

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

RINGWOOD SCHOOL

A large comprehensive school and specialist Language College in the town of Ringwood, inspected from 13th-17th October by an inspection team led by Ian Hodgkinson

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ringwood is a very good school. It provides its pupils with education of a high quality, and they achieve very well. The school has a rigorous approach to the evaluation of its own success while fostering very warm relationships and high morale among its staff and pupils. **It gives good value for money.**

The school has very many strengths. Its main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management of the school are outstanding.
- The school's systems for using assessment information to guide its planning are excellent.
- Pupils benefit from comprehensive monitoring of their attitudes and progress; pupils' attitudes are very good, they behave very well, and make very good progress.
- Links with the community are excellent, and support the quality of education exceptionally well.
- The school is held in high regard by its parents, pupils and community.
- The quality and breadth of the curriculum are very good, and opportunities for enrichment through activities outside lessons are excellent.
- The school does not offer sufficient planned opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of life in multicultural, multi-ethnic Britain.

The school has made very good improvements since its last inspection in 1997, when standards were good and the quality of education very good. Excellent progress has been made against the key issues raised at the last inspection. Assessment of pupils is now an outstanding feature of the school and has played an important part in raising standards and achievement still further. The quality of leadership, management and planning in subjects is now mostly very good. There has been excellent improvement in sixth form provision.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Ringwood School performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	A
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	N/a	A	A	

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

Standards achieved overall are very good

- Standards of pupils by Year 9 overall are above average, and pupils achieve well. Standards and national test results are high in mathematics and science, although pupils have performed less well in English tests over the last two years. There is some underachievement in geography in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards seen among pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and their achievement at GCSE, where results have improved faster than the national trend, is very good. Based on the capabilities of the pupils, recent English GCSE results have been weaker than they should have been, especially for boys, but standards in English have now improved.
- Standards of work in Years 12 and 13 are well above average, and have improved greatly since the last inspection. Students achieve very well. They work hard, and show the abilities to work independently, solve problems logically and think critically.

- Pupils with particular needs, including the able and talented, those for whom English is an additional language, and those with other special educational needs, achieve very well in the school because of the very good provision made to support them.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Most pupils develop a strong sense of moral values and social responsibility. The school provides very well for their personal development through a well-planned programme of personal education, and through assemblies and tutorial periods that stimulate thought and reflection on their own values. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive; they behave very well, and attendance is high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good.

Teachers' assiduous marking, and the use they make of assessments of pupils' work to plan lessons and other activities, are key strengths which underpin high levels of achievement in this school. These strengths ensure that, in most cases, learning for all pupils is highly purposeful in raising pupils' levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. Resources of many kinds, including computers, are used very well by teachers to make learning effective and enjoyable for pupils.

The curriculum is organised with great flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils. The work-related curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is of a particularly high quality. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities supports pupils' personal and physical development to an outstanding degree. Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is excellent. Support, advice and guidance are very good and based on very effective monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development. Links with the community support the quality of education exceptionally well through the provision of resources and opportunities for work-related learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school and its sixth form are outstanding. The school's rapid growth has been exceptionally well led and managed at all levels. Governors, through a combination of professional expertise and close links with the local community, have played an exceptionally strong role in shaping the direction of the school. Governance is, however, unsatisfactory in not ensuring that the school provides the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The senior leadership team has very high aspirations for the school; it rigorously monitors the performance of the school and its pupils and takes effective action to address weaknesses. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has promoted high standards and accountability for performance while fostering warm and supportive relationships throughout the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the work of the school, particularly with the quality of teaching and how well the school is run. Some parents feel the quality of annual reports on pupils' progress could be improved; the computer-generated statements are not always specific enough to the nature of work done or improvements needed in individual subjects.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is

- Improve the quality of planning to develop pupils' awareness of life in multicultural, multi-ethnic Britain.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that there is sufficient time for all pupils to receive the locally agreed syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11.

THE SIXTH FORM AT RINGWOOD OF SCHOOL

This vibrant sixth form is larger than average; it has grown rapidly since it was established eight years ago.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an excellent, cost-effective sixth form, and its students achieve very well. It has made outstanding improvement since the last inspection; results improved strongly and are now well above the national average.

The main strengths are:

- Standards of work are well above average in most subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are stimulating, challenging, and employ a very good range of methods.
- Students' attitudes to learning and their personal development are excellent.
- The sixth form benefits from outstanding leadership, which promotes high standards, high morale and excellent relationships between students and teachers.
- Sixth-formers participate fully in school activities and provide very good role models for pupils in other years.
- There are no significant weaknesses in sixth form provision.

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. Subjects looked at in detail are highlighted in bold type.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good in English , where students achieve well in response to their teachers' impressive subject knowledge. Very good in French , where teachers' high expectations promote effective use of the language by students. In German, too, very good teaching promotes very effective oral work.
Mathematics	Very good . Teachers have expert knowledge and some of the teaching is outstanding. Students achieve very well.
Science	Very good in biology where teachers have compelling subject expertise and students achieve very well. Excellent teaching was seen in both chemistry and physics, where standards are high.
Information and communication technology	Very good . Students' achievement is very good as a result of very good teaching in well-equipped computer rooms.
Humanities	Very good in psychology where standards are high and students learn to apply theoretical concepts with maturity. Students achieve very well in history where essay writing and research skills are particularly well taught. Standards have been more variable in geography, but teaching is currently very good.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Very good in graphic products . Students' design ideas are unique and imaginative, and an experienced team of teachers manages students' learning with skill and humour.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good in art where results have been around the national average but represent mostly good achievement for the students concerned. Satisfactory in music , where achievement is sound but some students lack confidence.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good in leisure and recreation where students achieve well because their individual needs are very well provided for.

Business	Very good. Students learn to apply theory very well in analysing business behaviour, under careful guidance from their teachers
General education	Very good lessons were seen in the sixth form enrichment programme, including performing arts and Japanese.

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

As in the rest of the school, assessment systems are excellent. Students and teachers know the grades which students should achieve, based on their previous exam results, and their progress is monitored rigorously in the light of these very clear targets. Tutors, in association with the head and deputy head of sixth form, carefully check the progress of their tutees and monitor the quality of education they receive. Careers education is very well managed and students are very well prepared for making choices about courses through the school, or training and course opportunities elsewhere. Although there is an absence of courses below advanced level on offer in the school, students are well advised on such courses that are available in other institutions. Students' skills of literacy, numeracy and use of information and communication technology (ICT) are generally good and well supported in individual subjects; a recently widened scheme to audit such skills and put in place programmes of support for those in need should ensure that sound key skills support learning for all. Students in the sixth form feel very well prepared for their courses and the drop-out rate and change of courses is very low. Sixth form students value the influence they have in the school through their involvement in sixth form and school councils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form benefits from the excellent and energetic leadership of the head of sixth form and the pastoral team he manages, under the careful direction of the governors and senior leadership team. Together, they have built a thriving sixth form, the success of which is based on the support and care given to each individual student. Teachers and managers know how well students are doing because they use assessment information very well to monitor students' progress and the quality of education. The leadership of the sixth form has also created a terrific sense of enthusiasm for learning among students who very much enjoy being part of the sixth form and taking part in its many activities. Relationships between students and staff are excellent.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students' views of the sixth form are highly positive. Nearly all students say, through their questionnaire responses, that they enjoy being part of the sixth form, feel that they are well taught and that the sixth form is well managed. Their questionnaire responses raised some questions over the quality of personal and careers advice to students, but inspectors found that these were of a high quality, and students did not pursue these matters as concerns in discussion with inspectors.

A copy of the full inspection report, which includes all the main judgements and grades, can be obtained from the school. Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted inspections', which is available from the school or Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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