

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

*There are **good** arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare and safety of the pupils. The advice and guidance given to pupils is good overall, as are the school's arrangements to involve pupils in its work.*

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong pastoral care and support systems and personnel are in place to try to do the best for pupils and students.
- There are very good, much appreciated, transfer and induction arrangements from the primary schools.
- There is good guidance on the next step of the pupils' and students' education, including the provision of work experience.
- The school council is an effective forum for pupils and students to make their views known.

But...

- Academic data are not used sufficiently well by all teachers, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Main school***

52. Very good relationships develop between pupils and the staff in school. This, together with the high quality support and care, helps ensure that the pupils are confident to get on with their learning. Policies and practices relating to health, welfare and child protection are well considered and implemented. Meetings involving academic staff and pastoral staff, such as the nurse and learning mentor, discuss the needs of individuals and demonstrate very well the efforts made to try to ensure the

best provision for all pupils. The school works hard with outside agencies over actual and potential concerns, including behaviour and, occasionally, attendance.

53. Very positive comments were made by pupils and parents about the smooth transition between the primary schools and Baverstock. As part of its specialist sports college plans, it has established very good links with local primary schools. This means that the pupils become familiar with a number of staff from Baverstock, and also benefit from the more specialised teaching they receive. Further links develop through meetings and discussions between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers, visits to both schools by pupils and teachers, and induction days in the summer term. The very positive outcomes were evident from the pupils in Year 7 talking enthusiastically about their new school. Moreover, this enthusiasm is shared by those parents whose pupils have joined the school from overseas; they note the care that was taken to make them and their children feel welcome.
54. Pupils receive good quality support and advice on what courses they might follow in Years 10 and 11, with information evenings provided in Year 9 for the pupils and their parents. Good preparation for work experience includes work with the careers service, including their participation in transitional reviews in Year 9 for pupils with special educational needs. The long established provision of work experience gives pupils a good insight into the world of work. Importantly, they learn about what they do not like as well as what they do.
55. Personal support and advice provided are very good, and include the setting and reviewing of personal targets. However, the use of academic data to set, and to monitor, targets to help the pupils improve their learning is currently unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and could be improved further in Years 10 and 11.
56. The views of pupils are taken into account well through the school council, which effectively includes all pupils through form and year discussions with their peer representatives. Consultation about the new and effective Code of Conduct took account of the views of all pupils through a questionnaire.
57. Across the school, learning support and other staff take good steps to ensure the care of pupils with special educational needs. There is regular and effective contact with outside care agencies. Supportive procedures such as special arrangements for examinations are effectively established. The learning support area provides a calm, nurturing environment where pupils feel secure. Subject inspectors observed good relationships between teachers and the pupils.

### ***Sixth form***

58. Good information is provided for students and their parents prior to entry. This is followed up by an effective induction programme at the start of Year 12. Pastoral and academic support for students is good. The students are well known to staff who are sensitive to their needs and strive to build their confidence and aspirations. Good information and visits are provided for those wishing to apply for higher education. However, the school does not make enough use of the data available to it when advising students about their likely examination outcomes, thus ensuring that they aim as high as possible.
59. The views of the students, both about the college and the school in general, are taken into account through a student council. However, they are not yet involved in matters that affect them day to day, even in such simple things as the choice of decoration for the rooms in the sixth form block.

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

*Links with parents are **good**, as are those with the community, other schools and colleges.*

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views of the school and college and involve themselves as and when necessary.
- The links with other schools and colleges are good.
- The school's role as a specialist sports college has been effective in strengthening bonds with the community that it serves.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Main school***

60. The parents feel that the work of the school is good. It is a popular school, with two applicants for every place. Concerns were raised about behaviour, but this was judged to be good overall, with problems, linked to teaching weaknesses, seen only in Year 9. The concerns of some parents about the targets set being too general were confirmed, as was the possibility of confusion over the grading systems used in reports. However, parents generally receive good quality information, including a weekly newsletter that keeps them up to date.
61. Parents are usually responsive to the school's requests for support over issues such as attendance and behaviour. Attendance at the annual parents' evening is high; however, parents would like to have more meetings about the curriculum. Parents are appreciative of the approachability of the staff in school. This good supportive partnership provides a firm and productive base from which to promote the pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and their parents or carers are suitably involved in decisions about their learning.
62. The school has good links with other schools, especially through its work with partnership schools as a specialist sports college. Through these, there is extensive use of the facilities by other schools and shared use of staff and coaching. The school is a very active member of the Excellence in Cities Network. The impact of sports college status has been very good in supporting community developments, raising self-esteem within the school, and engendering a sense of pride in the local area. The school is central to regeneration plans for the locality, a very visible symbol of change.

#### ***Sixth form***

63. Parents maintain their good support of the school into the sixth form. The good relationships developed with both past and new parents continue to provide a platform from which to promote the students' learning.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

*There have been significant changes in the four terms since the current headteacher took up his post, but much remains to be done. The overall quality of leadership and management is currently **satisfactory** overall. Governance and management are satisfactory, leadership is good.*

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a clear 'can-do' ethos that expects pupils to develop academically and socially.
- The governors now have a very clear picture of how well the school operates, and play a proper role in planning its work.

- The headteacher has worked hard to identify the strategic direction that the school must now take, based on sharp analyses of what it does, and does not do, well.
- Most subjects are well led.
- The large deficit that the school had in the spring of 2002 is now under control.

But...

- The school is only now establishing secure systems and procedures to monitor its work, and the achievements of its pupils, at all levels using rigorous data analysis.
- The support of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes, and their teachers, needs stronger management.
- The balance of spending has, in recent years, favoured staff at the expense of much-needed learning resources.

## Commentary

64. The arrival of a new headteacher in April 2002 has meant that many aspects of leadership and management were in a state of change at the time of the inspection. Over the past four terms, the new headteacher has had to put in place basic tools such as a school development plan, as well as managing the consequences of the six-figure budget deficit that he discovered on his arrival.
65. **Governance** is now satisfactory overall. All statutory requirements are met, and the governors are now beginning to play a proper role in the school's affairs. They take an active part in its work as a specialist sports college, for example in monitoring the impact of community partnerships. The governing body makes clear and up-to-date policy statements about promoting inclusion, including matters of race, sex and disability, and checks on their implementation. The inspection found that these policies were working as intended. The make-up of the governing body reflects the diversity of the area. However, the state of the premises makes it all but impossible to deliver the commitment to equality of opportunity for the disabled, given that there has been virtually no improvement to accessibility in the past. The school fulfils the required statutory requirements for special educational needs.
66. A financial audit of the school in November 2001 found many serious shortcomings in its governance. At that time, it would appear that governors played a relatively little part in charting and monitoring the development of the school. Over the past year, there has been a transformation. Many governors are new, so training is in hand to increase their effectiveness. A secure committee structure, backed by clear terms of reference, has been established, making the best use of governors' time. There is now far greater scrutiny of the school's affairs, and governors play an active role in setting the school's development priorities. They are now truly the critical friends of the school, challenging what they are told if the evidence is not clear. Governors now know, well, the strengths and weaknesses of the school, how it is doing in comparison with others, what state its finances are in, and what steps it must take to secure further improvement. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of current provision through its frequent contact with school personnel.
67. Governors play a proper part in the further development of the *sixth form*, and are aware that the present arrangements are not as cost-effective as they could be in some subjects.
68. **Leadership** is good overall. The headteacher arrived in a school that already had a strong self-belief in the way that education could transform the lives of its pupils and enhance its local area. He has been successful in building further on this strong position, in spite of having to manage a major funding gap in his first year; this inevitably slowed the pace of other initiatives. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. His vision builds on the school's many strengths, but also acknowledges that improvement is necessary. In particular, the vision

pays close attention to the needs of pupils as individuals, and the need to secure optimum achievement for all of them, whatever their background. The other members of the senior leadership group, some of whom have long service at the school, share in the vision and contribute to the very good leadership at the centre of the school.

69. In most subjects in the main school, leadership is at least satisfactory. It is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, physical education, health and social care and psychology. It is very good in religious education and in business studies, and underpins the good achievement of the pupils in these subjects. However, leadership is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages, where there is still no clear and shared picture of what needs to be done to improve standards in the subject, and how to bring this about. Good leadership is also a feature of the various pastoral teams.
70. The leadership of special educational needs within the specialist learning support area is satisfactory, although until recently, progress on issues identified at the previous inspection has been slow. However, there is a lack of clear vision within the special needs team of how wider support programmes within the school should be delivered. There is a need for more training to help teachers and support staff implement more effectively new developments in supporting pupils in lessons. Systematic whole-school monitoring of the provision for the pupils, and its effectiveness, are yet to be firmly established. The headteacher has a clear and appropriate vision of the nature of the provision for special educational needs that the school now requires.
71. *Leadership of the sixth form* is satisfactory. There is, however, no clear and distinctive vision within the sixth form team of what the sixth form should be, given the nature of its intake, or of how the school can retain more of its higher attaining pupils at the end of Year 11. This is reflected in the curriculum that it offers at present. Subject leadership in the sixth form is good in English, physical education, health and social care, and psychology. It is satisfactory elsewhere, except in art where it is unsatisfactory. The best subject leadership has a clear picture of what sort of students enter the sixth form, and how best to meet their needs, with a shared strategic view of what needs to be done.
72. There was no school development plan when the headteacher took up his post. The current plan is a short-term one, focusing very sharply on a few key areas such as teaching and learning, behaviour and ICT. A strength is that the main school plan integrates very closely with the various subject and area plans; a training day was set aside to ensure that this was done properly. The effects are evident in lessons, and the improvement in results in Year 9. The central place of development planning is seen through the work of heads of department and their link senior managers. A shortcoming of the present plan is that most targets are expressed as resource inputs or system requirements rather than as outcomes that the pupils are intended to reach.
73. **Management** is satisfactory in the main school. Against a background of the major task of bringing the school's finances back into balance, much has been done over the last year or so, putting into place appropriate systems to set clear policies and procedures, to plan the school's work, to monitor its progress, and to evaluate its outcomes. The school's self-evaluation report, written in preparation for this inspection, was very thorough and, for the most part, reflected the findings of the inspection very accurately. There is no doubt that the governors and senior managers have a clear picture of the key priorities facing the school. At present, self-evaluation of this clarity and precision is mainly confined to governors and senior staff. Data analyses prepared by them, for example on whether ethnic minority pupils, or boys and girls, make enough academic progress, are of good quality. The methods used are not, however, much in evidence yet in subjects at any level of the school. Thus most heads of subject have no clear

picture of whether pupils or students are achieving as they should, given their prior attainments, and drawing upon national data. Nor do they use these data to help them in performance management, or in evaluating how well their decisions are working. A start has been made with targets for pupils in Years 10 and 11, but their impact within the classroom is still limited; few teachers know their pupils' targets well. Monitoring of the work of subjects is now carried out on a regular basis by members of the senior team, but monitoring of the work of colleagues by middle managers, in pastoral as well as academic areas, is too patchy.

74. *Management in the sixth form* is satisfactory, although, as in the main school, data are not used sufficiently at present to evaluate the effectiveness of provision, to use the targets that result or to monitor progress. As in the rest of the school, monitoring of the work of the team by the head of sixth form is limited at present.
75. The management of the specialist learning support area is satisfactory overall. There is close monitoring of the progress of pupils on specific teaching programmes. Recent developments have improved funding, made suitable timetable arrangements to assist the special educational needs co-ordinator in the whole-school nature of the role, apportioned responsibility to other teaching staff to improve the teaching of pupils in subjects, and increased the hours for teaching assistants. However, in the wider school, management is less successful. There are still too few learning support assistants in lessons, despite recent increases. There is a need for more training to help teachers and support staff implement more effectively new developments in supporting pupils in lessons. There is not enough adaptation of teaching and learning methods and resources to help meet the range of learning difficulties. Systematic whole-school monitoring of the provision for the pupils and its effectiveness is not yet established.
76. The school is successful in recruiting well-qualified staff, and its induction arrangements are very good. Staff development is satisfactory.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,452,193	Balance from previous year	-173,362
Total expenditure	4,337,529	Balance carried forward to the next	-58,698
Expenditure per pupil	3,189		

77. Upon taking up his post, the headteacher discovered that instead of the expected substantial budget surplus, the school was, in fact, over £170,000 in deficit. In part this arose because the school's financial systems did not (and still do not) 'talk' to those of the local education authority. Pending the introduction of fully compliant financial systems, the school is buying in expertise to prevent such problems occurring again. The deficit immediately limited what could be done; an urgent recovery plan was put into place. The school is already working within its allocated budget, and is on course to remove the accumulated deficit before the deadline of 2007.
78. A major cause of the deficit was that spending on teaching staff is so high, and remains so, despite substantial reductions in staffing costs over the past year. Levels of teaching staff are still more generous than average, as are allowances. Moreover, teachers spend rather less time in the classroom than average. This imbalance means that the school has markedly fewer learning support staff in classrooms than usual, and accounts for the inadequate levels of spending on accommodation and learning resources – especially ICT – in recent years. However, special purpose grants are accounted for and used in a proper manner.
79. *Spending on the sixth form* is greater than the basic income for it. Some of the sixth form courses with a very small take-up are not cost-effective at present. However, sixth form income is topped up by the specialist school recurrent grant, to build up new courses and to provide opportunities within the area, even where take-up is limited. As a result, many students are the first in their families to take post-GCSE courses. The balance of the funding comes from the main school. Discussions are in progress to seek to work more collaboratively with other schools and colleges, in order to widen opportunities at a lower overall cost.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### What is the effectiveness of community partnerships?

*The quality of the school's work with its local community is very good.*

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very active in the project to regenerate the local area.
- The school's facilities are very heavily used by community groups.
- The specialist status of the school has given fresh impetus to its work with the wider community.
- Work with partner primary schools has been good.

But...

- More remains to be done with partner secondary schools.
- Poor accommodation limits what can be offered.

## Commentary

80. The school has very good links with the local community. Its facilities are heavily used by adult education, sports clubs, family and community groups, often in partnership with school activities and involving pupils. As a sports college, there is a heavy emphasis on providing facilities for local sport and for increasing participation as shown by its work, for example in athletics, football and rugby. The community dimension has broadened the curriculum by its creation of more locally based work-related activities, while its charity work for UNICEF has given pupils and students a broader global understanding of such issues as poverty and neglect. The school supports a number of local charities and groups such as the Bramshaw residents, thereby extending student social awareness and creating opportunities for developing responsibility. Its involvement in local regeneration through work on the ward strategy board and in neighbourhood renewal has led to a re-establishment of local pride and a fostering of self-respect, firmly rooted in partnership activities. It is more involved than most schools in similar contexts.
81. The impact of the sports college status on the school and its community has been significant. The effect on achievement has been very good, creating a sense of purpose, raising self-esteem and engendering pride in its work. The shared partnership and reciprocal activities have strengthened learning for pupils and members of the local community alike. Standards have been raised in the primary schools as a result of joint staff training, enabling, by age 11, improved outcomes in gymnastics, dance and athletics. New opportunities for all are succeeding with students gaining coaching certificates and accreditation such as the Community Sports Leader Award. The former qualifications have led to direct employment for some in Birmingham. Such success leads to improved attitudes towards more formal learning, while community links have enhanced the traditional curriculum by creating vocational opportunities on courses such as business education, as well as providing additional work-based experiences in the local superstore and other enterprises.
82. The quality of provision provided by the sports college is very good. Not only are there extra opportunities for the pupils, but also adult education courses, coaching sessions, family events and work with community groups. The school is clearly the focus of its community and proudly seen as such. Letters of support received during the inspection reflect this and show Baverstock to be an inclusive school. It is especially praised for its links with the Maypole centre and its efforts at re-integrating disaffected youngsters into society, through its sport programmes, drug awareness activities and high level of care. The school provides well for its partner primary schools and can be proud of its work with the Lindsworth Special School. However, insufficient progress has been made on working with other secondary schools. The school is actively engaged in neighbourhood renewal and through the Social Regeneration Budget has enhanced local self-worth by its involvement in programmes on healthy eating, first aid, obesity and asthma as well as creating opportunities in focus sports such as wrestling, weight-lifting and table tennis and working with local clubs. Student participation in local sport has grown, as has that of some parents and the unemployed, creating a culture of involvement and success, so important in a socially deprived area.
83. Leadership of the sports college is very good. The director of sport has vision and a clear sense of direction which she enthusiastically shares. Management is good. There is a strong team identity with energetic, well-qualified staff co-operating successfully on a diverse range of activities. They are well deployed to support school activities, the local family of schools and outreach work. The community programme benefits considerably from being able to utilise the

skills, energy and talents of a number of staff who work outside the sports domain but contribute to its effectiveness and particularly its social inclusion. The specialist school programme has enhanced the resources of the school and community, particularly in staffing and minor equipment, while the capital project has provided more accommodation, but overall it is inadequate for the very heavy usage of the sports college. There is satisfactory management of the community plan budget. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory, but as yet there is insufficient use of data to measure successes against targets, so accountability is mainly by verbal feedback, most of which is positive.

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

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

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

The focus of inspection was on English and modern foreign languages. In addition, work in drama was sampled. Here, the 2002 GCSE results were below average; those in 2003 are similar. In the lesson seen, pupils achieved satisfactorily as a result of satisfactory and enthusiastic specialist teaching. During the inspection pupils performed a scene from their production of *Romeo and Juliet* in assemblies. They are shortly to perform the piece in a local theatre.

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Achievement is good because of good and well-planned teaching.
- The department works well as a team and its leadership is good.

But...

- Despite good assessment procedures, teachers could use assessment data more effectively.
- The subject needs to make more use of ICT.

#### **Commentary**

84. Results in the 2002 national tests for Year 9 pupils are broadly average, maintaining an upward trend. Boys did relatively better than girls. Results improved further in 2003. In the 2002 GCSE English examination results were broadly average. There was no significant difference between the results of boys and girls, or pupils from minorities. Results for 2003 are not as high, reflecting the nature of the intake in this year. In the 2002 English literature examination, results were above average but the school enters fewer candidates than most schools. Literature results improved significantly in 2003 but still from a relatively low entry. All the 2002 examination results in Year 9 and 11 are as expected from the pupils' earlier test scores.
85. Pupils enter the school with below average standards. In work seen, standards are average by the end of Year 9, representing good achievement, especially by those pupils who entered the school with below average writing skills. Higher attainers make good progress in their use of vocabulary and well-crafted narratives. More pupils are working at higher levels than in previous years. Achievement is good in the current Year 11, and standards of work seen are average. Higher attainers respond particularly well to intellectually challenging teaching. More are working at the highest grades than expected, exemplified by some very detailed analysis of demanding texts such as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Hamlet*. Pupils throughout the school make the most progress in the standard of their writing. During Years 7 to 9, they become more assured in writing extensively and in their use of important organisational devices such as paragraphing. They also improve in their ability to sustain accurate sentence punctuation. During Years 10 and 11, the pupils maintain these strengths while developing a better analytical approach to writing about texts, using quotations appropriately to support arguments. Some middle attaining boys do not include enough references to the text to support the otherwise good understanding apparent in their work. Pupils with special educational needs

make good progress because teachers use a supportive range of methods including adapting materials appropriately. The writing of some low ability pupils is short, though clearly organised. Pupils from minority backgrounds have no difficulty in achieving at the same rate as their peers. Restricted access to computers means there are not enough opportunities to support the pupils' ICT standards. The department has identified satisfactory opportunities to support the pupils' numeracy skills.

86. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The consistent application of effective learning methods and good classroom organisation help the pupils to make good achievement. Very good specialist knowledge and high expectations are leading to higher standards. Despite the long lessons, pupils sustain positive attitudes because teachers plan different activities that ensure a good sense of purpose. Pupils enjoy the engaging, challenging and varied methods. In Year 8, lower attainers made good progress in their creative writing because of careful preparation, while higher attainers responded enthusiastically to challenging reading activities requiring speed reading, skimming and scanning. Good marking gives the pupils clear guidance on how to improve. Nevertheless, despite some good monitoring of pupils' progress, teachers do not take full advantage of the opportunities to use data rigorously to help the pupils improve further.
87. Leadership of the department is good and so is teamwork. Since her appointment, the head of department has led her team in a highly collaborative revision of schemes of work and lessons in Years 7 to 9. This emerged from a comprehensive evaluation of the department's work and has been an important factor in the pupils' improving standards. All teachers show a professional and reflective approach to their work. Management is satisfactory. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning, but more could be done. Some classrooms are cramped and restrict learning activities. The good revision of teaching schemes that is leading to better standards of writing reflects good improvement since the last inspection.

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

88. Standards of literacy are average and the provision made by subjects to enhance literacy skills is satisfactory. There is too much variation between subjects. For example, higher attainers tend to write at length effectively in most subjects, but the assuredness that middle attainers showed in extended writing in English is less evident elsewhere, especially in Years 7 to 9. The impact of in-service training on literacy issues lacks consistency and does not appear to have been systematically monitored or evaluated. There is very good practice in religious education. Pupils use individual whiteboards to generate ideas and to consolidate their learning of key vocabulary. They have frequent opportunities to write extensively. The teachers guide the pupils effectively in how to structure their writing into paragraphs and how to make it more coherent through the use of connective terms. This good practice offers a good model for other subjects. Teachers in ICT and business studies enhance the pupils' use of technical terms, but there was only limited evidence of this approach in mathematics and in design and technology. A good mix of practical and speaking and listening activities helps pupils to use technical words well in music. Apart from English lessons, there was not enough evidence of teachers expecting pupils to implement a structured approach to higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning texts to locate relevant information.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers are competent linguists, and have a high level of commitment.

But...

- Achievement is not high enough in Years 10 and 11 because of shortcomings in teaching.
- Assessment data are not used effectively to help plan how the subject should be taught, and how to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers.
- Unsatisfactory leadership of the department has not addressed fully the decline in GCSE standards over recent years.

## Commentary

89. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were below average in both French and German, with only a small proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades. Boys did much worse than girls in German, and both boys and girls tend to perform less well in languages than in their other subjects. The GCSE results have shown a steady decline over the last five years, and the 2003 results continue this trend.
90. In work seen, standards are average by the end of Year 9, which represents satisfactory achievement. The pupils' listening, speaking and reading skills are broadly average. They write simply in French or German, and there are good examples of more extended writing amongst some higher attainers. Standards are below average by the end of Year 11; achievement is unsatisfactory. The pupils do not make adequate progress in French or German at this level because the work they are set is often not challenging enough. The lowest attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are studying Spanish for a Certificate of Achievement show satisfactory achievement given their low linguistic attainment at the start of the course.
91. Teaching and learning in French and German are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but are unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The teachers speak languages well, and set good linguistic examples so that many pupils develop good accents. There is some good teaching which ensures that pupils learn and practise new language effectively through carefully planned activities that engage and challenge them. Many lessons, however, are poorly planned and often do not make language learning interesting, stimulating and effective. Opportunities for the pupils to practise the language and to use it independently are limited, so that they do not develop confidence in speaking, nor the ability to speak and write extended language. The teachers' expectations of what the pupils might do in the language in both lessons and homework are frequently not high enough, and therefore pupils do not use the language they have learned in order to cope with new and unfamiliar demands, either in speaking or in writing. Higher attainers, in particular, tend not to do as well as they should. Pupils with special educational needs would learn more effectively if there were more specific planning for their individual needs. The marking of written work is often not sufficiently conscientious, with the result that many pupils are not helped to improve the quality of their work.
92. Management is satisfactory; leadership is unsatisfactory. The head of department leads a committed team, but it is not yet a fully effective team. Assessment data are not systematically used to help plan the curriculum, or to guide teaching methods. The department does not have a clear, shared view of its strengths and weaknesses and of what needs to be done to reverse declining standards. This is because rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet fully in place. Criticisms made in the previous inspection report still remain unresolved, and therefore improvement since then has been unsatisfactory.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving standards at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 are the result of more challenging schemes of work and the greater focus on teaching and learning in the recent past.
- The teachers' good subject knowledge and confident delivery, as well as lessons which start promptly and quickly engage pupils in their work, promote good achievement.

But...

- The limited access to and provision for ICT within the department means that pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to support mathematics.
- More needs doing to promote the use of mathematics across the curriculum.

## Commentary

93. In the 2002 national tests in mathematics, standards were below average. The 2003 results show a sharp improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, standards were below average but in line with expectations based on the pupils' prior attainment in the Year 9 national tests. Pupils did less well in mathematics than in their other subjects. There was a fall in the results, reflecting the year group's earlier performance.
94. Standards are below average when pupils enter the school, with substantial variations from year to year. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 are now average. The improvement is a result of the more challenging schemes of work and the greater focus on teaching and learning. Numerical work is well developed, especially for lower attaining pupils, although measuring skills are still under-developed. In relation to their prior attainments, pupils show good achievement in all years. Overall, there are no significant differences in the standards of work of boys and girls, whilst pupils with special educational needs receive good support from individual teachers. Pupils from minority groups achieve in a similar manner to their peers; language barriers are not present.
95. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons start promptly making use of a variety of starter activities which quickly engage pupils in the work of the lesson. Lesson planning is very full and gives a clear focus for the work of the lesson. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and confident exposition but do not always anticipate common errors. Teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils. They make good use of praise to encourage pupils and ensure that their behaviour is acceptable. Many lessons conclude with a session which usefully revisits the work and checks pupils' understanding. Homework is inconsistent across the department and there is too much emphasis on 'finishing off' work. Marking is regular but pupils do not understand the grading system used. They have a good awareness of their targets but less idea of how to achieve them.
96. The provision for literacy is satisfactory but literacy skills are not sufficiently developed in the mathematics classroom. The provision for ICT within the department is unsatisfactory because access to computers is inadequate.
97. The leadership of the subject is good and ensures a clear educational direction for mathematics. In a short time, the head of department has created a positive ethos and a climate for learning which is now beginning to show itself in improved examination results. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the head of department has a good awareness of the strengths of the department as a result of her analysis of data and informal monitoring. However, this monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to identify and act upon weaknesses and provide a more focused department improvement plan.

98. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have improved as a result of the more challenging schemes of work and the greater focus on teaching and learning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and pupils enjoy positive and productive relationships with the teacher and with one another. Assessment procedures require further work and computers are not used effectively in the development of mathematics. The department has a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

99. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory although teachers have received some training in the use of mathematics across the curriculum. There is no whole-school policy, and many pupils struggle with simple calculations such as working out temperature rises in science. Measurement is used in food technology for weighing ingredients and graphical work is practised in geography and science, although rarely interpreted. Data-handling skills are used extensively across the curriculum to collect data for market research, but little consideration is given to suitable questions and sampling methods which avoid bias, except in business studies.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of leadership is good; there is a sense of purpose in the department.
- Teachers are committed; they form good working relationships with pupils.
- Overall, standards are improving, but are still below average in Years 10 and 11.

But...

- There is insufficient monitoring of the work of the department, leading to inconsistencies.
- There is little use of ICT to widen the range of strategies for learning.

### **Commentary**

100. Pupils' standards on entry to the school are below average. Results in the 2002 national tests in Year 9 were also below average, but the improvement made during Years 7 to 9 was well below that of pupils in similar schools. However, results in 2003 confirm that overall standards are now rising much faster than the national trend, with a particularly sharp increase in results at the higher levels. Boys regularly outperform girls. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, results were also below average. Pupils performed less well than in most of their other subjects, but girls did better than boys.
101. Standards in work seen during the inspection are average for the end of Year 9, reflecting the increased focus on teaching and learning in the relatively recent past. This represents good achievement for boys and girls alike, including those from minority backgrounds. Pupils are provided with challenging work from the start of Year 7. They soon learn to compare the energy in different foods by heating water and measuring the temperature rise. By Year 9, they are able to distinguish between genetic and environmental variation in human characteristics. Standards in work seen remain below average for the end of Year 11, reflecting earlier shortcomings, but show signs of improvement in Year 10, following the improvements to teaching and learning when in Year 9. Achievements in relation to prior attainments are

satisfactory in both years. Pupils are able to plan investigations, record measurements, and ensure that their results provide a fair comparison of the variables. However, in spite of regular practical work from Year 7 onwards, their analysis and evaluation of observations lack depth. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to their teachers, and their achievements are satisfactory.

102. Teaching in lessons is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. It is good in Years 10 and 11, where there is a higher proportion of experienced teachers. In lessons seen, it is never less than satisfactory, and occasionally very good, but the wider evidence base, including discussion and written work, shows some shortcomings. The curriculum is well planned, providing effective support for teachers. Teachers' command of their subject is also good. Their planning is thorough, leading to prompt starts to lessons, and good pace. Relationships are usually good, as are pupils' attitudes, especially in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are confident to ask for help. Teaching is therefore thorough, but its effectiveness is reduced by a number of factors. Teachers often dominate lessons, and do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to think about their work, and to work independently. There is also little access to ICT to extend the range of learning opportunities. Marking of pupils' work is regular but the overall quality of assessment is unsatisfactory. The grading of work lacks precision; moreover, there is insufficient use of data to identify possible under-achievement, and to take early action. These weaknesses have had an increased effect on achievement as pupils move through the school. The use of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.
103. The leadership of the subject is good. The head of department plans well, and leads by example. He has very good relationships with teachers, technicians and pupils; there is very good teamwork. Priorities are well thought out, and the development plan is a useful working document. The management of the department is satisfactory. Insufficient time is given to monitoring data, teaching and assessment, in order to promote consistency and raise the standard of provision. Since the last inspection, the quality of accommodation has improved, although one laboratory is still unsatisfactory. Standards have shown some improvement, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and pupils' attitudes to learning remain good. Funding is insufficient, however, so that the quality of resources is unsatisfactory. Overall, the department has made satisfactory progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

The provision for ICT is **good**.

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

- Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 are above average in the taught ICT lessons despite the lack of appropriate resources.
- The teaching of ICT is good with very good subject knowledge, shared well with pupils by a hardworking and committed team of teachers who plan lessons effectively.

But....

- There is insufficient access to appropriate ICT resources. This hinders achievement and is holding up the planned delivery of the control and data logging aspects of ICT.

#### **Commentary**

104. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 and 11 are above average in their specialist work. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils enter Year 7 with standards below average and

show good achievement overall by Year 11; it would be higher were pupils using ICT more fully in all of their subjects, and if pupils had better access to computers. In work seen, Year 7 pupils reach average standards in skills of word processing, desktop publishing and using the Internet to research information. In Year 8 pupils effectively improve their skills and develop good knowledge and understanding of how computers can be used in a variety of ways. By the end of Year 9 they use computers competently and with increasing confidence, particularly for researching, presenting information in a variety of ways, and using spreadsheets and databases successfully. Achievement is hindered because pupils have to share computers in lessons. The lack of appropriate resources across the curriculum means that the aspects of control, measuring and modelling are not adequately covered, although delivery is planned later in the year. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, particularly that of boys. Overall, pupils develop their skills further and extend their knowledge and apply them well to explore and investigate and are able to use computers and software programs for a variety of situations.

105. The quality of teaching in ICT lessons is good in all years. Good relationships between teachers and pupils of all backgrounds and attainment levels encourage co-operation in lessons and this leads to good behaviour and positive attitudes. Lessons are well planned and teachers share good subject knowledge effectively with pupils. Pupils learn effectively because they are actively involved in a range of tasks. When they are given the opportunities to work independently and to develop their problem-solving skills they respond well. Support given by teachers to individual pupils is very good and helps them to make progress in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough in some lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 to enable them to make maximum progress in their learning. The teaching develops the use of technical language well. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
106. Leadership is good. There is a clear vision for the subject, supported by a team of teachers with a shared commitment to maintaining and improving standards. Management is satisfactory. Administrative routines are sound but the lack of systematic whole-school procedures is reflected in the subject, thus monitoring and evaluation, underpinned by rigorous use of data, need further development.
107. The department has shown good improvement since the previous inspection with improvements in standards, teaching and overall provision in the taught elements of ICT.

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

108. Resources for ICT are unsatisfactory, resulting in unsatisfactory provision for ICT across the curriculum. Many subjects have planned for an appropriate use of ICT. However, equipment is unreliable and out-dated, and pupils and teachers have difficulty gaining access to the necessary computers. Thus opportunities for pupils to develop their application and capability in ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory. However, effective practice was observed in music and business studies. Many teachers have undergone training in the use of ICT and they express a suitable commitment to using it. The headteacher and governors are aware of the lack of resources and it is a high priority on the current school development plan. The school has recently appointed an ICT project development manager to co-ordinate and develop this area.

### **HUMANITIES**

The main subjects are geography, history and religious education. One Year 10 sociology lesson was also observed. Standards in sociology are below average, although achievement is satisfactory given pupils' prior attainment. Teaching and learning in the lesson were satisfactory.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils learn well as a result of good and enthusiastic teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support.
- The new head of department has made a good start.

But...

- More strategies are needed to help pupils take effective notes.
- Teachers need to develop more strategies for ensuring the accuracy of teacher assessment at the end of Year 9.

### **Commentary**

109. Results in the GCSE examination were broadly average in 2002; those for 2003 show a continuation of a rising trend.
110. When pupils enter the school, their standards in the subject are below average. Standards of work seen are average by the end of Year 9, representing good achievement for all pupils. There are no evident differences in achievement by sex, prior attainment or ethnicity at any level. By the end of Year 11, pupils opting to take history at GCSE achieve broadly average standards, representing good achievement, given their below average prior attainment when they began the course. Although pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of historical events, people and places, pupils of average and below average ability are less secure when they have to select and deploy pieces of historical evidence in order to make an argument. This means that their notes do not help them to organise their information into analytical answers. In order to further raise standards, the department needs strategies for enabling pupils to write with more confidence and to make more effective notes.
111. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups. During the week of the inspection there were some examples of excellent teaching. As a result of the enthusiastic teaching, pupils enjoy their lessons and the number opting to take the subject at GCSE is increasing. Lessons are well organised. This means that lessons proceed smoothly and pupils know what they need to do and why. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs effectively. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, a group of lower attaining pupils was able to explain why a man who died 2000 years ago did not die naturally, but as a result of murder. Although they found it very difficult to write down their answers they did so with the help of a classroom assistant. In another lesson, the teacher had written specific learning objectives for a pupil with special educational needs and this enabled the pupil to make clear progress in her knowledge and understanding. A strong feature of lessons is the way in which history is taught within a clear moral framework. This means that pupils realise that it is relevant to their lives and worth studying. Although marking is regular and helpful, the department needs to develop more strategies for ensuring that teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 is accurate. Although pupils word process and research homework, access to computer rooms is difficult and teachers have not yet had training in using the new interactive whiteboard. There are few opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy skills in the subject.
112. It is still too soon to judge the effectiveness of leadership and management since the head of department had been in post for only three weeks at the time of the inspection. However, he has certainly made a good start in deciding what needs to be done next. He is helped by a stable and

committed team, which shares good practice and concerns effectively. The subject has shown good improvement since the previous inspection.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- High attainers achieve high GCSE grades through good coursework advice.
- Positive relationships and mutual respect encourage learning.

But...

- Assessment is inconsistent and does not offer sufficient advice on how to improve.
- Implementation of the national programmes for teaching and learning is slow.

### Commentary

113. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, results were in line with the national average and they are similar in 2003. There has been a small improvement since 1998. At GCSE, results are again at the national average in 2002 and 2003, and this is the trend of recent years. The pupils who take the subject tend to do better in geography, by about half a grade, than in their other subjects.
114. Standards are broadly average when pupils start the school and average by the end of Year 9, representing satisfactory achievement. The pupils have improved their geographical knowledge, particularly their map and location skills. By the end of Year 11, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory for both boys and girls alike in relation to prior attainment when they started the course. High attainers are especially well supported in their GCSE coursework on rivers. The pupils with special educational needs achieve as expected; pupils from minority backgrounds show similar achievements to the others. Geography shows evidence of developing literacy skills but makes little provision for extending pupils' skills in numeracy and in ICT.
115. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers and warm relationships. The pupils' oral responses are good but more emphasis needs to be given to extended writing to provide challenge for higher attainers. Lessons are strongly teacher directed, and national programmes to offer more variety, pace and better meet individual needs have not yet been established. Tasks are often too easy. Insufficient depth of homework restricts learning, especially for middle attainers. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and on some occasions good, with mature responses regularly given in question and answer work. The pupils' understanding of social and cultural issues is particularly strong. The pupils write confidently and at greater length, which leads to improved grades at GCSE. These pupils benefit from good advice on how to gain high coursework marks. Marking is thorough but rarely shows the pupil how to improve. Praise is widely used. There is some inconsistency between teachers in their assessment of National Curriculum levels. The pupils work co-operatively and behaviour is satisfactory, although a lesson in Year 9 was marked by immaturity and a poor attitude to learning.
116. Leadership is satisfactory, as is management. The department is well organised, experienced and enthusiastic. The monitoring of teaching and learning, the sharing of good practice, and the use of data to set better individual pupil targets have yet to be fully developed. Accommodation is good with bright display to encourage learning. Resources are adequate, but the very limited access to computers

restricts the development of pupil skills. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection, but the need to develop more appropriate tasks for lower attainers still exists.

## Religious education

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

### Main strengths and areas for development

- The quality of leadership is very good and provides a clear vision.
- Pupils achieve better than might be expected because of the very good teaching.
- Strategies for improving pupils' writing are excellent and there is scope to share these more widely across the school.

But...

- Teachers now need to develop more strategies for helping less able pupils to develop more confidence in discussing their ideas orally.

117. Results in the GCSE examination in 2002 were above average. Results in 2003 fell. However, the number of pupils who opt to take the subject at GCSE is fairly small and, in both years, pupils achieved at least as well as, and often better than, might be expected given their prior attainment.

118. When pupils enter the school, standards are below average. In work seen, standards are above average by the end of Year 9, representing very good achievement. By the end of Year 9, pupils know and understand the main beliefs and practices of the major world religions. They understand what these beliefs mean to people of faith. They are able to understand moral complexities and show tolerance and respect for those around them. By the end of Year 11, standards in the relatively small GCSE group are also above average. Standards in the core group are broadly average. Pupils show good achievement overall in these years, with no evident difference by sex, attainment level or ethnic background. This is in spite of the time allocated to religious education in the core group being low, and both teachers and pupils work hard to gain these standards. Although standards in literacy overall are average, standards in writing are improving and are having a positive impact on standards in the subject in all years. Lower attaining pupils, in fact, often write with more confidence than they show when they present their ideas orally. Pupils show confidence in word processing their work and in researching on the Internet, although access to computer rooms is difficult. Teachers, however, make very good use of ICT, such as *PowerPoint*, in their lessons. There was no evidence of the subject making a contribution to the development of numeracy.

119. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. The limited time for the subject in Years 10 and 11 restricts the achievement that is possible in the core groups. An excellent feature is the way in which teachers develop pupils' writing skills. This was evident, for example, in a Year 10 lesson where pupils used individual whiteboards to jot down ideas about different types of love and later wrote a reflective passage on the Christian concept of *agape*. Teaching is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and challenging. As a result, pupils take the subject seriously and clearly enjoy their lessons. Some Year 11 pupils, for example, talked very enthusiastically about work they had done in Year 8, making models of places of worship. The pace of learning is always brisk and teachers make very good use of questioning to clarify and reinforce pupils' learning and also to enable pupils to feel confident in sharing their views with others. Marking and assessment are good. Pupils are given levels for their work in Years 7 to 9 and understand

what they need to do in order to improve. A strong feature is the way in which pupils show an interest in their activities, work co-operatively and concentrate for long periods.

120. Leadership is very good, with very clear vision and direction. Management is also very good; planning, teamwork and the sharing of concerns and good practice are strong features of the department. No issues for attention were raised in the previous inspection report; the subject continues to perform well.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Good teaching supports pupils well in their learning.
- Teachers manage pupils well and very good relationships create very good conditions for good learning and positive attitudes to work.

But...

- The use of data as a diagnostic and target setting tool is under-used.
- Implementation of the National Strategy for literacy, numeracy and ICT needs speeding up.

#### **Commentary**

121. GCSE examination results were average in 2002 and results in 2003 continue the trend of improvement in recent years. Girls perform better than the boys. Pupils gained better results in textiles and graphics than they did in the other technology subjects.
122. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards are average. Year 9 pupils reach average levels in designing and making products in a range of materials. They use a good range of formal graphics skills as well as sketching to show each stage of development. Overall, this represents good achievement compared to the below average standards pupils have when they join the school. Their numeracy skills, however, are below average and pupils show only a limited range of writing skills. Year 11 pupils develop confidence in applying the design process and as a result they gain marks at each stage of their coursework. Well-developed graphics skills help pupils to enhance the quality and presentation of their work in all material areas. Pupils in textiles reach above average standards. All pupils show good achievement in Years 10 and 11, and pupils of all ages and backgrounds show very good attitudes to the subject.
123. Teaching and learning are good at all levels. In Years 7 to 9, lessons are well structured and teachers ensure pupils' learning is underpinned with appropriate knowledge which enables them to work through each task. A good range of activities helps to keep the pupils' interest alive, and provides the challenge for them to master the skills they encounter. In Years 10 and 11, teachers ensure pupils follow the examination mark criteria closely. Well-planned lessons provide pupils with clear guidance for coursework. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and pupils benefit from the specialist knowledge covered. Classroom displays are stimulating and provide good examples of work. Pupils are encouraged to test their products at various stages and include a good variety of industrial processes and techniques. However, the range of strategies and resources used with pupils who have special educational needs is in need of further development. In spite of this, teachers provide good individual support for pupils in lessons and as a result pupils of all backgrounds and attainment levels achieve well.

The use of ICT to raise standards further is underdeveloped as a result of the low level of computers within the department.

124. Both leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department has established good working relationships amongst staff. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection and standards are in line with the national average despite the variation in the ability range of the various year groups. However, more use could be made of data analysis to target work more precisely to pupils' needs, and to evaluate the impact of what is provided.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Art and music were the subjects inspected.

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are constructive and support positive attitudes to learning.
- Clarity of objectives leads to planned and carefully assessed units of work.

But...

- Pupils need more opportunities to stimulate creativity and imagination in their work.
- Improved ICT and visual resources are needed to develop critical and evaluative skills.

### **Commentary**

125. Standards at GCSE level have improved since the last inspection and, although they remain below average, pupils obtain results in the subject that are now in line with those in their other subjects.
126. Pupils start their art course with well below average standards. By the end of Year 9, they have made some progress, but standards of work remain below the average. The standard of work seen by the end of Year 9 indicates steady progress particularly in painting and printmaking and the use of colour and pattern. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement, but some gaps remain. Critical and evaluative skills need improvement and this needs much better provision of ICT and visual resources. In Years 10 and 11, while the overall standards are below average, most pupils make sound progress and achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall. Those pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, but gifted, talented and high attaining pupils do not achieve so well. Drawing skills in all year groups need improvement and printmaking at GCSE level is weak. A small proportion of pupils are working above expectations, but overall the barriers to achievement in Year 10 cluster around a lack of confidence in the use of drawing media. Pupils have a growing knowledge of artists but their critical skills remain weak.
127. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Teachers have warm and productive relationships with their classes and this creates a satisfactory climate for learning. Teachers exercise firm control and pupils are well managed; behaviour is good. Pupils work diligently and concentrate hard in lessons, and there is a high level of application in all year groups. Clear learning objectives lead to planned and carefully assessed units of work. Assessment systems are conscientious and detailed and they support pupils' clarity about their test and examination requirements. However, assessment does not effectively inform and revise teaching strategies, for example by reviewing the value added by individual pupils. Pupils enjoy a broad range of media and there is a planned balance between the

development of knowledge and practical skills. Sound classroom management ensures that pupils with learning difficulties are identified and supported effectively and are able to make progress. Teaching methods and resources, particularly ICT, image projection and library provision, need improving in all art rooms to help develop pupils' critical and evaluative skills when studying artists' work. The lack of ICT provision severely limits pupils' capacity to use this valuable tool effectively. Across Years 7 to 11, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be challenged and stimulated to produce more creative and imaginative artworks. Small-scale, over-prescribed units of work are inhibiting personal and imaginative responses, particularly for high attaining pupils, in all years.

128. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Successful methods have been used to raise GCSE standards. Leadership has created an effective team of teachers who are expert and committed to an inclusive department. Strategic departmental planning needs to be more focused on improving teaching methods and the continuing drive to raise standards in all key stages. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

## **Music**

The provision for music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The clear vision of the new head of department provides a good framework for development.
- The provision for music technology in Years 7 to 9 is good and pupils achieve well because of specialist teaching.

But...

- The behaviour of some Year 9 pupils and of some groups in the practice rooms is not as good as it should be.
- Pupils' skills in composition are not as good as their other skills.

## **Commentary**

129. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2002 were below average, and the results in 2003 are at similar levels, though no national averages are available yet for comparison. The results, recently, have not been as good as at the time of the previous inspection, due to some turbulence in staffing.
130. Standards in music on entry to the school vary from year to year, but are generally below average. In work seen during this inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are average, representing good achievement since these pupils entered the school with below average standards. By the end of Year 9, pupils' performing skills are average, and they reach above average standards when they use music to create arrangements on computers, but their composition work is not as good as it should be. By Year 11, standards are above average. These are the pupils whose above average standards were noted in the 2002 Year 9 teacher assessments; achievement is therefore satisfactory. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those from minorities show good achievement, in line with that of others, because teaching provides well for their individual needs.
131. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have a very good command of the subject, and first rate practical skills, so that they sing and play whenever they need to illustrate a point, and this means that pupils learn quickly and thoroughly. Lessons are planned with a satisfactory variety of activities, but the planning is good where clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils, and when what has been learned is summarised at the end of the lesson. In the good lessons, timed targets are used and the

pace remains brisk. Teachers try to insist on high standards of behaviour, though standards slip in practice room work. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, some unsettled behaviour by one Year 9 class, and an activity that left too many pupils passive, contributed to inadequate achievement. In Years 10 and 11, teachers ensure that pupils are effectively engaged in a variety of challenging activities that develop their musical skills. Performance skills are particularly well catered for and, as a result, the pupils show interest in their lessons and work with confidence.

132. No judgement is made on leadership, since the head had been in post for only three weeks at the time of the inspection. Two of the three teachers in the department are new, and the department is refocusing itself after a period of change. A strength is that ICT is used very well in music, and half of the course in Years 7 to 9 is made up of music technology work. There is some good self-evaluation in the technology units. Standards of literacy are average, and pupils learn technical language satisfactorily. However, their general vocabulary is not wide, and they often find it difficult to describe what they hear, beyond short sentences and basic vocabulary. There is no specific provision for developing numeracy in music. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The good judgement on teaching and learning in 1998 has been sustained.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education in the main school is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in practical work because teaching is good at all levels.
- Standards in competitive team and individual sports are high.

But...

- Standards in GCSE examinations indicate a falling trend.
- Poor accommodation constrains development and limits what may be achieved as a specialist sports college.

#### **Commentary**

133. Standards in the GCSE examinations were above average in 2001 and average in 2002; those for 2003 were lower. This downward trend is partly the result of the school's policy of entering pupils in Year 10 in 2002 rather than in Year 11 a year later. This is tied to the specialist schools bid, and results in pupils doing less well than they could. For all pupils, the recent results are broadly similar to those they gain in the other subjects that they take.
134. The teachers' own assessments in 2002 and 2003 were that standards were below average by the end of Year 9. This is not borne out in work seen, where practical and oral skills are average, and achievement is good. By the end of Year 9, performance in games and dance is average overall. Standards are above average in girls' swimming and boys' football, but below average when girls play football. By the end of Year 11 core course, standards are average overall in practical work and pupils achieve well. Boys display well above average levels of fitness in circuit training. Standards are average overall in GCSE games and dance; achievement is good. In recent physical education examinations, high attainers have not achieved as well as they should because the school enters them at the end of Year 10. In other respects, there are no significant differences in the achievements of pupils from different backgrounds, or prior attainment. In competitive games, athletics, gymnastics, trampolining,

weight-lifting and wrestling, achievement is excellent. Some pupils compete at international level; many represent the region or county in individual and team events.

135. Overall, teaching and learning are good in all years because teachers know their subject very well and organise activities enthusiastically. The department's consistently high expectations underpin very good behaviour, excellent participation rates and immaculate uniform kit. In Years 7 to 9, generous staffing promotes good rates of learning for pupils across the ability range. In swimming, the highest attainers improve their back crawl starts rapidly due to specialist coaching; middle and low attainers progress well because the teachers pay close attention to their needs. In Years 10 to 11, collaborative teaching usually inspires good levels of commitment from pupils, particularly when some of the team work alongside the class. However, in an introductory lesson for Junior Sports Leaders, pupils grew inattentive because the teachers talked too much. Very good teaching in dance helps girls and boys to raise their performance of the GCSE set study. Departmental assessment procedures are embryonic. Moderation at the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory. GCSE marking provides insufficient links to national benchmarks or clear advice on what the pupil needs to do to improve theory work.
136. Leadership is good, with the potential to be very good with more time in post. Management is good. In spite of the constraints caused by the specialist schools bid prepared by the previous head of department, much promising work is evident. To date, monitoring and evaluation are in their infancy. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Strengths include the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, the introduction of GCSE dance, and the flourishing extra-curricular programme. However, the trend in examinations is disappointing, core time allocation in Years 10 and 11 remains modest, and poor accommodation has an adverse effect on specialist status.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good, and sometimes very good, achievement that is seen.
- The good teaching that promotes good learning.
- The subject expertise of the teaching team.
- The way in which work is well matched to the needs of the pupils.

But...

- The teachers need to make far better use of data in the work of the subject.

### **Commentary**

137. The trend in GCSE examination results has been upwards since the previous inspection. In 2002, results overall were average. There has been a further, and substantial, improvement in 2003. Boys do less well than girls, but not greatly so.
138. In work seen, standards are above average for the end of Year 11. This represents good achievement overall; lower attainers show very good achievement because of the way that teaching is structured to support them. Pupils from ethnic minorities take a full part in lessons and achieve at similar rates to their colleagues. Pupils gain a secure factual knowledge of the subject, and most apply what they know to new situations. This is reflected in well-prepared coursework. Literacy skills are average; most

pupils communicate at least satisfactorily in writing because the teaching team makes sure that this important area is well supported, for example through detailed correction of written work. Speaking skills tend to be less strong; many pupils lack confidence. Numeracy standards are average, because the subject requires the pupils to use a range of mathematical tools. Standards in using ICT are average, but the subject tends not to be developing the skills of ICT as much as it could; unlike most other subjects, access to computers is not a major problem here.

139. Teaching and learning are good. The pupils show good achievement in their work because the teachers are very experienced. A key feature is that members of the team have been examiners, and have also written course texts. They therefore give very clear guidance to pupils on how they should use the assessment criteria for the courses, and this means that the pupils know what they must do to improve their work. Since work is also well targeted to the needs of the pupils, because they are well known to staff, achievement is particularly good for the lowest attainers. Marking is of high quality; teachers make accurate assessments, and also write lengthy and helpful comments. Above all, however, teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can do. Aided by good-humoured relationships, teachers control classes well; as a result, pupils work productively, are not afraid to ask for help, and enjoy their work. Teachers will not settle for work that is no more than satisfactory; they explain how pupils could have obtained better results from just a little more effort or care. The pupils respond well to this.
140. Leadership is very good. There is a clear and shared ethos that expects pupils to do well, whatever their previous history. Management is satisfactory, and teachers are implementing the various strategies and procedures that form part of the new school development plan. However, planning priorities could be more closely tied to what pupils are expected to gain from changes. The work of the team is monitored satisfactorily, but as in the school as a whole, there has been insufficient focus on data analysis to refine teaching and learning styles still further.
141. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The relatively strong position of the subject in 1998 has been maintained. It has the capacity to continue to develop well under the guidance of an enthusiastic head of department.

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

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- An audit of the existing curriculum identifies coverage of citizenship.
- The annual reporting procedures fulfil statutory assessment requirements.

But...

- Achievement could be higher because the teachers do not yet have a secure grasp of what is required.
- Allocation of time and current staffing arrangements constrain development of the subject.

## Commentary

142. The school delivers citizenship mainly as part of its personal, social, health and careers programme, taught mostly in tutorial time. Additionally, specialist teaching of the subject occurs in Years 10 and 11 as part of a similar programme, during a series of lessons within an arrangement involving several other subjects, although none of this was seen in the inspection.
143. In work seen, and from discussions with pupils, standards are broadly average for Year 9. In Years 8 and 9, oral and written work is broadly average. By the end of Year 9, the vocabulary and spelling of high attainers is well above average. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, standards across the subject are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not achieve as well as they might because of limitations in the teachers' understanding of requirements in this new, statutory National Curriculum subject.
144. Overall, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning in the lower part of the main school are satisfactory overall and can sometimes be excellent. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher's scintillating approach inspired excellent participation and involvement from all pupils in the tutor group. Links to citizenship and literacy were an integral feature of quick-fire questioning and focused memory work. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning in tutorial time are unsatisfactory overall. Although lesson plans contain appropriate references to citizenship, teachers do not make the subject material explicit as they explain the work. Additionally, written and oral tasks lack challenge. Assessment of pupils' progress in the subject is embryonic as the school awaits further guidance.
145. The co-ordinator's leadership is satisfactory, given the constraints impinging on his role to date. Management is satisfactory, restricted by current structures for curriculum, staffing and timetabling. Good features include an audit of the existing personal, social, health and careers curriculum to identify coverage, and citizenship within departmental schemes of work, for example global issues in geography and ethics in science. Pupils also learn about the subject through a variety of activities such as the school council elections. The annual reporting procedures fulfil statutory assessment requirements, providing parents with adequate information about their child's progress in the subject.
146. Citizenship was not a separate National Curriculum subject at the time of the last inspection. The position of this new subject is similar to that found in many schools at present. Accordingly, procedures for monitoring and evaluation are in their infancy.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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
General studies	16	62.5	78.6	0	25.7	15.6	30.0
Psychology	9	88.9	83.2	11.1	32.5	22.2	33.6

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Communication studies	12	100	98.3	16.7	36.8	70.0	81.1
English	14	100	98.3	28.6	36.5	80.0	80.1
Design and technology	6	100	95.3	16.7	35.5	70.0	76.5
General studies	19	100	90.1	10.5	29.1	66.3	69.3
History	6	100	97.1	50.0	41.0	83.3	81.2
Music	6	100	97.7	16.7	41.8	63.3	82.2
Psychology	18	100	94.3	22.2	38.9	73.3	77.7
Physical education	8	100	95.4	12.5	29.5	62.5	73.2
Business VCE	10	40.0	87.1	0	16.5	18.0	60.1
Health & social care VCE	10	100	90.1	0	16.3	64.0	62.5

### Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Intermediate Business	n/a	83		17		0	
GNVQ Intermediate Health and Social Care	n/a	100		42		0	
GNVQ Intermediate Leisure and Tourism	n/a	100		0		0	

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subject was English. There is no teaching of modern foreign languages in the sixth form. One lesson in drama was also sampled in Year 12. The teaching was very good, with a very knowledgeable teacher establishing a very good working atmosphere, in order to deliver the learning objectives that were clearly set out at the start. The students responded with a very good rate of learning. Drama results are broadly average.

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject.
- Work is marked well, and marking plays a full part in the teaching process.

But...

- Objectives for lessons are not always expressed as learning objectives.
- Students are not always as independent in the way they learn as they might be.

### Commentary

147. In A-level and AS examinations in 2002, results were average. The trend of results in recent years is similar to the national pattern. There are currently no averages available for 2003, but the results are similar to previous years. In relation to their earlier GCSE scores, students gain results that are in line with what would be expected. Retention rates are good; almost all students complete their courses.
148. In work seen, standards are average. This represents good achievement, given that standards on entry to the sixth form are below average. Though all students have at least the required grade C at GCSE, there are no students with the highest grades. There are no differences in achievement between male and female students, though very few male students choose to take the subject. Students extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of texts well. Higher attaining students use accurate quotations to back up the points they make, and embed them well in their essay writing. Lower attaining students are not so skilful in weaving quotations into their argument. The students' literacy skills are average, overall, and students use ICT effectively in their writing. There is little evidence that they develop their skills in the application of number.
149. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have a thorough grasp of the subject, and ensure that the students learn to peel away the layers of meaning in the texts they study. Lessons are well planned and move at a brisk pace, with a good variety of activities. In good lessons, pair and small group work is used effectively so that the students have a chance to learn from each other's investigations, as well as from the teacher and from their own study. Assessment is satisfactory overall: data are not always fully used to set challenging targets, but marking is a particularly strong feature of the work in English: teachers mark the students' work well, and this plays an important part in moving the learning forward. Relationships are good, and enable the students to engage well with their teachers. They ask questions to which teachers sometimes give direct answers but, often, teachers throw the question back to the students, perhaps in a different form, or with a clue to the answer, and this encourages the students to use the information they have to answer their own questions.

150. Teachers share with students the topic of lessons, but do not always express this in terms of what the students should have learned by the end of the lesson. This means that students are not always as independent in their learning as they need to be. Teachers do not always check the accuracy of some historical details of the background in which texts were written.
151. Leadership is good, and the department is well managed: teachers who are new to sixth form work are well prepared, with good guidelines, though their teaching had not been monitored by the head of department by the time of the inspection. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.
152. The school does not teach a formal course in key skills (communication).

## **MATHEMATICS**

The focus subject was mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and confident exposition in lessons which start promptly and quickly engage students in the work.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour as well as the positive and productive relationships with the teacher and with one another.

But...

- There is too little access to ICT by the department, so that students have too few opportunities to use ICT to support mathematics.
- Some teachers talk too much, and too little account is taken of the spread of ability so that higher attaining students are not sufficiently challenged.

### **Commentary**

153. The number of students entered for the A-level examination in 2002 was too small to make national comparisons but standards in the AS level examination in 2002 were below national averages. The unconfirmed results in 2003 show no improvement.
154. On the evidence of the students' work and the lessons observed, standards at the end of Year 13 remain below national averages. On the basis of their modest prior attainment, students show unsatisfactory achievement. The school is aware of this, and is to provide additional transition work to help the students to work effectively. A key problem is that although the students' attitudes and behaviour are good, their progress is marred by the poor attendance and poor commitment of a small minority of students. Literacy skills are satisfactory.
155. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons start promptly and lesson planning is full. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and confident exposition but teachers talk too much on occasions, and here, there is too little variety in teaching methods. Information on individual students at the start of the year is sketchy, so that teaching does not take enough account of the very wide spread of ability in the class. The provision for ICT in the sixth form is unsatisfactory and students have too few opportunities to use ICT within mathematics

lessons. Enrichment opportunities to research mathematics or make use of revision programmes on the Internet are under utilised.

156. The leadership and management of the department in the sixth form are satisfactory. The department's response to recent curricular changes has been good, but schemes of work do not yet provide a coherent framework for teaching. Monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to identify and act upon weaknesses, prioritise developments and focus on improvements to the provision in the sixth form.
157. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards remain the same as reported at the last inspection. Assessment procedures require further work and computers are still not used enough.
158. There is no provision for the teaching of key skills (application of number)

## **SCIENCE**

The focus was on physics, but biology and chemistry were also sampled.

In biology, examination results in 2002 were well below average. Students' achievements were satisfactory, but there was some under-performance in AS and A-level results in 2003. A very good biochemistry lesson was observed in Year 12. The students had a wide range of GCSE grades, but they were all very involved in a theory lesson about the chemical structure of proteins. Because of the teacher's high expectations, they responded very well to the challenge of AS-level work.

Chemistry results in 2002 were also well below average, but generally in line with expectations based on students' GCSE scores. In a good Year 12 lesson, students were required to use their initiative and computer skills to prepare a presentation on the properties of metals in Groups 1 and 2. They worked well in groups. The task helped to consolidate their knowledge of the periodic table.

### **Physics**

Provision in physics is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good, and thoroughly planned.
- Students have a good relationship with their teacher, and a positive attitude to work.
- Students with a wide range of GCSE grades take the course.

But...

- There is a lack of clear academic targets for each student.

### **Commentary**

159. The examination results in 2002 were well below national average, but generally in line with expectations based on GCSE grades. This represents satisfactory achievement. In recent years, there has been a low uptake for the subject, and few students have obtained A or B grades. However, all students have gained a pass grade, often from modest GCSE grades. All students normally complete the course.

160. In work seen, standards are below average. In Year 13, there are only two students. Both are achieving satisfactorily, in line with expectations based on their GCSE grades. In a good lesson, the introduction consolidated work from a previous lesson about the structure of a capacitor. The practical work involved the collection of data about discharge times. The practical work was undertaken confidently, with a sound knowledge of the theory supporting the work. There was a confident exchange of views with the teacher.
161. In Year 12, the introduction to the course has included lessons on basic mathematics such as formulae, scalar and vector quantities, and graphical analysis, since students are no longer certain to be good users of mathematics. This has given the students more confidence with calculations, since at least half the group are not taking AS mathematics. There was extensive use of formulae and calculations in the work seen based on Newton's laws of motion. In a very good lesson, students worked very well in groups when measuring the time electronically for pieces of cardboard to fall a set distance. This enabled them to obtain a value for the acceleration due to gravity of a body falling through air. They became aware, through discussion, of the major potential errors in their measurements, and made satisfactory achievement overall.
162. Teaching is good overall. There is a good understanding of the students' difficulties, and the pace of lessons is appropriate for the group. The best features of teaching are the teacher's experience, the interest shown in the students as individuals, and the thoroughness of planning. The introductory lesson on Newton's third law involved good demonstrations, and the use of searching questions to raise students' level of understanding. There is insufficient use of target setting, or regular comparison of students' standards with expectations. The majority of written tasks involve taking notes in class, and follow-up work based on the work covered in lessons. This often involves the application of number. There are few opportunities, however, to write in their own words. Most students' folders are maintained in satisfactory order, but the content of written work is below average. In other respects, the development of wider literacy is satisfactory.
163. The overall level of resources is unsatisfactory, with some major items not being replaced because of the low level of funding in the department. Textbooks are of good quality, but there is insufficient access to computers to extend learning opportunities. As a result, standards in the key skill of ICT are below average. Since the last inspection, standards in physics have remained at about the same level. There has been a review of the course provided, planning is thorough, and the subject has made satisfactory improvement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The focus of the inspection was the discrete provision of ICT at AS and A2-level. As a result of timetable constraints a very limited number of lessons could be seen; hence there is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning, or the achievement of students in Year 12.

164. The school offers courses at AS and A2-level in ICT. Courses are popular and most students who start the AS course complete it. These courses were not offered at the time of the last inspection. Results in the 2002 examinations were average; this represents satisfactory achievement given the students' attainments on entry.
165. Students' standards in Year 13 are below average; however, this represents satisfactory achievement given their standards on entry to the sixth form, with no marked patterns by sex or ethnicity. Students have limited ICT capability, and their experience is limited to generic software tools such as word processing, computer modelling and presentation packages. Students have not experienced more advanced software, such as relational databases, or used programming languages such as HTML for designing and editing web pages. However,

students make good use of the Internet; they research topics well and discuss their findings competently. Communication skills and application of number skills are satisfactorily developed through activities such as word processing and spreadsheet modelling. Students' attitudes to the subject are very positive. As a result of insufficient evidence it is not possible to make a reliable judgement on standards or achievement in Year 12.

166. As a result of insufficient evidence it is not possible to make a reliable judgement on the quality of teaching and learning.
167. The head of ICT has only recently taken over the leadership and management of the subject and therefore it is too early to make a judgement. However, in the short period of time with this responsibility, a rigorous scheme of work for both AS and A2 courses has been developed, and the two teachers involved in the delivery work closely together and have a shared commitment to improvement.
168. At the time of the inspection, the school did not offer a course in key skills (ICT).

## **HUMANITIES**

The focus subjects were geography and psychology. One lesson of general studies was sampled. In this, the teaching was good. The students had a positive attitude to their learning which led to good achievement. Standards are satisfactory.

### **Geography**

The overall provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Mutual respect and shared values allow discussion to flourish.

But...

- Higher attainers need more opportunity for self study.
- The pace of work needs to be more challenging.

#### **Commentary**

169. In A-level and AS-level examinations in 2002, results were in line with the national average and the 2003 results are similar. In recent years, the trend of the results has followed the national pattern, but the small group size makes statistical comparisons difficult.
170. Standards of work seen are average and the achievement of the students concerned is satisfactory. There are no differences in achievement between male and female students. Students are able to extend their geographical knowledge and develop skills of analysis, interpretation and spatial awareness, becoming confident learners by Year 13. Students have sound literacy skills but need to develop their competences in the application of number and ICT skills.

171. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, being secured by the teachers' good subject knowledge and much encouragement. Learning takes place in a very positive and supportive atmosphere. Students develop good oral skills and their responses show a high level of understanding with mature evaluation and analysis, often supported by well-reasoned judgements especially on topics such as pollution, where ethical issues are considered. Teachers give good advice on organisation and note taking, while practice at examination questions prepares students well. At times, however, there is an over-dependence on the textbook and lessons lose pace and challenge. There are insufficient opportunities for higher attainers to develop independent learning skills and to research material to a greater depth, with the limited access to ICT a contributory factor here.
172. Leadership is satisfactory, being competent and committed. Management is also satisfactory, utilising resources effectively and having appropriate schemes of work in place. With the exception of computer access, there are adequate resources for delivering the geography curriculum. The use of data and value added approaches are under-developed, as is the monitoring of teaching and learning.
173. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

## **Psychology**

Provision in psychology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is enthusiastic, motivating and based upon good subject knowledge and good preparation.
- Overall, standards are broadly in line with the national average.

But...

- The clear vision and ideas for development that the teacher in charge has for the subject need to be formally recorded as specific targets in a subject development plan.

## **Commentary**

174. While results at A-level and AS-level in 2002 and in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average, few students attained the higher grades.
175. In the work seen, achievement is satisfactory; for some students, it is good. Standards are broadly average. In a Year 12 lesson, the majority of students demonstrated an accurate understanding of some important technical terms through their appropriate use in discussion. In a Year 13 lesson students demonstrated an impressive developing insight into the difficulties of interpreting crime statistics. Standards of literacy and numeracy are average. There is little evidence that students use ICT in their writing or research, a consequence of limited access to ICT in the sixth form.
176. Teaching and learning are good, and take account of the students' needs on this course. Students benefit from teaching that is well prepared, carefully structured and based upon good subject knowledge. Teaching is enthusiastic, motivating, sufficiently challenging and delivered at a good pace. Students are responsive in discussion, respectful of the views of others and show gains in knowledge, understanding and skill. Skilful questioning provides students with

the opportunity to rehearse and consolidate prior learning and to make connections between subject content. Marking usually tells students what they have done well and how their written work could be improved. Discussion with students indicated that they enjoy this subject and that they feel well supported.

177. Leadership of the subject is good. There is now a clear vision for taking the subject forward. Management is good with student monitoring and tracking systems in place, although the development plan for the subject is basic at present. Resources have recently been increased, and there is now a *PowerPoint* presentation facility and a DVD library. The college library facility also contains a good collection of key course texts and other relevant books.
178. Psychology was not a focus during the last inspection and so it is not possible to comment on improvement since that time.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

No work was seen in this area.

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

One music lesson was sampled; teaching was good. The teacher's excellent knowledge of the subject and very good practical skills led to an interesting lesson in which the pupils made good progress. Recent examination results show that students gain results that are in line with expectations from their GCSE performance.

### **Art and design**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some individual students have enjoyed success in sculpture and ceramics.

But...

- Research and personal investigation through the use of sketchbooks require significant improvement.
- Critical study skills need to be more systematically taught.
- Whole-class teaching strategies are needed to underpin key media and design skills.

## **Commentary**

179. Standards of students on entry to A-level courses in art and design are consistently below average. However, examination results at A-level have been well below the national average for several years. Although there has been some individual success, particularly in sculpture and ceramics, overall there is a continuing trend of unsatisfactory achievement. In 2003, Year 12 students' AS standards dropped significantly on their final unit grades, the examination unit. The reason was due to poor research and investigative work based in their sketchbooks.
180. Standards seen in the studio in both Year 12 and Year 13 are well below average and represent unsatisfactory achievement overall. Some individual students have achieved satisfactory standards; one student produced a good body of sculptural work based on spire forms. This work showed flair, vision and competent three-dimensional skills. The rhythmic sequencing of this work showed a sound application of number. However, for most students the visual exploration of ideas, media experimentation and the appraisal of artists' work all require significant improvement. Sketchbooks are poor and there is a need for far greater challenge by teachers in the development of these personal journals. Standards of drawing are weak and visual ideas are not presented creatively or imaginatively. Students' work is sensitive and thoughtful at all times but lacks confidence in the use of media. Resulting work is small, tight and lacking in strength. Provision for ICT is poor and this has affected students' capacity to research as well as use computers creatively.
181. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Currently, students are working hard and display diligent application. Assessment of 2003 AS results is sound and students are clear on what is needed to improve standards this year. However, in lessons there is an overall lack of challenge and low expectations. There is unsatisfactory teaching of research and critical skills, particularly the development of the students' sketchbooks as significant personal records of ideas, reflections and investigation. Methodologies do not support the strong acquisition of skills. There is too much individualised learning, resulting in uneven achievement. The lack of whole-class teaching of key media skills results in wide differences in progress, which currently remains heavily reliant on the students' own skill base. The lack of a focus and stimulus for learning for the whole class dissipates the effectiveness of the teacher, slows the pace of the lesson and weakens student achievement. Some students require significantly more support for higher level skills, particularly critical and evaluative skills. This support may mean the use of writing frames to aid the development of literacy skills. The lack of whole-class teaching means that research skills, media, stimulus, appreciation and analysis skills are under-developed.
182. Leadership and management in the sixth form are unsatisfactory. The future improvement of standards at A-level will require clearer strategic planning focused on significant staff development and training.

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

The focus subject was physical education.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education in the sixth form is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for academic, vocational and leadership courses is very good.
- The range of extra-curricular sports is very good and involves many students.

But...

- Standards in A-level examinations have fallen.
- There are no general physical education lessons, unusual in a sports college.

### **Commentary**

183. Standards in A-level examinations have fallen to well below average in 2002; they are similar in 2003, although the size of the entry means reliable statistical comparisons are not possible. The school's 100 per cent pass rate in the subject, noted at the last inspection, has been maintained. In the most recent examinations, students, particularly girls, tended to do less well than might have been expected given their Year 12 AS grades. Retention rates are disappointing. The school enters its first small group of students for the BTEC sports science examinations in 2004.
184. Standards are average when students join the sixth form. In work seen, standards are average overall in theory and practical work for the end of the course. Students cope adequately with the literacy, numeracy and ICT aspects of each course. Scrutiny of written work and test answers indicates that the two males following the A-level course are reaching average standards at this stage of Year 13. Their achievement, to date, is satisfactory in relation to prior attainment. In Year 12 AS practical work, males and females understand how to use heart monitors and record the results of endurance exercises which they perform as part of a bleep test. Standards of written and oral work are average in the Year 13 BTEC group. Responses in the lesson, together with work in folders, indicate that achievement is satisfactory overall, though females tend to be progressing better than males thus far. No lessons for Community Sports Leaders were observed; records indicate that all who follow this optional course achieve the award. In extra-curricular sport, standards are high in a variety of competitive activities. One student is the Midlands U19 trampolining champion.
185. Overall, teaching and learning are good in sixth form lessons. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject and enjoy a very good rapport with the students. In Year 13, teaching and learning are very good in theory lessons because the teacher provides lots of topical information and uses probing questions to involve all the students, thus extending their knowledge effectively. In Year 12, because the teacher explains the key learning objectives clearly at the outset, learning is good, although students can be subdued. However, departmental assessment and marking procedures are not yet as systematic as they might be in helping students to gauge their progress against national standards, and to understand what they need to do to improve. In discussion, Year 13 students say they enjoy the subject, but express disappointment about the numbers who leave courses early.
186. Leadership is good. The director of sport, together with the head of physical education, provides good vision and direction for the team contributing at this level. Management is good, with appropriate deployment of staff. However, monitoring and evaluation are at an early stage. Although the last inspection report contained few references to the sixth form, improvement appears good. The BTEC course and extra-curricular activities are developing well. However, A-level results are very modest

and the lack of general physical education provision does not reflect well on the school's specialist sports status.

## **BUSINESS**

Courses in business education were sampled. The school provides GNVQ Intermediate, GCE A-level and VCE courses in business studies. The GNVQ results are average in terms of pass rates, but few students reach higher award levels, and the completion rate is below average. Those who complete the course reach standards that are in line with expectations from their earlier GCSE results. Completion rates on the GNVQ course are below average. Results in the VCE and A-level courses have been below average in recent years, although in line with expectations for the low GCSE grades of the students concerned. In work seen, teaching and learning were good, and standards average, representing good achievement.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

The focus subject was the GNVQ in health and social care.

### **Health and social care**

Provision in health and social care is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good because lessons are effectively planned and delivered.
- Good information is given to students throughout their course on how to improve their work.
- Relationships between staff and students are good, enabling students to gain confidence and work independently by Year 13.

But...

- The application of analytical and evaluative skills, and the use of ICT, require further development.

### **Commentary**

187. Standards in this subject have been improving year on year with standards broadly average. Achievement when compared with GCSE results is good; for some students, it is very good. Students' ability to gather first hand information using questionnaires, interviews and visits are good. Collecting additional information using the Internet and books is satisfactory for GNVQ and AVCE students but the use and application of a range of ICT skills are under-developed. AVCE students' ability to analyse information and use it to make comparative judgements is satisfactory but the use by GNVQ students of technical language and extended writing in portfolio work needs further development. The department is aware of this and encourages students to develop their written and oral skills. The development of numeracy is satisfactory.

188. Teaching is good. Planning is thorough, teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject and teamwork is strong. Theory and practice of health and social care are well related, giving students realistic insights into the demands of the different aspects and groups associated with health and social care. The development of knowledge is effectively linked to case studies and practical work placements to help students to gain a thorough understanding of the many aspects associated with health and care in the community. The very good relationships teachers have with the students create a good learning environment. Students have positive attitudes towards the subject and their learning, responding well to activities during lessons. They listen carefully and give adequate answers to direct questioning. However, students are less confident

in open discussion and find some difficulty working independently in Year 12 but this has been developed well by Year 13 with AVCE students competently taking responsibility for many aspects of their learning. Assessment is good and students have good support and guidance on how to improve their work.

189. Leadership and management are both good. There is a clear direction for the department and a shared commitment to raising standards. There is a strong team approach to the management of the subject with staff supporting each other and the students. Resources are adequate.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

The school offers AS and A2 courses in general studies, which are designed to complement students' other choices in the sixth form. The course offers an interdisciplinary course covering modules in science and technology, society and politics, arts and media, industry and commerce, and beliefs and values.

Standards in the 2002 examination series were below national averages but represented sound achievement in view of the students' performance at GCSE.

One lesson of the course was sampled on the topic of voting and the political process. The teacher, demonstrating good knowledge of the subject and the students, delivered the lesson making use of a good range of resources. Students were encouraged to participate fully in the lesson and thus improve their knowledge and understanding of the political process.

## 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>4</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>3</b>
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4	3
How well pupils learn	4	3
The quality of assessment	5	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	6	6
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	4	3

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