

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Community  
College**  
Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique Reference Number: 103743

Inspection Number: 186878

Headteacher: Mr. J. B. Connor B.Sc. M A

Reporting inspector: Terence Parish  
15465

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707960

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandpits Lane Keresley Coventry West Midlands CV6 2FR
Telephone number:	01203 332382
Fax number:	01203 335626
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. M. Byrne
Date of previous inspection:	September 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
T. Parish, Rgl	Design and technology	Attainment and progress
		Teaching
S. Walsh, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
B. Skelton	English	
G. Hunter	Mathematics	Leadership and management
C. Lower	Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
J. Tolley	Modern foreign languages	Curriculum and assessment
B. Stoneham	Business studies	The efficiency of the school
	Sixth form provision	
M. McGregor	Art	
S. Johnson	Music	
J. Clarke	Physical education	
	Information technology	
M. Morton Thorpe	History	
D. Frost	Geography	
M. Evans		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
D. Pink	Special educational needs	
	Equality of opportunity	

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International

“Bradley”  
15 Upper Avenue  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 3XR

01323 646273

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

### Paragraph

#### MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well  
Where the school has weaknesses  
How the school has improved since the last inspection  
Standards in subjects  
Quality of teaching  
Other aspects of the school  
The parents' views of the school

#### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

#### INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1 - 6  
Key indicators 7

#### PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

##### Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 8 - 24  
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 25 - 30  
Attendance 31 - 32

##### Quality of education provided

Teaching 33 - 40  
The curriculum and assessment 41 - 60  
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 61 - 66  
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 67 - 74  
Partnership with parents and the community 75 - 81

##### The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 82 - 89  
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 90 - 93  
The efficiency of the school 94 - 98

#### PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 99 - 136

Other subjects or courses 137 - 228

#### PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 229

Data and indicators 230

## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour, overall, is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The curriculum offered to pupils in the sixth form is good and contemporary studies enriches it.
- Careers education and guidance are very good.
- Extra-curricular sporting opportunities are excellent.
- Business studies and economics, dance, physical education and drama foster high standards.
- Financial control and school administration are good.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- Pupils still do not receive their full entitlement to information technology.
- In French there are too many unsatisfactory lessons in Key Stage 4 and weaknesses in management.
- The most able pupils are insufficiently challenged in some lessons.
- The time available for lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 is insufficient to satisfactorily deliver the National Curriculum and is eroded by lateness to lessons by some pupils and the irregular attendance of a significant minority of Year 11 pupils.
- The accommodation for design and technology remains unsatisfactory.

**The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and strengths and weaknesses generally balance each other. However, some weaknesses still remain from the time of the last inspection report. All of the weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The standards of pupils' work are broadly similar to those at the last inspection, in line with the national average, and remain below national averages in French and in information technology. Girls still significantly outperform boys in many subjects but the school has addressed this issue through monitoring and adjusting setting arrangements, and has been successful in mathematics. Teaching is now good rather than sound and is still better at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Overall pupils' behaviour remains good, but there are still instances of unsatisfactory and poor pupil behaviour in some classes that adversely affect learning. The number of computers available per pupil is now above the national average, but there has been insufficient improvement in their use and this is now considered poor at Key Stage 4. The management and use of assessment and reporting of pupils' capabilities in the use of computers remain unsatisfactory. Although difficulties in the management of modern foreign languages, present at the last inspection, have been resolved through new appointments, there has been an unsatisfactory improvement within the classroom and there are now new management issues. Pupils' punctuality at lessons has improved but further improvement is still needed. School and departmental planning for the next year has improved, though longer term planning still needs further development. The programme for personal, social and health education has been significantly improved and is now co-ordinated very effectively by a deputy headteacher. The science laboratories have been re-furnished to a good standard. Design and technology facilities remain unsatisfactory. Resources have improved for music. There is now a coherent, whole school approach to pupils with special educational needs. There have been significant improvements in mathematics; increasing investigative work by pupils, more textbooks, better monitoring of teachers by the head of department and better use of computers, and these have contributed to improved standards in the subject. The scheme of work, assessment and developmental planning have improved in history. The issue of the inadequacy of the fire alarm

was still being addressed at the time of this inspection.

Taking into account what has been done to improve the school, what remains to be done and what was possible, the judgement of the inspection team is that school improvement is satisfactory. The local education authority now has a statutory duty to monitor and support school improvement and so the team considers that the schools capacity to move forward, after this inspection, is also satisfactory.

• **Standards in subjects**

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	
Key Stage 3 test	C	B	<div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> <i>well above average</i>    A                      B                        C                      D                        E                 </div>
GCSE examinations	C	B	
A/AS - levels	D	N/A	

In Key Stage 3 mathematics does better than English which is better than science. Pupils' attainment in information technology is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 and poor at Key Stage 4. Most pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. GCSE performance in 1998 was close to the national average. The underlying rising trend over time is in line with the national trend. The strongest subjects at Key Stage 4 are physical education, drama, English, German, music and GNVQ business studies. The weakest subjects are information technology, French and GNVQ leisure and tourism. Pupils' attainment in the sixth form is in line with expectations based on their performance at Key Stage 4. The strongest post-16 subjects are business studies and economics. The weakest subject is GNVQ leisure and tourism. There are a minority of pupils in both Key Stage 4 and the sixth form who fail to complete courses and attain no qualifications.

• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	satisfactory	Dance, drama, physical education	
Years 10-11	good	Drama, business studies, physical education	French
Sixth form	good	Business studies and economics	
English	satisfactory		
Mathematics	satisfactory		

93% of teaching is satisfactory or better, 55% good or better and 18% very good or better. Of 176 lessons observed 2 were excellent, 12 were unsatisfactory and 1 was poor. The sixth form has a higher proportion of good and very good lessons, one being judged excellent. All teaching in English, art, design and technology, geography, information technology, music, physical education, business studies and drama is at least satisfactory. In French over half of lessons are unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any*



*weaknesses.*

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good overall, but unsatisfactory behaviour by some pupils occurs within some lessons in several subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4.
Attendance	Satisfactory, but the attendance of a number of Year 11 pupils during the inspection and last year was sometimes unsatisfactory.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. Relationships between pupils are good in many subjects.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. Head and governors committed to success of school. Good pastoral leadership by deputy headteacher. Senior management team have clear roles.
Curriculum	Unsatisfactory Key Stages 3 and 4 due to non-compliance with National Curriculum issues and time allocated to music, art, single science.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils make good progress and the department is well managed.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. Social and cultural development satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Staff development good, resources and accommodation mostly satisfactory. Accommodation for design and technology is particularly unsatisfactory.
Value for money	Satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress at average cost.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

### • The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maths, art, drama, dance, geography, physical education</li> <li>• Pupils' behaviour</li> <li>• Attendance monitoring</li> <li>• Careers guidance. Advice on options.</li> <li>• Information for Year 7</li> <li>• "All roundness" of school</li> </ul>	

Thank you for the returned questionnaires and attending the parents' meeting. Inspectors took full account of the views you expressed. Our judgements reflect some of them and these are included in the report. Pupils receive a satisfactory standard of education. Some subjects are certainly much stronger than others. Careers advice is very good and the support for the current Year 7 is very good. The quality of reports you receive about your children's work is variable and could be improved. The behaviour of pupils, overall, is good and inspectors observed very good behaviour on many occasions. However, there are patches of unsatisfactory behaviour that reduce the progress of the pupils affected by it within lessons in a number of different subjects. The usefulness of homework to pupils is variable depending upon the subject and the teacher. There was no evidence, during the inspection, to suggest complaints are handled unsatisfactorily.

The inspection team wishes every success to all pupils within the school.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To raise the standards of pupils' work and improve the quality of their learning the school should:

### **1.Ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to National Curriculum information technology at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and continue to improve and develop computer skills within the sixth form by:**

- Providing pupils with sufficient time, within the curriculum, to improve and develop their general computer skills.
- Using computers appropriately to support teaching and pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Co-ordinating the contributions that computer lessons and the use of computers in subjects make to pupils' attainment in information technology.
- Making rigorous judgements about pupils' attainment, in the use of computers, based on informed understanding of the levels of attainment described by the National Curriculum and fully reporting their position at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Increasing the number of computer peripheral resources such as digital cameras, computer assisted design and manufacture devices, projection facilities.
- Significantly improving and extending e-mail and Internet access.

(Paragraphs: 14, 18, 19, 41, 42, 43, 52, 82, 89, 91, 95, 109, 138, 139, 141, 142, 156, 173, 178, 206, 207, 214)

### **1.Raise the standards of teaching and the quality of pupils' learning in French by:**

- Monitoring pupils' and teachers' work in the classroom closely.
- Adopting teaching styles within the classroom that are successful in other lessons and subjects in ensuring satisfactory behaviour by almost all pupils and at least satisfactory progress in their work.
- Writing a subject development plan that focuses on improving pupils' standards of attainment through raising the quality of learning they experience within the classroom.

(Paragraphs: 14, 18, 19, 37, 38, 82, 182, 184, 186-192)

### **1.Improve the progress of all pupils by:**

a.Reducing the 7% of less than satisfactory teaching and its attendant unsatisfactory pupil behaviour through:

- Professional development of teachers.
- Adequate monitoring of lessons by managers.
- Providing support to teachers where it is considered necessary.

a.Ensuring appropriate work is consistently provided to all pupils and that, in particular, higher ability pupils are sufficiently challenged.

(Paragraphs: 25, 26, 27, 30, 35, 36, 46, 52, 104, 119, 127, 132, 134, 157, 165, 178, 186, 190, 191, 192, 198, 202)

### **1. Increase the time available for teaching by:**

a. In art at Key Stage 3, single science at Key Stage 4 and music and information technology at both key stages, moving towards a 25 hour teaching week, as adopted by many secondary schools without a significant commitment to religious education, through:

- Considering making the school day longer.
- Allocating lesson times differently within the existing school days and time-tabled weeks.

a. Making better use of the time available for all pupils through:

- Ensuring morning registration time is consistently useful to them.
- Taking steps to further reduce lateness to lessons caused either by the nature of the site or pupils dallying between classrooms.

a. Taking action to reduce the time lost by a significant minority of Year 11 pupils by irregular attendance.

(Paragraphs: 41, 42, 45, 54, 72, 96, 133, 141, 198, 205, 211)

### **1. Improve the provision for design and technology by:**

- Completing plans to offer systems and control technology at Key Stage 4 and providing better experiences of it at Key Stage 3.
- Deciding how many rooms are needed to teach the current and proposed curriculum effectively and deciding where they might best be located.
- Re-furbishing the necessary accommodation and providing appropriate resources within it to ensure all current safety legislation is met and safety recommendations and best practice are considered.
- Improving accommodation and resources to a standard able to support current and immediate requirements for National Curriculum technology and likely to encourage and foster high standards of work by pupils.

(Paragraphs: 82, 92, 153, 156, 158, 160)

### **In addition to the key issues above the governors should consider the following smaller weaknesses when developing their action plan.**

- The continuing poorer attainment of boys compared with girls in many subjects. (Paragraphs: 16, 60, 107, 154)
- Insufficient progress in whole school planning for a longer period than one year. (Paragraphs: 86, 88, 98)
- Inadequacies in the style, consistency and quality of end of year reports to parents about pupils' attainment and progress. (Paragraphs: 58, 75, 77, 89)
- Inadequate opportunities for pupils to develop their citizenship and take on responsibilities. (Paragraph: 30)
- Some inadequacies in site risk assessment. (Paragraphs: 74, 89)
- Inconsistencies in applying the pupils' Code of Behaviour. (Paragraphs: 32, 69, 87)
- Inaccuracies in data such as attendance registers. (Paragraphs: 31, 44, 70, 89)

## · INTRODUCTION

### · Characteristics of the school

1. Cardinal Newman School is a mixed Voluntary-Aided Catholic School for pupils aged from 11-19 years. There are 1 174 pupils on roll, more than average, with the number of girls exceeding that of boys by just 78. However, the difference in the number of boys and girls is larger in the sixth form, where approximately two thirds are girls, and in Year 7 where nearly 60% of pupils are girls. The school has strong links with its five feeder schools from which more than 90% of pupils are drawn.

2. The proportion of pupils identified with having special educational needs, around 17%, is in line with the national average whilst the number with statements of special educational need is below average.

3. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, 22%, is above the national average and slightly above the Coventry average. There is a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, some 5%, with only 3% identified as having English as an additional language. This is above the national average but well below the 15% of EAL pupils within Coventry.

4. Most pupils come from a wedge of Coventry, with the school on the circumference and the point at the centre of the city. There are some social disadvantages within the catchment area.

5. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average and this has been the case over the last four years.

6. The school has set a number of priorities for the current school year and beyond:

- Raising pupil performance in the year 2000: At Key Stage 3 increasing the proportion of pupils attaining Levels 5 and 6 in English and in science. At GCSE at least 47% of pupils to achieve 5 A\*-C grades, 95 % to achieve 1 A\*-G and the average point score to reach 38. At A level GCE for at least 90% of pupils to achieve a pass and for the average point score to be above 16. At GNVQ for at least 90% of pupils to achieve a pass and for all pupils to achieve at least 1 unit accreditation. Beyond 2000, to continue to develop the use of pupils' attainment data to set GCSE targets for Year 10.
- Curriculum development. Now that much of the hardware is in place, it is intended to move forward in the use of computers by pupils; to write and implement whole school policies on literacy and numeracy; to implement the revised post-16 curriculum proposals from Autumn 2000.
- Pastoral care / Catholic ethos. Further develop the life of prayer in the school and to pilot the Pupil Inclusion Unit.
- Staff development. To build on the successful submission for "Investors in People Status".
- Facilities development. A bid has been made for "New Deal" money to refurbish design and technology. Another bid has been made seeking specialist Sports College status. Proposals have been submitted to the Diocesan authorities and Department For Education to enlarge and extend facilities for the sixth form given its recent rapid growth.

## 1.Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	94	105	199

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	60	68	57
	Girls	77	66	42
	Total	137	134	93
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	68(52)	66(55)	50 (56)
	National	65 (57)	60 (60)	56 (60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	29 (15)	39 (34)	16 (20)
	National	35 (23)	36 (37)	27 (29)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	49	60	52
	Girls	73	68	63
	Total	122	128	115
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	61 (54)	64(59)	57 (59)
	National	61 (60)	64 (64)	61 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (20)	41 (32)	27 (26)
	National	30 (28)	37 (37)	30 (29)

1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>2</sup>

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	90	78	168

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	29	74	83
	Girls	41	74	75
	Total	70	148	158
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	42 (38)	88 (88)	94 (90)
	National	43 (43)	87 (86)	93 (94)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	47 (40)	83 (80)
National		78 (80)

## Attainment in the Sixth Form<sup>3</sup>

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	19	26	45

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	13.1 (15.3)	19.0(12.5)	16.8 (13.3)			N/A
National	18.0 (18.6)	18.6 (18.6)	18.3(18.6)			N/A

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of *such students* who achieved this qualification:

	Number	% Success rate
School	25 (18)	100 (100)
National		65 (76)

2

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

3

Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	8.1
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.9
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	47
Permanent	2

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	18
Satisfactory or better	93
Less than satisfactory	7



## 7. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 7. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 7. Attainment and progress

2.Pupils' attainment when they enter the school, based on national test results in English, mathematics and science, and scrutiny of their work is broadly average. The last inspection report indicates pupils' attainment at Key Stage 3 was a little below average and the school maintains that it has been consistent since 1995.

3.Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, based on 1998 test results, is in line with the national average. Given the below average socio-economic circumstances of the intake, pupils' attainment is above that of similar schools.

4.Pupils' attainment in English, from Key Stage 3 tests, is close to the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 or above, but below for level 6 and above. In mathematics, pupils' attainment is above the national average for both yardsticks, whilst in science it is below for both, significantly below for higher attaining pupils.

5.The performance of boys and girls, in 1998 Key Stage 3 tests, is close to their respective national averages, except in science, where the performance of girls is below the national average.

6.The school trend from 1996 to 1998 is similar to the national trend, but this masks some significant differences between English, mathematics and science. Pupils' performance in English fell steeply between 1996 and 1997, then sharply improved. Their performance in mathematics followed the national rise between 1996 and 1997, then moved sharply upwards against the slight national dip. Pupils' performance in science shows a decline between 1996 and 1997 and a faster decline than national between 1997 and 1998. 1999 results show these subjects holding their relative positions. English is in line with the national average for level 5 and above, below for level 6 and above, mathematics is in line for both, science is below on both counts and still declining.

7.Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 3 to be broadly average. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in English and in mathematics in both lessons and through the Key Stage. Their work builds on earlier learning. In science, though pupils' progress in the lessons observed during inspection is satisfactory, their progress through the Key Stage is unsatisfactory, as insufficient attention is paid to work done earlier in Key Stage 2 and pupils' own knowledge, skills and understanding. In some lessons, more able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

8.Pupils' attainment in other subjects by the end of Key Stage 3 is most often average. However, it is unsatisfactory in information technology, largely due to insufficient use of computers in other areas, and unsatisfactory in French due to the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. On the other hand, pupils' attainment in German, physical education and drama is good and in dance very good. Pupils' progress in these lessons shows the same pattern and this picture is very similar to the one given in the last inspection report. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3. Pupils with English as an additional language make the same progress as the majority of pupils. The most able pupils do not make sufficient progress in English or science.

9.At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998, pupils' GCSE attainment is in line with the national averages for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A\*-C, or A\*-G and 1 or more grades A\*-G. It is above the average for similar schools for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A\*-C and for the average total GCSE point score per pupil. Pupils' attainment at foundation level in vocational subjects is satisfactory overall and very good in business studies.

10. The underlying trend in pupils' GCSE attainment since the last inspection is similar to the national trend, a gradual movement upwards with an atypical peak in 1996. Boys' results continue to be below the national average and girls' results above the national average.

In 1999 the school difference in boys' and girls' results is over twice the national difference for 1998 and the local difference for 1999. Pupils' attainment since the last inspection has effectively remained where it was - broadly typical and a little below national averages.

11. The proportion of pupils attaining GCSE A\*-C grades in English language in 1998 is above the national average but below it in English literature. In mathematics the proportion is below average but has shown a rising trend over three years and is likely to be in line with the national average in 1999. In science, the 1998 results are close to the national average but a slight fall is indicated in 1999.

12. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4, from inspection evidence, is satisfactory in mathematics, science, history, geography, art, business studies GCSE, and health and social care GNVQ. It is good in English, German, music and business studies GNVQ and very good in physical education. It is unsatisfactory in French and GNVQ leisure and tourism and, overall, in design and technology. Pupils' attainment is poor in the use of computers, as there is no scheme to move them on and insufficient use of computers in subjects.

13. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, design and technology, history, geography and health and social care. They make good progress in English, drama, science, German, art, music and GCSE business studies, and very good progress in physical education, dance and GNVQ business studies. Pupils' make unsatisfactory progress in French, due to the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and poor progress in information technology, as there are no mechanisms in place to foster their progress or determine what it might be. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress. Those pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to most pupils. The most able pupils do not make sufficient progress in English or science.

#### 19. **Literacy**

14. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are good. In Key Stage 3, pupils respond enthusiastically, offering well formulated comments showing that they have listened carefully and taken into account the views of others. In more formal contexts, they express themselves well in standard English. Progress is maintained in Key Stage 4, with increasing competence in using more technical vocabulary, for example in literary criticism and media studies.

15. Pupils' standards of reading are satisfactory or better in both key stages. Pupils read fiction and non-fiction regularly for pleasure, keeping a reading diary and presenting reviews in lessons. Pupils make good use of the school library outside of lessons though there was only one instance observed of pupils using the library in lesson times for reading for research. In lessons, at Key Stage 3, pupils read with growing discrimination in a range of genres developing critical skills. There was no evidence of pupils developing computer skills associated with reading, such as extracting information from the Internet or CD-ROM's.

#### 21. **Numeracy**

16. Pupils' numeracy across the curriculum is set to be an important development issue for the coming academic year. The first steps towards a whole school numeracy policy have been taken to enable support for the pupils' mathematical understanding outside of the mathematics department. Evidence of the policy having any effect is limited so far, but pupils use their number skills well in some curriculum areas including history, design and technology and science at both key stages and information technology at Key Stage 3. In the sixth form business studies and economic courses students use numerical skills of a very high order, as they do in their general studies work. This work is substantially in advance of that which is usually seen.

## 22. ***The sixth form***

17. The attainment of students studying A level GCE in 1998 was below the national average, with girls performing significantly better, in terms of average points scored, than boys. Though pass rates were high, comparatively few A and B grades were achieved. The school's own value added analysis suggests that the majority of students gained final A level results that are in line with expectations based on their performance at GCSE. A level results for 1999 are below the standard of those achieved the previous year, though girls are still attaining better results than their male counterparts. Value added analysis also suggests that attainment deteriorated in 1999. Biology, economics, English literature and geography were the only subjects to record pass rates that were above national average expectations for A and B grades in 1998. The attainment of present post 16 A level students is variable, though some show an increased capacity for independent study and are emerging as confident learners. This is especially notable in economics, where expectations are high and very good quality teaching is successfully challenging the students' understanding. Some students are entered for AS levels each year but, as the cohort is so small, no significance can be attached to the results gained. The attainment of students on the three intermediate GNVQ courses offered in Year 12 is similarly variable. The results in business GNVQ are very good and in the other two areas results are satisfactory

18. Value-added data available to the school indicates that most students make satisfactory progress during their courses and proceed to gain additional qualifications. The development of vocational options in Year 12 is successfully offering opportunities for progression to a wider cohort of students. For present post 16 students, overall progress is satisfactory. It is good economics, intermediate GNVQ business, information technology, German, geography, art and physical education, where the quality of teaching is good or very good. Progress is also being enhanced by the good monitoring and assessment procedures that are practised. These are based on the good value added data produced by the school.

## 24. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

19. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory overall. Most pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 concentrate well, stay on task and produce well presented work. There are a small number of pupils who have limited attention spans and are easily distracted. Pupils can become restless and distracted if the lesson lacks purpose and the teacher's behaviour management skills are weak. However, even within these lessons, many pupils try to get on with their work.

20. In the sixth form pupils have good attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and show mature attitudes towards their work. In a small number of lessons pupils are too passive and can be compliant rather than being actively involved in answering teachers' questions and posing further questions for themselves.

21. Pupils' behaviour is generally good. Most pupils behave well in their lessons and around school and show respect for their teachers. In 8% of lessons overall the behaviour of a small number of pupils is unsatisfactory and this adversely affects the attainment and progress of other pupils in the class. During the inspection, this unsatisfactory behaviour was more prevalent in Year 9 and Year 10 lessons where one lesson in eight was affected. Most of the unsatisfactory behaviour is immature, attention seeking behaviour. The vast majority of pupils have good manners and try hard to be welcoming to visitors. Older pupils generally behave well in the common room areas, but a small number of younger pupils let themselves down by acting inappropriately. Pupils in the sixth form act in a mature, sensible manner.

22.The number of fixed term exclusions is similar to those seen in other comprehensive schools and two pupils have been permanently excluded recently. The school is adopting government guidelines to reduce its exclusion rate and is developing an inclusion unit.

23.Relationships are generally satisfactory. Pupils work collaboratively in physical education, business education and food technology. They can work well in pairs in music, science and textiles technology, sharing equipment sensibly. They listen to each other when required; for example they listen respectfully to each other's performances in music. Pupils with special educational needs, in withdrawal lessons, are positive about their learning, respond appropriately to the demands of their teachers and their behaviour is good.

24.The school has not increased opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility for their own learning since the previous inspection report. Pupils taking General National Vocational Qualifications do have good opportunities to develop research skills and to learn independently, rather than passively receiving information from their teachers. When pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, they respond well but these opportunities are very limited across the school. The School Council has recently been established as a way of pupils contributing to the life of the school. There are no prefects nor is there any form of community service. The notion of sixth formers assisting younger pupils in year seven has only been recently introduced. Pupils do contribute to the local community through generous charitable giving.

### 30. **Attendance**

25.Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and the whole school attendance rate for the 1998/99 school year is very similar to the national average. While attendance rates are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, attendance in Key Stage 4 is sometimes unsatisfactory. Erratic patterns of attendance develop in Year 10 and last year there was a small but significant number of pupils in Year 11 who no longer attended school on a regular basis. This reduces overall examination entries and their attainment. During the inspection, the absence of between 10% and 20% of Year 11 pupils from lessons was not uncommon. It is impossible to make a properly informed judgement about the rates of unauthorised absence in the school as the school does not always make an accurate distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence in the registers. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Some pupils are appropriately placed on the register to monitor their attendance.

26.There has been some improvement in punctuality since the previous inspection and fewer pupils appear to be late in the mornings. Pupils continue to be late for lessons during the school day. Although there are relatively large distances between departments, there is no transfer time built into the timetable. Despite these problems many pupils show little sense of urgency when moving between lessons.

### 32. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### 32. **Teaching**

27.Teaching overall is good and is better than at the time of the last inspection. Of the 176 lessons observed during the inspection 93% are satisfactory or better, 55% good or better and 18% very good or better. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There are no overall dominant features attributable to teaching; almost all judgements, for most subjects, are satisfactory or good.

28.Good or better teaching is characterised by involving the pupils in their learning, stimulating and interesting them, providing work that they can do and moving at least some way to stretching the attainment of the more able. Most pupils make at least good progress. Business studies, physical education, dance and drama are particularly consistent in teaching this way. In two thirds of lessons in English, thorough planning, effective pacing and good teacher intervention provides

pupils with support, explanation or additional challenge. In a third of mathematics lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 and almost a half in the sixth form, work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils and a good pace to lessons ensures good progress by pupils. In almost a fifth of lessons in science at Key Stages 3 and 4 very good teaching uses on-going assessment of pupils to determine what they understand so that their progress can be determined within lessons. In art, in the sixth form, very good use is made of discussion between both student and student and students and teachers to foster ideas. Within the 40% of good history teaching, at Key Stages 3 and 4, there is a good balance of teacher input and pupil activities. Explanations and illustrations by teachers stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and lessons are well paced. In the 25% of more effective teaching in modern languages, teachers' expectations are high, pace is brisk, resources well used and pupils rise to the challenges offered.

29. Satisfactory teaching has a balance between strengths and weaknesses and most pupils within such lessons progress satisfactorily. Common weaknesses within otherwise satisfactory lessons in this school are: too slow a pace within quite long lessons, leading to inefficient use of time and lack of attention by some pupils; too much teacher direction and a lack of variety in the work given to pupils, leading to a lack of interest by some and unsatisfactory behaviour by a few; insufficient challenge for more able pupils; no use of computers where they would be appropriate. Obviously all these weaknesses are not present within any single satisfactory lesson.

30. Unsatisfactory or poor lessons have several or all of the weaknesses above and often have significant unsatisfactory or poor behaviour of pupils associated with them. Three lessons in English had significant weaknesses in the management of pupils, resulting in the unsatisfactory or poor progress of pupils. Two lessons in mathematics had unsatisfactory pupil behaviour due, in part, to unsatisfactory teaching. An unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 3 science had little provision to serve the needs of the brightest pupils. In Key Stage 4 two-thirds of lessons in French are unsatisfactory. French is used ineffectively by teachers, resources are inappropriately used, work set fails to challenge pupils, the pace is slow and pupils are sometimes poorly behaved, displaying little respect for their teachers or, at best, are noisy and inattentive.

31. The overall standard of teaching within subjects is: excellent in dance; very good in business studies, drama and economics; good in English, science, German, design and technology, art and physical education; satisfactory in mathematics, information technology, history, geography, music, leisure and tourism and health and social care; unsatisfactory in French.

32. The overall quality and use of day to day assessment of pupils by teachers is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Marking is good in English where teachers' comments on work show recognition of pupils' achievements, though correction of mistakes is less apparent. In science the marking of work, including homework, is good but the use of assessment to identify where pupils have problems is less secure. In geography the marking scheme is consistently applied but teachers' comments in pupils' books telling pupils how to improve are infrequent. In history, work is marked consistently and feedback to pupils provided. The quality and regularity of marking in modern foreign languages is inconsistent, varying from little marking and few comments to regular marking with informative comments. In business studies a range of very good assessment procedures ensures pupils make very good progress.

33. The overall use of homework by teachers to support or improve the progress that pupils make is satisfactory at both key stages and in the sixth form. In English there is insufficient evidence of homework that fosters pupils' research skills, especially in the sixth form. In modern foreign languages, in the sixth form and some Key Stage 4 classes, homework is used effectively to reinforce learning and prepare pupils for future work, whilst in other classes little homework is set and consists of finishing off work started in class. Very good use of homework is made in business studies with teachers setting pupils realistic tasks that further their knowledge, skills and understanding.

34. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs, within withdrawal groups and when

supported in lessons, is good. Pupils are effective in their learning when teaching is supportive to their needs, tasks are well matched to pupil's ability, and there is an appropriate level of challenge. Teaching of the small numbers of pupils with English as a second language is at least satisfactory and mirrors the quality of teaching within individual lessons.

#### **40. The curriculum and assessment**

35.The curriculum provision fails to meet statutory requirements for information technology at both key stages and for design and technology at Key Stage 4. Time allocated to lessons is 24 hours as against the recommended time, at Key Stage 4, of 25 hours. Time currently allocated to teaching is eroded by the time taken by pupils to move between some areas of the school and some pupils dallying between lessons exacerbates this problem. A significant proportion of non- teaching time is spent each day on daily routines such as taking the register, checking absences and discussing individual issues.

36.The curriculum offered at Key Stage 3 is appropriately broad. Pupils follow appropriate courses that cover the subjects of the National Curriculum, personal and social skills and religious education, but the time provided for information technology, art and music is well below that recommended and this has an impact on what can be taught in lessons. Additionally, in art, large group sizes and the allocation of only single lessons makes the effective delivery of the National Curriculum difficult. Higher attaining pupils are offered the opportunity to study German as a second foreign language from Year 8.

37.At Key Stage 4 pupils follow a core curriculum and a range of optional courses leading to National Certificate of Achievement, GCSE or GNVQ accreditation. However, the provision for information technology does not meet statutory requirements since no specific time is allocated for this subject and there is no planned provision or monitoring of the use pupils make of computers in other subjects. This weakness was identified at the time of the last inspection.

38.Design and technology is not studied by all pupils, so statutory requirements are not met and this information is incorrectly recorded on the Head Teachers' Form.

39.Foundation General National Vocational Qualification courses in business, leisure and tourism and health and social care are providing an alternative curriculum to pupils. However, lower attaining pupils choosing these options must take a single award science GCSE, the national intention of which was to provide an alternative for high ability pupils pursuing second languages, music or similar. The 25% of pupils taking a single science is twice the national average in Year 10 and is against the national intention that the great majority of pupils should study double science or three sciences. Additionally, the time allocated to the single science course is 10% of curriculum time rather than the 12% recommended for more able pupils.

40.All pupils have equal access to the curriculum in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 some pupils, through their option choices, cannot follow a double science course, also, music in that key stage is effectively open only to instrumentalists. The school has addressed the gender imbalance by creating two top streams in particular years as well as forming single gender groups in English in Year 9. Whilst the needs of able pupils are addressed specifically by departments and this works well especially in the 6<sup>th</sup> form, there is no overall school strategy for identifying and supporting these pupils.

41. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are small withdrawal groups for literacy, which are effective in raising pupils' attainment. Pupils receive effective teaching in small groups in English, maths and science. Individual educational plans are well matched to pupil's abilities and provide a good basis for planning individual lessons to meet the needs of particular pupils.

47. **Sixth form**

42. The school offers a broad post 16 curriculum comprised mainly of advanced level GCE courses. The curriculum has been broadened by the introduction of intermediate GNVQ options in business, health and social care and leisure and tourism. Laudable efforts have been made to enrich the curriculum further through the provision of a well planned and sensitively delivered personal and social education option known as contemporary studies. This is a wide-ranging course delivered by a committed group of tutors. Students study a series of modules in Year 12, including geo-politics and a course on social education in which they must examine their own learning styles. This course is making a significant contribution to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection period, attendance at modules was extremely good and the students enjoyed the challenges presented. Many follow the course into Year 13 where they are given the opportunity to sit for an advanced level in general studies. Students also benefit from good quality careers advice, though opportunities to pursue their interests in sport, drama and music and to adopt positions of responsibility are limited in comparison with other schools. For example, though all GNVQ students undertake work placements and some advanced level students with an interest in engineering are involved in a joint venture with Jaguar and the University of Warwick, other arrangements for work placements are ad hoc. Management simulations and work shadowing schemes that can help to raise expectations are not routinely available.

43. Policies for sex, health and drugs education are in place, meet statutory requirements and are taught through a well-planned programme in personal and social education, science and religious education lessons.

44. Pupils with special educational needs follow broadly the same curriculum as their peers, although withdrawal for small group work deprives pupils of some French and Geography.

45. In the sixth form there is a wide variety of courses leading to intermediate GNVQ accreditation, A/S and A level and provision is good over all. However, the time allocated to advanced level science courses is low, particularly when pupils have followed a double science course, rather than three sciences, at Key Stage 4.

46. Departmental planning for the requirements of pupils of differing attainment, particularly the more able, is still insufficient in some subject areas both for pupils within setted and mixed ability groups. Schemes of work are in place in most subjects to reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum or examination boards. A notable exception is information technology. In general pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education or work. A very good careers programme, very well planned in conjunction with the careers service, including work experience in Year 11 and in the sixth form, prepares pupils very effectively to make informed choices at each stage.

47. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, including 29 sporting activities in which approximately 400 pupils participate. There are theatre visits to galleries and trips to France and Germany. Pupils also participate in concerts at Easter and Christmas, in drama productions and inter-school music festivals.

48. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in improving the personal and social education scheme of work and it is now taught by a team of teachers who regularly evaluate and amend it. Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs have improved and all departments now have their own policies for equal opportunities but there is no policy

recognising the needs of more able pupils. Previous difficulties with classes split between teachers have been resolved. The use of tutor time is still generous, teaching time is less than recommended and some pupils' lack of punctuality to lessons still reduces the time available. Planning in modern foreign languages has improved and there are now detailed schemes of work for both key stages. Year 11 pupils studying German as a second foreign language have to attend sessions after school but this is being phased out and the present Year 10 are now able to study two languages within curriculum time, unlike music pupils who have to pursue their interests after school.

#### 54. **Assessment**

49. The quality of the assessment of pupils' attainment, overall, is satisfactory. The policy for assessment, recording and reporting has been updated recently. This provides clear guidance on the procedures and practices required. However, this is not yet fully embedded in practice and there are inconsistencies within departments.

50. A large amount of information is gathered both from primary schools and from tests the school itself carries out and this is used effectively to measure attainment and progress, to set pupils and to analyse trends over time. A deputy headteacher feeds this to departments to help them plan future teaching and learning strategies and to set pupil targets.

51. There are examples of very good assessment practice in geography, history, English and music, where pupils' progress is tracked through National Curriculum levels of attainment and pupils are encouraged to assess their own progress and set their own targets. Departments regularly target grade C/D borderline candidates at GCSE. Assessment is used effectively in vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and in courses in the sixth form to monitor and plan progress. In other subjects there are few opportunities for pupils to take an active part in their own assessment and information gathered is not always used effectively to plan future teaching and learning.

52. Marking is generally satisfactory and teachers usually give pupils a good idea of how they are progressing and how to improve. Reports to parents are variable in quality; some teachers give parents detailed information about pupils' academic achievement and progress but some concentrate their comments on pupils' attitudes and behaviour rather than on what they know, understand and can do in subjects.

53. Pupils with statements of special educational needs have individual education plans that provide relevant and focused targets and these are shared with subject teachers. Pupils' work is assessed regularly against these targets and reports to parents provide a clear picture of their progress towards these goals.

54. The school analyses pupil attainment by gender and has taken steps, with limited success, to counter under-achievement by boys, but has been more successful in mathematics and in history. Since the last inspection the school has produced a whole school assessment policy which provides clear and detailed guidance for assessment, recording and reporting and places much emphasis on target setting to raise standards, though this good practice has yet to be fully implemented.



## 60. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

55. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; that for spiritual and moral is good, whilst that for social and cultural is satisfactory. There are a number of good features. The school is a caring community. Pupils are offered a range of opportunities that help to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural potential and prepare them for adult life as responsible members of society. The school has improved this part of its provision for pupils since the last inspection.

56. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good. The school aims to make prayer, worship and liturgy a real educational experience, by developing pupils' relationship with God and with one another. To this end, each day begins with an act of worship, either in a year group or a tutor group assembly. Some assemblies make a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development; for example, the year 7 assembly on the theme of "What can we contribute" clearly made pupils think about themselves and their personal attitudes and values. Some pupils particularly value the opportunity to meditate in the chapel. The teaching in many of the lessons also makes a beneficial contribution to pupils' spiritual development. However, the practice in some individual teachers' classes is not yet up to the standard of that described in the policies. Nevertheless, in the best lessons, pupils are helped to know themselves better, to assess their values, their attitudes and their relationships with others. Religious education makes a particular contribution, as do personal, social and moral education lessons. Drama, which is very popular with the pupils, provides opportunities for reflection and for developing the knowledge of values and beliefs. Good examples of lessons that promoted self-awareness and understanding of others were seen in careers education and in psychology. Pupils have the option to attend mass, held for a particular year group each Friday. This is a further opportunity for individual reflection for pupils and staff. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in a retreat, which is residential and emphasises reflective activities, during their school career.

57. The provision for pupils' moral development is also good. Values are shared and ideas of right and wrong are reinforced throughout the curriculum. For example, all pupils consider environmental concerns in geography, the use and abuse of the internet in information technology and moral dilemmas, such as drug abuse in sport are examined in physical education and in personal, social and moral education. This education programme teaches personal responsibility and morality, both from a general and from a Catholic perspective. Careers education continues to make a significant contribution to the understanding of citizenship. In some GNVQ and business studies lessons, discussions that focus on wages, trade between rich and poor nations and aid to the Developing World, contribute to pupils' moral development. Physical education lessons often emphasise fair play and sportsmanship. A few pupils give of their own time to write a newsletter for the Dystonia Society. Concern for others is evident in, for example, the numerous charitable activities undertaken by pupils, some of which raise large sums of money.

58. Pupils' social development is satisfactorily promoted. Pupils have some opportunities for exercising personal and social responsibility, such as through the new School Council. Most pupils recognise that they have a major responsibility for their own learning and progress. Pupils in Year 12 study social education, including examining their own learning styles. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' social development. Many accept responsibility in other ways, for example, pupils with special educational needs giving support to one another in a science lesson which included reading sections of text. In most cases, relationships with teachers are good. Pupils relate positively to one another during extra-curricular activities and around the school, as well as in the classroom.

59. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, but weaker in terms of promoting pupils' understanding of other cultures. There are strengths in the range of educational visits that pupils and students have been able to be part of, for example joining a Coventry-wide link with China and in the participation in local cultural activities, such as linking with a local hospice. Pupils also take part in school productions and in a range of extra-curricular sporting activities, for instance the school orchestra and, for older pupils, the climbing club. In some subjects, such as religious education and geography, provision for extending pupils' understanding of the wider world is good. For example, other cultural traditions and faiths such as Hinduism and Islam are considered in religious education. In physical education, pupils have experienced South American dance and a range of dance and theatre styles.

60. However, there is little evidence that the encouragement of pupils' cultural development is a key element of planning lessons in other subjects. Pupils consider art and music from the past and from other cultures, but this is not a strong feature in the planning of lessons. In art, for example, the study of other cultures is implicit in some critical studies, but it is not given sufficiently explicit consideration. Whilst pupils do have opportunities for visits abroad and exchanges, and in subjects such as history and geography there is provision of opportunities to explore and compare cultures, there are too few planned opportunities to promote an appreciation of the richness and cultural diversity of modern Britain.

#### **66. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

61. Provision is satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school has continued to provide a consistent caring environment within a compassionate Catholic ethos. Pastoral provision is well managed by a dynamic deputy headteacher who gives clear educational direction to this important area. Year heads and tutor teams move through the school with their year group and this results in consistency of care and allows staff to build up a good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils. Different year groups develop a very individual identity and ethos, however all years continue to employ whole school systems and strategies to good effect. The differences lie within the social provision for each year group. Whilst Year 7 has a good range of social responsibilities, these aspects are less well developed in other year groups.

62. The monitoring of academic and personal progress is good. Progress is adequately monitored in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 the process becomes more rigorous. Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are identified and a well-organised system of mentoring is used to support them. Pupils are also well supported in the sixth form.

63. The school's arrangements to promote good discipline and behaviour are satisfactory. The school's behaviour policy has been recently revised after consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Most teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently but a minority of teachers compound their own weak behaviour management skills by not rigorously applying the school policy and some pupils take advantage of this by behaving inappropriately.

64. The school's arrangements to monitor and promote good attendance are satisfactory. Tutors and heads of year monitor attendance and pupils who do not attend school on a regular basis are identified and referred to the education welfare officer. The school's records of attendance do not meet statutory requirements because the school has not made a sufficiently clear distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence. Following criticism about pupils' punctuality in the last inspection report the school has introduced more rigorous procedures to encourage punctuality. All latecomers now have to face a senior member of staff. This has resulted in some improvement in punctuality when pupils arrive at school.

65. There is careful monitoring and identification of pupils with special educational needs. Whilst many pupils are on the special needs register for behavioural reasons these are well supported by the school and outside agencies.

66.The morning registration period is not always used productively. Although there is guidance on the use of the registration period this is not always followed and sometimes pupils are allowed to just sit and chatter. The registration period is rarely well used in the sixth form.

67.The school's arrangements for child protection are good. There are three members of staff with child protection training and they are located in key areas of the school. The school follows locally agreed procedures.

68.Although the school has made some recent improvements to procedures to ensure the health and safety of its pupils, the position is still not satisfactory. The school has very recently produced a satisfactory health and safety policy. Although there are well established procedures for risk assessment in some departments such as science and physical education, the approach to whole school risk assessment is fairly casual. The school lacks formal procedures to ensure that regular whole school and departmental risk assessment occurs. Consequently some minor whole school hazards are not identified and health and safety issues remain unresolved in the design technology department. The school has been slow to resolve the issue of the ineffective fire alarm identified in the previous inspection report and which still did not function correctly at the time of this inspection. Fire drills do not occur often enough.

#### **74. Partnership with parents and the community**

69.Parents are supportive of this over subscribed school. Almost all parents are willing to support the school over academic issues and standards of behaviour. Parents find the school easy to approach should problems occur. The information that the school provides for parents is satisfactory overall, but many aspects are good. There are weaknesses within the annual written reports to parents about their children's progress.

70.There is a good range of information about the work of the school. The prospectus and the governors' report to parents are of good quality and contain all the information required by law. Chatty newsletters supplement these sources of information. Additional good quality information is provided for parents of pupils in years seven, nine and eleven to assist parents in understanding the special aspects of those year groups, for example, subject options.

71.The annual reports to parents about their children's progress are unsatisfactory and parents voiced some dissatisfaction with them at the parents' meeting. There is often insufficient information about the work that pupils have followed, for example, there is little detail about the curriculum in either the mathematics or geography reports. Most reports focus on the pupils' behaviour or response to the subject rather than telling parents what their children know understand and can do. There is often insufficient information for parents to be able to measure progress. Reports are generated from comment banks and some teachers produce very similar reports for pupils of differing levels of attainment. Most subject reports give parents little indication of what their children can do to improve. English reports are a notable exception to this. Annual reports are supplemented by interim reports that are a useful addition to the reporting process.

72.There are regular parents' evenings where parents can discuss their children's progress. An extra opportunity in Year 7 reassures parents soon after their children have started at secondary school and a specific options evening is provided for parents of pupils in Year 9. In addition to social and fund-raising activities, the Parents' Association provides some interesting evenings where parents can learn about current educational issues. Parents monitor and sign homework diaries, which are used well to communicate between home and school in Year 7.

73.The school's links with the community are satisfactory. As the school is a community school there is a good range of community activities which take place on the premises. However, many of these activities involve minimum contact between pupils and members of the local community. An exception is the link between Year 8 and the over 50's group where pupils base their work in English on interviews they have conducted with its members.

74.The school has well-established links with its main feeder primary schools. There is a well-established induction programme and pastoral information is carefully collected. The mathematics department has good contact with the primary schools and this has led to early setting in mathematics.

75.There is a well-established programme for work experience in year 11 but arrangements for work experience for sixth form pupils taking A levels are ad hoc. The school's bid to become a sports college has enhanced its relationship with many local sporting organisations.

## **81. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **81. Leadership and management**

76.The leadership provided for the school by the head and governors is satisfactory. They are committed to the success of the school and aspire to the achievement of high standards. Consequently the ability of the school to improve is judged to be sound. However, a number of issues remain on the table which were identified in the last inspection, particularly those relating to: pupils' learning about information technology and their use of computers, raising standards of teaching and learning in the modern foreign languages department and improving provision for design technology. The fire alarm system recognised as faulty in the last inspection four years ago has only very recently received attention.

77.There is a satisfactory policy for monitoring equal opportunities and senior members of staff monitor differences in gender, ability and ethnicity. Pupils with English as an additional language are provided with appropriate support through the local authority provision.

78.In all curriculum areas except modern foreign languages and information technology leadership by the head of department is satisfactory or better. In English, business studies, and special educational needs it is good. In geography and physical education it is very good. Heads of department, supported by members of the senior management team, are involved in an annual cycle of departmental self-review that is improving the standard of education offered to the pupils in each area.

79.Good leadership is provided for the heads of year by one of the deputy heads. The quality of leadership and management provided by the heads of year is satisfactory in all cases and good in the sixth form and in Year 7. In these areas good practice results in children being given opportunities for personal growth through responsibilities entrusted to them. They are encouraged to play a role in the wider society of the school and its surrounding environment. Special educational needs is well co-ordinated in the school and assessment and guidance procedures are well documented and followed. Staff directly involved in providing special needs provisions are well briefed, a common approach is provided for the support of pupils and the liaison with outside agencies is good.

80.The governing body is closely involved in the work of the school through a well-structured committee system in which each member plays a part. The chair of governors, a highly committed governor of thirty years' standing, visits the school at least once a week to be kept abreast of current developments. Other governors, including the chair of the finance committee, give unstintingly of their time. Governors play a major part in making important decisions such as those relating to staffing and budget determinations. However, governors have been remiss in not following through on some issues identified during the last report and in the subsequent action

plan.

81. There is an all-embracing set of aims incorporating the schools' aspirations as a Catholic community as well as an institution for learning. These were revised immediately after the last inspection. Views were taken and incorporated from all interested parties at that time. It is unclear how the aims lead to a commitment to high standards and consequently the ethos of the school is judged to be satisfactory. The monitoring and implementation of school policies about pupils' conduct and behaviour are inadequate.

82. The school development plan is described in sound documentation and focuses on key areas for development about pupil performance, curriculum development, the Catholic ethos of the school, staff development and the improvement of facilities. Departmental planning is closely related to the whole school plan. Targets are identified and time scales for completion set at both levels. Some of the cost implications are precise but there are many in the school plan and in the supporting departmental plans that are too vague, for example, "time" or "money". Apart from this the plan identifies clearly what needs to be done during the coming year to bring improvement. Needs for the longer term are not clearly addressed in any documentation seen during the inspection.

83. Statutory duties required of the school and governing body are not met in full. The National Curriculum entitlement for all pupils has several infringements, the most notable being within information technology. Registration and other pupil data is inaccurate. Health and safety issues are outstanding. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are unsatisfactory.

#### **89. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

84. There is a good match of number, qualifications and experience of current teaching staff to the demands of the curriculum and satisfactory arrangements are in place to offset the effects of long-term absences. There are sufficient numbers of skilled support staff available in the library, technical services, administration and laboratories with the exception of design and technology (food). A part-time information technology technician is now in post, an improvement since the last inspection, and it is planned to convert this to a full-time post. There are sufficient teachers and resources for pupils identified as having special educational needs. Educational assistants liaise very effectively with teachers and support pupils with statements of special educational needs.

85. Staff professional development is good and the school's commitment to this aspect has been recognised by Investors in People. A strength of the system is the annual professional review in which all staff identify targets for development based on departmental plans which are linked to the school development plan. Together with lesson observation programmes, this satisfies the statutory requirements for teacher appraisal, an improvement since the last inspection. Good systems are in place for general induction and for the induction of newly qualified teachers. A good range and variety of 'short course' and 'training day' professional development takes place. However, teacher training is still required in information technology and GNVQ leisure and tourism.

86. Accommodation is generally good and provides a pleasant environment with a wide range of specialist rooms and facilities, including a chapel and theatre. Sports facilities are particularly good with sports hall, gymnasium, swimming pool, and a range of outside pitches available, though some tennis courts still need resurfacing from the time of the last inspection. There is no dedicated dance studio and the floor in use at the time of this inspection is not satisfactory. Classrooms are generally adequate in size but some are small for classes with more than 25 pupils, for example in history and art. Since the last inspection science accommodation has improved following a major refurbishment, but serious concerns remain in design and technology where facilities do not meet health and safety requirements, are very much outdated and do not

relate to the present curriculum. The size of some workshops is not suitable for group sizes above 20. The Local Education Authority is working closely with the school to establish whether "New Deal" money can be accessed to address the situation in design and technology. However, the school has been remiss in not moving forward at all, with respect to this issue, since the last inspection.

87. The provision of resources is satisfactory, although there are wide variations across subjects. Provision is good in physical education, music and mathematics but less than satisfactory in design and technology and in dance. The number of computers available to pupils has increased significantly since the last inspection but there are no resources in many classrooms, for example English. The book stock in English is old. The library is well run with computerised records and an organised rota for pupil use. However, the stock is rather small and needs up-dating in some areas. For example, in art there is a lack of texts reflecting a range of artists and different cultures and in music texts are rather dated. The library is popular and is a satisfactory resource to support learning.

### 93. **The efficiency of the school**

88. Financial planning for the school is satisfactory. The school has a detailed development plan that outlines key objectives in the short term and this document guides the planning undertaken by both academic departments and pastoral year heads. All development plans have clearly stated success criteria and refer to the resources to be used, though some provide little information on the costs of the proposals to be implemented. In 1998, the budget was marginally overspent, but this deficit was easily financed by surpluses accrued previously. The average cost incurred per pupil by the school is close to the national average. Though the processes by which the governors and senior staff identify key areas for expenditure are sound; the formal mechanisms for appraising the outcomes arising from such expenditure are less clear. The previous inspection report referred to the cost effectiveness of expenditure as being evaluated only informally. The same criticism still applies and the governors need to implement formal procedures for judging the efficacy of their spending decisions. The school offered little evidence to show financial projections for the medium and longer term. Though the Local Education Authority undertakes such modelling, the governors should be developing their own models to inform their planning.

89. Overall the school is making an effective and efficient use of its staff, accommodation and learning resources. The main exception is in information technology where the four designated specialist rooms are under-utilised for approximately half of the two-week timetable cycle. The school has sought to enhance its curriculum by offering three GNVQ options at both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. This development is meeting with some success, though some staff working on the leisure and tourism and the health and social care courses would benefit from more subject specific training.

90. Though many of the A level groups are populated by small numbers of students, the school offers a range of options and these are augmented by consortium arrangements negotiated by all Coventry schools. The school is not a major player in the consortium but its existence allows students a wider range of choices. A financial analysis of sixth form provision indicates that there are no issues of inefficiency and all courses are appropriately staffed and resourced. The main weakness identified during the inspection concerned the arrangements for morning registration. All registrations seen involved significant periods of time with little active tutorial work being witnessed. At best these sessions gave students a time for social intercourse.

91. The financial administration practised by the school is good and has remained so despite the long-term absence of the school's financial officer. A new appointment to this post has recently been made and the appointee and the deputy headteacher responsible for finance undertake their duties with great care and enthusiasm. Financial administration is effective and unobtrusive and is providing good support for the central objectives of the school. The innovative efforts of the

deputy headteacher responsible for finance have allowed extra funding to be allocated to prime purposes. Funding has been re-allocated as additional computers, for example, have been acquired at little cost from local firms. An assiduous approach has also been adopted towards utility costs and the school has successfully sought reductions in the costs of gas and electricity and further reductions are being investigated. The effectiveness of the school's financial controls has also been recognised in the very good report recently issued by the local authority's auditors.

92.The school is satisfactorily providing value for money. There is a satisfactory balance of expenditure across the three key stages for which the school caters and good provision is made for funding pupils with special educational needs. Though day-to-day financial management is good, there was no evidence to show that the governing body has introduced an effective formal system for long term financial planning. For example, the evaluation of the outcome of expenditure, especially in terms of the attainment and progress recorded by pupils, remains informal, limiting its usefulness to the school's senior managers.

## 98. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### 98. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### 98. **English**

93. Attainment in English is satisfactory. Key Stage 2 results show that attainment on entry to the school is in line with national standards and has been consistent over the last five years. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations are broadly in line with national averages and better than those achieved by similar schools. In Key Stage 3 the percentage achieving Level 5 or better matches national expectations, but the proportion attaining Level 6 or better is lower than the national average. Over the last three years, comparing 1996 and 1998, attainment at age 14 has remained broadly in line with national trends, with a marked drop in attainment in 1997.

94. GCSE results in English have been consistent with national trends since the last inspection and are well above the average for similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment in English language is good and the percentage [57.6%] achieving an A\*-C grade is higher than the national figure. However, the 50.4 per cent awarded an A\*-C grade in English literature at GCSE is below the national figure of 58 per cent. On both courses girls' achievement is better than that of boys. Students on GNVQ courses reach appropriate standards and attainment at A level GCE is good. In 1998 more than a third of the A level students gained the higher grades A or B.

95. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have a good understanding of character and plot. Many are beginning to express critical opinions and the most able can support these with some appropriate reference to evidence from the text. In Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form many pupils are able to analyse literature with insight and use an understanding of the writer's techniques to support interpretation.

96. Good standards of writing are achieved in both key stages and in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3 pupils write fluently, with increasing control of content and form. A successful feature of the teaching is the use of "draft" books for each stage of preparation. Pupils use these conscientiously to improve their writing. Note-making skills are taught as a part of this process. In all of the lessons observed important issues and key words were introduced effectively, helping pupils to prepare written assignments that were relevant and well-expressed. Pupils have a clear understanding of the aims of their writing and the criteria by which it will be assessed. Most take pride in their work and standards of presentation are good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing accuracy in syntax, punctuation and spelling. In Key Stage 4 the best writing shows a mature attention to form and accuracy. Redrafting skills improve the structure, detail and clarity of written coursework. Lessons were observed where a general emphasis on developing coursework was balanced by practical advice on writing with speed and relevance for examinations. An impressive aspect of a sixth form lesson was the way pupils were encouraged to be adventurous in their writing. Many Key Stage 3 pupils use word-processing at home to produce well-presented written work. This is even more evident at GCSE and by the sixth form word-processing is a departmental requirement for all A Level coursework. The department does not do enough to increase pupils' access to word-processing in school.

97. Pupils' progress is satisfactory throughout and good at Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3 pupils of middle and lower attainment make good progress. While some outstanding work was scrutinised, results at age 14 indicate that the progress of many of the most able is no more than satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the educational targets set for them. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory.



98. Pupils are generally attentive, demonstrating good levels of motivation and perseverance. Three lessons were observed where unsettled and inattentive behaviour disrupted the progress of the class and in one lesson the teaching method did not challenge pupils sufficiently. In general the attitudes and response of pupils contribute to good progress in their learning. Pupils often work in pairs and small groups. They were observed taking responsibility for their own contribution to the activity and for the progress of the group. This aspect is good in English and very good in drama.

99. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons observed, teaching varied from unsatisfactory to very good. Teaching is satisfactory in most lessons and in over 60% of lessons is good or very good. Lessons are not teacher-dominated and do not encourage passive or compliant behaviour. Pupils are challenged to respond and to show initiative. There is insufficient evidence, especially in the sixth form, of tasks or homework that develop pupils' independent progress and research skills. Three lessons had significant weaknesses in the management of pupils which lowered the quality of learning and resulted in poor progress. In the best lessons teachers matched high expectations of achievement with high standards of pupil behaviour. In most lessons thorough planning included a range of well-paced activities offering good experiences and progress in speaking and listening, in reading and in writing. Teachers were sensitive to the needs of pupils of different abilities and quick to respond with individual help. Effective teacher intervention provided correction, explanation or additional challenge. Teachers work well with educational assistants, supporting pupils with special educational needs. Marking is good, usually with a level or grade to indicate attainment and a grade for effort. Pertinent and personal comments showed that work had been appraised attentively and that teachers recognised each pupil's achievement. Constructive correction of errors in written work was less apparent. Assessment of pupils' work to inform planning and progress is good in both key stages and in the sixth form. Assessment criteria are explained to pupils.

100. Work in English and in drama are important in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Both departments identify opportunities for personal development with due regard for the maturity of pupils. Work in drama is particularly successful in this context and difficult topics, like prejudice or equality of opportunity, are tackled directly. The teaching of literature requires pupils to reflect on the personal and moral situations of characters in various settings e.g. children's experience of war, (*Friend or Foe*), the holocaust in Europe, (*The Diary of Ann Frank*) and racism in the USA, (*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.*) In language work the development of personal expression encourages pupils to explore their own and others' feelings. In drama such work results in a group performance, analysed by the rest of the class, who discuss the feelings and values involved. Relationships between teachers and pupils developed in English and drama lessons encourage open, confident discussion. This was most marked in Key Stage 4 lessons. Stimulating discussion of spiritual and moral issues was least evident in the 6<sup>th</sup> form lessons observed, although the texts (*Othello* and *Talking Heads*) offered powerful challenges.

101. Management of the department is good overall. The leadership of the experienced head of department is very good. There is clear educational direction combining equality of access and high expectations. Department aims are well formulated in the context of the school's development plan. The comprehensive departmental handbook is positive about values and aims. It contains detailed schemes of work and is clear about procedures, e.g. marking policy. It offers examples and proformas e.g. reading logs. The curriculum is broad, balanced and coherent, meeting National Curriculum requirements for all abilities. Curriculum planning is effective and allows for progression through the key stages and into the sixth form. The department is aware of the different attainment of boys and girls. As an experiment the top two sets in Year 9 have been organised as single sex groups. Progress has been made since the last inspection to ensure that the selection of pupils for the low ability groups in Key Stage 4 distinguishes between behavioural issues and ability.

102. Assessment information is accurately recorded and shared by teachers. It is moderated by the head of department to place pupils in groups appropriate for their ability. Departmental meetings are led professionally and, in the one observed, all teachers participated in a well-managed moderation of GCSE coursework. There is a good match of qualifications and experience to teachers' responsibilities. All teach the full range of abilities in both key stages. Sharing advanced work in the sixth form promotes professional development. A programme of lesson observation and staff appraisal, directed by a deputy headteacher, resulted in all teachers in the department agreeing responsibilities and personal development targets. These, for example, responsibilities for assessment or for cultural experiences supporting A Level, are having a beneficial impact on the quality of education.

103. Most of the classrooms used for English are in one building. Teachers have sole use of a room and take pride in the quality of the learning environment, which has improved since the last inspection. There is a good range of stimuli displayed on walls, including key words. Pupils' work on display is predominantly by the most able. A work area exists for teachers, but facilities are limited and occasionally this room is used by pupils. Resources are well managed and skilfully used. The book stock is adequate but old, much of it dating from the early days of GCSE. Good use is made of audio and video recordings, but there are no computer resources in classrooms and this is a significant weakness in provision. The library has been much improved since the last inspection. Although small for a school of this size, it provides a valuable resource to complement the teaching of English, notably through the individual reading programme and the homework club based there. It should be used more to develop research and study skills.

109. **Drama**

104. Attainment in drama is good in Key Stage 3. Attainment is very good by the end of Key Stage 4, with 83 per cent of the entry gaining an A\*-C grade in 1999.

105. Progress in Drama is good in both key stages. Continuity and progression are well planned and performance skills develop well through the key stages. High and middle ability pupils make good progress to achieve high GCSE grades.

106. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils work well collaboratively, often in small groups and take good responsibility for their progress. Evaluation of their own performances promotes maturity and sensitivity to the feelings of others. In the lessons observed pupils were engaged and enthusiastic about their work. The take-up rate in Drama at Key Stage 4, which has had to be limited to 30 for the past two years, indicates the pupils' interest in the subject. For the practical and performance aspects of the subject this is a large group size. The last school drama production involved over 120 pupils of all ages and abilities.

107. Teaching in drama is good, especially in the effective intervention which directs and challenges pupils as they develop ideas dramatically. The management of pupils and the discipline required promote very high standards. All pupils make good progress in the acquisition of personal and social skills. The curriculum is good and schemes of work are currently being rewritten to broaden pupils' progress, emphasising gains in personal skills and links with other areas of the curriculum. Work in drama makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in both key stages and difficult topics are tackled. One year eleven group was observed exploring with impressive maturity the theme of suicide.

108. With the Canon Diamond Memorial Theatre and other rooms in the same building, drama enjoys good accommodation that is well used. Resources in drama are limited, but well managed. The amount of money provided for drama is small, but it has been augmented by sponsorship from local firms and the receipts from school productions. A new sound system

has been installed, but other resources will be needed to support a subject growing rapidly in popularity.

#### 114. **Mathematics**

109. Pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, was above the national average for 1998 both for pupils achieving Level 5 or better and for those achieving level 6 or more. When compared with the results obtained by pupils from similar schools results were high. Boys and girls achieved similar standards. Over the years 1996 to 1998 the Key Stage 3 results have been close to the national average, but are rising more quickly. The pattern for 1999 is similar. By the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils are confident in their use of fractions. They can gather like terms and simplify algebraic expressions and solve linear equations. Low attaining pupils are competent at basic number work and can use a calculator with accuracy for simple problems. They can also estimate the distance between towns on a map in kilometres and the height of a building in metres. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work established that, overall, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national average attainment.

110. Results in the 1998 GCSE exams were below the national average. The number of pupils gaining a grade C or better (36.8%) was less than national norms. Pupils' results in mathematics have compared unfavourably with their achievement in other subjects in the school for 1996 to 1998 but the overall trend has been upwards, and the 1999 comparison shows that maths is on a par with other subjects. More able pupils in year 11 showed themselves capable of drawing graphs of quadratic functions of the form  $y = ax^2 + bx + c$  and of cubic and linear functions. They could solve simultaneous equations graphically and by substitution. Lower attainers could recognise line symmetry and reflect a shape using a mirror line.

111. GCE Advanced Level results in the sixth form are below national standards. There is an understandable variance from year to year with a relatively small number of candidates possessing variable abilities but in relation to their ability as observed during the inspection, the students are achieving satisfactory results, and the number of pupils choosing to study mathematics is increasing. The students apply themselves to their studies and are well supported by good teaching from well qualified staff. However, those who have followed the intermediate level course at GCSE find the transition to A level difficult, as do those who have been admitted to the A level course on the basis of previous high commitment to work, having obtained only a C grade at GCSE. The department makes an effective and successful contribution to the key skills element of the sixth form GNVQ courses.

112. Pupils' progress is satisfactory at all stages in the school. Regular testing and monitoring of work enable the pupils to maintain and focus their efforts. Pupil performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 is monitored every half term. In Year 10 the pupils are then set targets for improvement. This is good practice that enhances pupils' performance and motivation. Plans are in place to extend this practice to include pupils in Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve the targets on their individual action plans and progress satisfactorily. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

113. The pupils' behaviour and commitment are satisfactory. Two lessons were observed when pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory. Books are, for the most part, neatly kept. Behaviour and application in many lessons is very good, reflecting the standards set by the teaching staff, as well as pupils' own desire to do well. In most cases relationships between pupils and pupils and their teachers are good. The strength of these relationships does much to promote the culture of achievement that pervades most of the work in the mathematics department.

114. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is almost always satisfactory or better. At Key Stage 4 teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons, and in the sixth form teaching is good. All of those teachers who teach mathematics on a regular basis are knowledgeable about their subject and teach it

with rigour. The best lessons seen were especially well prepared, with work matched to individual student need and delivered at a good pace. A good example of this was an investigative lesson for low attaining Year 11 pupils. They were asked to investigate what patterns they could make with matches that involved them in considering number patterns. Another good example was seen in a sixth form lesson on moments of forces.

115. The mathematics department benefits from good leadership and a qualified team of hard working teachers committed to raising standards. Improvements in teaching are arising from paired teacher monitoring of performance and from teacher in-service development. Monitoring arrangements both for teaching and marking are now in place and are to be subject to further development. The department works well together as a team and is already benefiting from these arrangements to improve the quality of their work in the classroom.

116. Issues raised in the last inspection have, in the most part, been successfully addressed. More investigative work is done to enable the pupils to improve their enquiry skills. The purchase of textbooks for all pupils enables the department to make better provision for pupils of all abilities. The head of department is monitoring the work of his team more closely and the provision of more computers is enabling more information technology to be incorporated into the schemes of work. Pupils' punctuality to lessons still remains something of an issue, but has improved.

## 122. **Science**

117. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was below the national average in the statutory tests for 1998 and above average for similar schools. The 1999 pupil attainment was similar. Attainment in lessons is satisfactory.

118. At the end of Key Stage 4 the attainment of pupils is close to the national average for 1998. The 1999 results show a slight fall in comparison. Attainment in lessons is satisfactory.

119. Student attainment in advanced level biology for 1998 was above the national average and for advanced level physics in line with the national average. Student attainment in these subjects has been maintained in 1999. Attainment in advanced level chemistry was below the national average for 1998 but has shown an improvement in 1999. Attainment in lessons is satisfactory.

120. Pupils in both key stages and advanced level students demonstrate a good level of investigative skills. They are able to organise themselves well and use practical skills effectively.

121. The overall progress of pupils through Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory as it does not build sufficiently on Key Stage 2 attainment and pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, pupils' progress in lessons is satisfactory. When pupils are challenged by skilful questioning, which not only seeks knowledge-based answers but searches for reasons, their progress is good. For example, in a lesson on igneous rock formation, pupils in a Year 8 class were asked not only what happens when molten rock cools, but also why different size crystals appear in the solidifying process following a crystallisation practical. Pupils make the best progress when the lessons are structured to enable all pupils to reach their full potential, for example when a lesson on compounds started with a simple introduction in the form of a practical, moved on to word equations and symbolic equations for the more able pupils.

122. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 4 is good.

123.The progress of students over time at advanced level GCE is good in biology, satisfactory in physics and is moving towards satisfactory in chemistry. The progress in lessons is good.

124.The progress for pupils with special educational needs is good. Prior attainment information and individual pupil education plans are used to support the pupils where appropriate. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

125.Pupils are generally interested in their work and are most interested when the lessons are delivered with enthusiasm. For example, in a very good lesson on the properties of materials, pupils were encouraged by the teacher's enthusiasm to put forward some of their more unusual questions to the rest of the class to stimulate discussion and thinking about such things as, 'does aluminium stretch?' and 'does glass bend? The general increase in interest in science is reflected in the recent increase in the numbers of students taking up advanced level sciences. Pupils work well together and are mostly well behaved, although there is a minority of pupils who try to disrupt the learning of others.

126.The teaching across all key stages is good. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and lessons are planned well. Teaching methods and the organisation of pupils is good and the use of time and resources are satisfactory. Expectations of what pupils are able to do is generally good. However, in a minority of lessons in Key Stage 3, little provision is made to serve the needs of the brightest pupils in the group. The assessment of work and the marking of homework is good but the use of assessment to identify individual pupil difficulties is just satisfactory. Where the teaching is very good, on-going assessment during the lesson is used to monitor the progress of pupils. For example in a lesson on teeth, a simple ordering of 'statement strips' by individual pupils was used to assess how well they understood the process of tooth decay.

127.The curriculum at both key stages meets statutory requirements. However, blocking single science with GNVQ options results in the number of pupils taking double award science being below average. The time allocated to single science is below recommendation. Also the time allocated for advanced level sciences is at least one period per week short of the ideal. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. The certificate of achievement in science is a successful course meeting the needs of a minority of pupils at Key Stage 4. Schemes of work are in place for Key Stage 3 but need to be completed for Key Stage 4 in accordance with the departmental plan. There are no schemes of work for advanced level sciences.

128.The strategies in place for assessment are good, with end of topic tests and self reviews in Key Stage 3 and end of unit tests together with predictions of pupil performance at Key Stage 4. However, methods for identifying specific pupil problems, identifying targets and monitoring progress need to be developed, particularly at Key Stage 3. The department has clear guidelines on the setting and assessing scientific investigations at both key stages.

129.The management and co-ordination of the department has been sustained at a satisfactory level through a period of turbulence due to a complete refurbishment of laboratories and a long-term staff absence. Teamwork is a feature of the department involving teaching staff and laboratory technicians, the latter giving excellent support in the provision of laboratory practical requirements. Regular departmental meetings take place in an open atmosphere in which team members make valuable contributions to departmental planning. The department has a realistic departmental plan with clear relevant targets. Outstanding targets need to be addressed as a priority. Staff development needs have been identified in the department by the annual departmental professional review resulting in a clear set of targets for each member of staff. A major contribution to staff development was the departmental self- review, which involved a programme of 'paired' lesson observations. The head of department monitors teaching and marking on an informal basis, but this needs to be formalised into a coherent programme to ensure complete and targeted coverage.

130. The match of number, qualifications and experience of the science staff to the demands of the science curriculum is good. The accommodation is good, having undergone a significant refurbishment of laboratories since the last inspection. Laboratory technician storage and preparation space is good, laboratories are pleasant and clean. Some have good displays of pupils' work. The arrangements for the provision of safety for pupils are good. The planning for lessons includes risk assessments in accordance with the schemes of work. The storage of flammable liquids and radioactive materials comply with statutory regulations and there are class sets of safety glasses situated in each laboratory. Resources are adequate for the delivery of science across the curriculum, although enhancing the provision for physics remains a departmental target. The head of department efficiently manages finances.

### 136. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

#### 136. Art

131. Art is popular and there is good take up of the subject in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Since the last inspection standards have been sustained.

132. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Pupils have very variable levels of art skills on entry to the school. Through the key stage they develop their skills particularly in drawing and painting work. They experiment with and can use a range of media predominantly in 2 dimensions. Skills in 3D work are not well developed. Pupils learn the basics of how to handle line, tone and colour and can record what they see with a growing degree of accuracy. They look at the work of artists and create work that is based upon both observation and imagination. For example Year 7 pupils combined an imaginary aerial view with pencil studies of their own feet to make a composition entitled 'The parachute jump'. Year 9 pupils were able to use their observation skills appropriately to record buildings seen from the classroom window. Pupils do not make use of information technology in their work or make much reference to art work from other cultures.

133. Pupils' attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average. In the 1998 GCSE examinations girls' results were slightly above the national average and considerably above those of the boys. The gap between the performance of boys and girls has remained wide since the last inspection. Pupils develop their skills across a range of materials and media with the best attainment in painting and drawing work. The use of colour and handling of acrylic and water colour paint is very well developed. Pupils in a Year 10 class, for example, were making well observed studies of a still life group and developing these using acrylic paints. Pupils' knowledge of the work of artists is developed alongside their practical making. For example Year 11 pupils were constructing 3D interpretations from studies made of paintings on a gallery visit. Sketchbooks are well used by some pupils to record and develop their ideas. Pupils do not make use of information technology to develop their work in art.

134. Attainment in the sixth form is in line with the national average for grades A to G but fewer pupils achieve the higher A and B grades at A level. The current sixth form pupils have, in many cases, appropriate and well-developed painting and drawing skills. High quality development of personal and imaginative subject matter through research and visits to galleries is a feature of much coursework. For example, direct observation of the figure and studies of cubist work by Picasso led to one pupil developing expressive paintings. Pupils can present and discuss their ideas with others and take part on a regular basis in critical studies' lessons.

135. In Key Stage 3 pupils' progress overall is satisfactory. They develop the use of a sketch book to record their observations and ideas and are introduced to a range of artistic styles linked to the work of artists. Some units of work result in slow progress because too much time is spent experimenting with materials at the expense of completed work. They make limited progress with 3D work and no progress with their use of computers to develop their artwork due to the lack of

opportunities provided. Cramped rooms and inadequate curriculum time adversely affect pupils' progress.

136. Progress is better at Key Stage 4 and is particularly good in the current year 10 as a result of the close monitoring of units of work where pupils are encouraged to write down clear targets and deadlines. Painting skills in particular show the best progress, with growing confidence in the use of acrylic paints. Unlike the situation at the previous inspection, no opportunities exist now for pupils to make progress with their application of information technology. In the sixth form, the structure of pupil reviews and discussion, coupled with greater independence, results in good progress and increased awareness of a range of artists and their work. They develop personal study skills and mature attitudes to their work and this also leads to good progress.

137. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils identified as having special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

138. Attitudes to art are good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. Pupils respond well to the work set and develop positive relationships with each other and staff. They show respect for the equipment and rooms in which they work and co-operate well sometimes in cramped conditions. Most pupils take great care with their work and good behaviour and concentration are characteristics of lessons.

139. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in the great majority of lessons it is good and sometimes very good. Schemes of work are clear and concise and teachers plan lessons effectively and manage pupils well. Verbal comment is often used to encourage and promote progress. Discussion is used to very good effect in the sixth form. Teachers make use of display but there is further scope for this to be used to promote aspects of knowledge and understanding of art in the classroom and around the school. Assessment at the end of units of work, along with pupils' evaluation of their work is well used, with good procedures for monitoring work and setting targets at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. More help is required at Key Stage 3 to enable pupils to understand how to improve their work in progress. Curriculum time is also limited and some units of work require revision to improve pace and challenge and widen the range of experiences.

140. Development planning has taken note of whole school initiatives and the department continues to face the challenge of improving the performance of boys. Accommodation in two of the four art rooms is cramped for some classes and this limits the range and scale of work that can take place. The location of the rooms in two separate teaching blocks does not assist day to day communications and collaboration between staff. In the absence of the head of department, due to long term illness, the remaining staff, with an acting head of department, are working very hard to ensure that all pupils continue to benefit from a specialist taught art curriculum and that standards are maintained.

#### 146. **Business studies**

141. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998, pupils' attainment in GCSE business studies was significantly above national average expectations for both grades A\*-C and A\*-G, with a 100 percent rate being recorded. Results in 1999 did not reflect the high standards of the previous year especially for A\*-C grades, where girls are now doing significantly better than boys. A level economics results for 1998 for grades A and B were in line with national expectations, though girls were significantly outperforming boys. In 1999, no candidates achieved above grade C, but a 100 % pass rate was recorded in both years and this exceeds the figures recorded nationally for all schools. The cohorts of pupils following the foundation GNVQ business course in Key Stage 4 and the intermediate course in Year 12 record very good attainment. Completion rates are high and final grades are very good.

142. The attainment of current GCSE pupils is variable but it is at least in line with average

expectations, with higher attainers achieving at above average expectations. Higher attainers quickly assimilate new ideas and are able to apply these with success. For example, in a lesson on credit, higher attainers were able to offer the hypothesis that rates of interest will vary directly with time and size of the loan. For the vocational education courses at both key stages, attainment is good. Pupils have developed a good level of understanding and can apply their ideas. At A level, attainment is also good and, for some students, it is very good. A significant number of students have developed good analytical skills. Research assignments encourage students to delve deeply into set topics; they can then offer detailed analytical answers. For example, three girls gave a presentation on minimum wage legislation. Their analysis was very good and they were able to link this concept to other key theories such as the multiplier effect. In another lesson on trade, some students could successfully apply previously mastered price elasticity theory. Attainment at A level is furthered by the frequent use of extended writing tasks. Such a strategy is used less often at Key Stage 4, where the frequent use of worksheets is not consistently providing pupils with the challenges they need.

143. Business studies and economics are popular options. Progress in GCSE lessons is good, in both vocational areas it is at least good and at A level it is very good. At all levels, pupils are consolidating their knowledge and many derive enjoyment from their studies. Progress is enhanced by the nature of the challenges set and, particularly at A level, the emphasis placed on research skills is further aiding understanding. Pupils' progress is not only in terms of their knowledge of business and economics. The department places much emphasis on numeracy and literacy and this is benefiting all pupils. For example in a Key Stage 4 GNVQ lesson, a careful explanation was offered on the difference between the words 'check' and 'cheque'. The need for accuracy in language was also paramount in A level lessons and was linked directly to examination technique.

144. The behaviour of pupils in all lessons is always at least satisfactory and in the vast majority of lessons it varies between good and excellent. High standards of conduct and behaviour were witnessed in most lessons, across both key stages and involved the whole range of pupils. The nature of the school site means some pupils arrive late to lessons and they are occasionally slow to settle, but once they realise the lesson has started they behave well, are attentive and, almost without exception, take an interest in what is being taught. They sustain concentration, work independently and collaboratively and take a pride in their endeavours. In oral work, pupils listen to the views expressed, show respect for the views of others and immature comments about the ideas expressed by others are rare. It is clear that such exemplary behaviour is closely allied to the quality of teaching provided.

145. The attainment and progress of all pupils is enhanced by the high quality of teaching offered. In all lessons teaching is at least satisfactory. In 80 percent of lessons teaching is good, or better and, in over 53 % of lessons, it is either very good or excellent. All staff are good classroom practitioners who employ a range of strategies to ensure that the attention of pupils is captured. Allied to this, staff have secure subject knowledge, invariably prepare well, make lessons interesting by providing variety and have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils are consistently challenged. Classes are managed well and informal assessment is employed effectively to determine the pace of lessons. Very good use is made of homework. Tasks set are realistic and are designed to further pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Where lessons are less effective, the level of preparation is less thorough and are teacher dependent, with a lack of variety in the tasks set. In some Year 11 GCSE lessons, the effectiveness of otherwise good lessons was reduced because the worksheet lacked realism. The challenges presented were good, but the information on costs such as wages was dated. The handout used is a commercially produced aid that entered the market in 1985. It is advisable that handouts present information that is realistic and relevant to the pupils' own experience.

146. The management of the business and economics department is very good. There is a clear ethos to raise standards and the range of very good assessment procedures employed help the department to achieve its objectives. Opportunities for pupils are further enhanced by the



provision of vocational courses at both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

## 152. Design and technology

147. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall. Aspects of making, for example, using a range of machine tools to work metal and making good use of sewing machines to join and decorate textiles are good. Relatively tight control of projects by teachers does enable progression in a range of practical skills and associated knowledge to develop, for example, marking out and preparing wood and metal, preparing and cooking food to fit particular dietary requirements, like providing fibre. However, this does detract from pupils' progress and attainment in design and this is not sufficiently well developed, particularly by higher attaining pupils. Pupils' knowledge is patchy. They know the names of hand tools, for example, tri-square, coping saw; they understand terms such as taper and thermoplastic, but are generally unaware of the names and properties of the materials they are working with, or of the range of materials that they could consider as alternatives. Pupils know the basic tenets of food hygiene, including tying hair back and why they should not wear nail varnish, but they do not always apply the rules. Pupils' use of lathes to turn, face off and taper both metal and plastic is above average and not often seen in other schools. However, their work with plastic in other ways, for example, forming with heat, shaping and finishing, is below average. Pupils' use of control software to write simple procedures for traffic lights is average if a little old hat. Those pupils with access to computers at home are generally better at typing in information, creating and saving files and accessing work that they have saved. Pupils' knowledge of other aspects of systems and control and of the commonest method used by schools to teach them, electronics, is below average.

148. Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, measured by GCSE results in 1998 is below the national average. Mainly boys took workshop and graphic product related courses and these results were well below average. Mostly girls took food and textile courses and, overall, their results were above average. Looking for trends from earlier years is difficult as courses have changed significantly, however 1998 results are significantly better than those of 1997. Unfortunately, results in 1999 slipped back, though girls' results effectively remained above the national average. A group of lower attaining girls is removed from the design and technology curriculum at Key Stage 4, an infringement of National Curriculum requirements, whilst all boys remain, some being directed towards a motor vehicle GCSE. The differences between boys and girls results are coloured a little by this but girls still do much better than boys.

149. From work seen during the course of the inspection, both present and files and examples from the last Year 11, pupils' attainment within workshop, graphic, food and textile related activities is in line with national expectations. Workshop projects show a degree of pupil choice lead by a design brief, for example, chessboards and tables and a rather unusual "exploding" car, but the material used is essentially wood which is disappointing considering the metal lathe and heat treatment work that could be built upon from Year 9. Making skills and the finish achieved are satisfactory but weaknesses remain in drafting ideas. The design formula is too slavishly followed and not used as a vehicle to enable imagination to become reality. Graphic product work shows good use of photographs, space and colour, for example, in the work on cafes and exhibitions, and the best work is well above average. In these areas it seems that pupils do fall down in their written examinations and teachers are addressing this through earlier starts to projects and additional work for pupils after school. However, to get to the centre of the matter, closer attention needs to be given to design and a broader knowledge base throughout Key Stage 3 and into Year 10. Pupils in food technology show themselves well able to apply brainstorming techniques and use books and other materials to research food types and products. They can also use a computer database to present their findings as bar graphs and pie charts. However, their knowledge base is still thin, for example, many pupils in Year 11 could not explain what pasta is or how it is made, and others looking at Mexican food could not define what the basis of it is, for example, what makes it different from Chinese or Indian.

150. The progress that pupils make is good overall, good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key

Stage 4. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils in practical situations supports the progress they make. They listen to what they are told, follow instructions and generally obey health and safety requirements, certainly the more critical ones like wearing goggles and not crowding people on machines. Pupils' progress is held back by insufficient work in design and computer related activities and work in a variety of materials and about systems. The accommodation, particularly in the workshop areas, and the resources and equipment available within it are poor and combine to restrict the progress that pupils might otherwise make.

151. Teaching is good overall, no lessons observed are less than satisfactory with over half being good or very good. Strengths lie in management of pupils, essential within potentially hazardous situations, especially when class sizes exceed 20, and in demonstrations of technique, for example cutting and preparing vegetables and the use of coping saws. Teachers take advantage of such demonstrations to raise pupils' understanding by explaining about, for example, the bitterness of some seeds and the nature of saw teeth and the forces used in sawing. Teachers' expectations of pupils' practical work are good but expectations of their ideas and designs are more restricted. More able pupils are expected to do better but are not always sufficiently challenged by the activities presented to them to enable them make good or very good progress, especially in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' use of assessment is good and target setting in Year 10 and the identification of pupils likely to need additional support is following school guidelines.

152. The curriculum offered to pupils is satisfactory. Textiles technology broadens the work available and provides good opportunities for design and the use of computers likely to be more rigorously pursued by the new teacher in charge of it. There is a lack of work in systems and control. The plan to introduce it as a GCSE, with the support of the Marconi Company, is a good one though it will also have to be developed in Key Stage 3.

153. The leadership of the department is good, ideas are being developed and supported through appropriate in-service training, for example, a recent control course and visits to other schools to see different approaches. The new teacher in charge of food and textiles, appointed September 1999, is already making very good progress in re-organising those aspects of the curriculum. Good use is made of the existing technician both in and out of the classroom. There is no technical support in food or textiles and this leads to inefficient use of teacher time for preparation, cleaning and maintenance.

154. The accommodation for all of design and technology was out of date at the time of the last inspection and contained a number of health and safety issues. Essentially it has not changed and there are still significant health and safety issues, that may be different, which the school has been informed about. There are too many workshops though some in use are too small for the class sizes they have to accommodate, lighting is unsatisfactory and the layout of machines and benches do not facilitate safe work. The food area has been well looked after but flooring and cupboards do not come up to current health and hygiene standards. The school has made a bid to the local education authority for a share of government funding specifically addressing poor accommodation.

## 160. **Geography**

155. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and this is supported both by teacher assessments and inspection evidence. Throughout the subject girls outperform boys.

156. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is in line with the national average. In the 1998 GCSE examination, 47 % of the pupils gained grade A-C compared with 51 % nationally. In 1999 the school percentage dropped to 44%. GCSE attainment has been steadily declining over the past seven years.

157. Pupils' attainment at A Level GCE in 1998 is above the national average. In the 1998 examination, 47% of the pupils gained grade A-B compared with the national figure of 34%. 100% of the candidates gained a grade A-E compared with 91% nationally. In 1999 the percentage of candidates gaining grades A-B fell drastically to 15% but again all candidates achieved a grade A-E. In 1999 boys did far better than predicted.

158. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Their workbooks show an accumulation of knowledge, the refinement of skills and a deeper understanding of geographical phenomena and processes as they move through the school. The development of specialist vocabulary and the ability to express themselves both orally and in writing is evident.

159. In some Key Stage 3 lessons progress is limited because of the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils. They find it difficult to settle and this in turn distracts others. However, some of the higher attaining pupils maintain their concentration and make good progress. At Key Stage 4 progress is steady. In a Year 10 class the pupils were developing a good understanding of the tropical rain forest eco-system and in Year 11 the pupils could relate photographs to an Ordnance Survey map and distinguish features of different sectors of an urban development. Pupils had good factual recall of topics previously studied but many had insufficient knowledge of the inter-relationship between physical and human features of a landscape.

160. In the sixth form the work in pupils' books and seen in one lesson indicates that the students' attainment is in line with national expectations. Year 13 students had a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the global development of tourism. They were developing the skills of independent research and were able to evaluate the writings of different authors on a subject and form their own opinions. They understood the importance of primary sources when researching a topic.

161. Overall pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. The A level students and the Key Stage 4 pupils concentrate well, stay on task and take a pride in the presentation of their work. At Key Stage 3, there are pupils in most classes who have limited attention spans and become distracted and distracting.

162. The teaching of geography is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 there is some good teaching and in the one A level lesson seen it was good. At Key Stage 3 planning is a strength and teacher knowledge is secure. All other aspects are satisfactory. In some lessons the pace is slow, and the support for lower attainers is not always appropriate. The structure of some lessons is too dependent on the course textbook and lacked appropriate injections of stimulating activity that retained the interest of all pupils.

163.The teaching in Years 11 and 13 showed a good understanding of the examination requirements and focused well on study skills.

164.Curriculum planning is very detailed and the geography curriculum is good at all stages. The National Curriculum programmes of study are all covered at Key Stage 3 and the schemes of work for GCSE and A level meet the needs of the appropriate syllabus. The curriculum time is appropriate and there is no evidence that the fortnightly timetable adversely affects attainment or progress.

165.Assessment is good. The department analyses test and examination results thoroughly and uses the findings to review teaching strategies, and identify pupils who need additional support. The result is a common marking scheme that is consistently applied, although pupils' books contain too few suggestions on how the work could be improved.

166.The department is very well led. Over the past four years the establishment of the humanities faculty and the development of GNVQ Leisure and Tourism courses have been priorities and teachers have coped well with different teaching commitments and increased responsibilities. The professional review of staff has been well conducted and the monitoring of teaching includes classroom observation. There is no evidence that the introduction of GNVQ courses has been a contributing factor to the decline in GCSE results.

167.The geography department shares seven neighbouring classrooms with history and they are adequate. One large room makes an appropriate subject base although other rooms are cramped when used by large Key Stage 3 groups. There are sufficient resources to support effective teaching although the lack of information and communications technology equipment and use, identified in the last report, remain as issues.

### 173. **History**

168.Standards achieved by pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. GCSE results in 1998 were in line with the national average at Grades A\*-C, and are better than previous years. Whilst there are no national figures for 1999 yet available, this trend looks set to continue. Since 1998 the performance of boys has improved with the number achieving A\*-C grades reaching parity with that of girls.

169.The majority of pupils of all abilities are acquiring satisfactory levels of knowledge of the periods of history studied in Key Stage 3. They are given frequent opportunities to develop understanding of methods of investigating the past, acquire appropriate skills when investigating events, and use both primary and secondary sources of evidence. For example: Year 7 pupils understand the importance of evidence for interpreting the past, and can construct timelines and family trees. Year 9 pupils consider how developments in technology affect warfare and led to the development of trench warfare. Pupils explore bias and propaganda, for example, in Year 8 studying the life of Oliver Cromwell, and in Year 9 the contribution of Arkwright to the Industrial Revolution. Causation and change are investigated throughout the key stage, for example when considering the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in Year 7 or developments in the use of machinery in the Industrial Revolution in Year 9. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have a working knowledge of the complexity of change and of differing factors involved. In each Year pupils have opportunities for personal studies, for example Year 9 pupils carry out a case study of railways. Pupils write in various ways: short answers, extended writing, letters, diaries and newspaper articles, and studies of the past. They have opportunities to interpret graphs and statistics.

170.Key Stage 3 lays good foundations for pupils' work at GCSE. Numbers choosing history are increasing and pupils are acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate for the requirements of the syllabus. This is evidenced in GCSE coursework studies of Northern Ireland, analysing the origins and development of conflict there through source interpretation,

consideration of bias and propaganda, identification of the difference between facts and opinions, and study of attitudes and how events have caused these to harden or change. Pupils' work indicates that all pupils are acquiring a sound knowledge of events and can use a variety of sources, and that able pupils produce detailed, accurate, precise and well-argued responses to questions.

171. Progress throughout both key stages in knowledge, understanding and use of skills is satisfactory for most pupils. This has been improved since the last inspection by reducing the number of teachers deployed to teach history. Although lower attainers experience some difficulties with reading sources or recording ideas, this is being addressed by use of new specialised resource materials, providing different work for pupils to do and support by class teachers and assistants. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils, based on improving assessment techniques and good records pupils' attainment, including the use of Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs. In Key Stage 4 the progress of pupils is reviewed by teachers and targets set for borderline predicted grade C-D pupils. Knowledge and understanding is regularly consolidated and reinforced at the beginning of lessons, and occasionally at the end. Pupils' work is marked consistently and feedback provided. Planning of lessons is based on a recently revised scheme of work that identifies objectives, resources and activities. However, in a few lessons there was under-expectation of pupils, and too few opportunities for pupil participation. There is a need to audit the variety of teaching and learning strategies used by teachers and to check pupils' progression. The use of computers to support pupils' learning is restricted to Year 9.

172. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all lessons and was good in one third of lessons observed. Teachers at Key Stage 3 have a sound knowledge of the subject and the requirements of the National Curriculum and have a consistent approach to teaching. At Key Stage 4 knowledge of the subject is good. Lessons are planned and prepared appropriately at Key Stage 3, in line with the scheme of work. In most lessons activities are appropriate for the needs of the pupils, and resources match learning objectives and are well used. Where teaching is good there is a good balance of teacher input and pupil activities; pupils' enthusiasm is stimulated by teacher explanations and illustrations and there is good use of time. In a few lessons teachers' expectations are too low, and pupils are given insufficient opportunities to participate. Generally explanations are made clearly and in some lessons there is good use of questions to consolidate learning and encourage pupils to think for themselves. Relationships with pupils are good. Pupils' work is marked consistently and records of attainment kept and used to identify progress and under-achievement, especially at Key Stage 4.

173. Most pupils in both key stages have positive attitudes to history and find it interesting. In eight out of nine lessons observed pupils were attentive and concentrated, organising themselves well, keeping focused on the task, and worked co-operatively when given the opportunity. Behaviour is good in most lessons.

174. Management of the department is satisfactory. The scheme of work has been revised and methods of assessment improved. There is a development plan that has successfully addressed issues raised in the last inspection. Money is prudently spent. The work of the department as part of the humanities faculty reflects the aims and ethos of the school and is giving value for money.

175. Accommodation, while limited in size, is well used. There are displays in all rooms although more work by pupils could be shown. Resources are adequate and are being improved each year. History contributes to pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example in Key Stage 3 when investigating contemporary responses to sickness and death as a result of plague epidemics, or attitudes towards the poor in Tudor times, and the impact of the Crusades on English and European societies. The study of Irish history at Key Stage 4 makes an effective contribution to pupils' understanding of the causes of conflict and the importance of awareness of bias and propaganda when handling sensitive issues.

## 181. Modern foreign languages

176. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils achieve standards below national expectations in French and in line with national expectations in German. In French most pupils have difficulty recalling previously learned vocabulary and structures, respond to instructions and basic questions about themselves with hesitation and often, very briefly. They participate in short dialogues, exchanging simple information, but are not confident in speaking; their heavy dependence upon written prompts inhibits their confidence and adversely affects their pronunciation. Most have difficulty identifying the main points from extracts of speech without much guidance and repetition. They copy fairly accurately and construct sentences following a model and referring to lists of set phrases. There is some evidence of extended writing but this is usually heavily guided. Most label items and match print with sound and meaning but reading skills are weak over-all. Some higher attaining pupils in French and German achieve in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3, identifying and applying patterns successfully and constructing their own sentences. In German they are more confident and competent and display independence in using the language both orally and in written form.

177. At GCSE the percentage of candidates achieving A\*-C grades, in 1998, is well below national averages in French and well above in German. In both languages the percentage of candidates achieving A\*-G grades is above national averages. Girls achieve better than boys in French. The percentage of the cohort entered for German is low compared with national figures. There has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining A\*-C grades in French and a significant improvement in German in 1999.

178. From inspection evidence, by the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils studying French achieve below national averages and attain standards in line with grades D-G at GCSE. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are weak and most pupils lack confidence in responding to spoken French. They take part in dialogues but are dependent upon models and lists of set phrases. Writing skills are limited and only higher attaining pupils write accurately without a model. They identify the main points from short texts and extracts of speech but most need much repetition and guidance. Higher attaining pupils in French and pupils studying German achieve in line with national averages overall; they take part in dialogues exchanging information and describing events in the past, present and future in some detail. They identify the main points and detail from a variety of texts and extracts of speech at normal speed with little need for repetition.

179. Pupils studying French and German at advanced level GCE achieve in line with expectations at this stage in the course. They speak with confidence and have a good range of vocabulary and structures and are beginning to develop a good understanding of the way the languages work and to adapt them to suit their own needs. They write fairly accurately and at some length and take part in dialogues using vocabulary and structures from a variety of topic areas. In German they are beginning to appreciate and use idiom and are beginning to make inferences from the type of language used. They identify detail from a range of texts containing unfamiliar language and express opinions and justify their views in simple debate. The small number of examination entries makes comparison with national averages difficult

180. For almost all pupils studying French in Key Stages 3 and 4 progress is too slow. Progress in German is good over-all. Pupils make good progress where they are given the opportunity to practise informally or put their skills to the test in realistic situations, using more than one skill to complete a task. In these situations they concentrate and are engaged by tasks set. However, the progress of some average and lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, is too often hampered by the lack of appropriate support or by materials which have not been adequately adapted to meet their needs or by poor behaviour. Progress is also slowed by the dependence of most pupils upon written prompts and word lists that do not encourage them to operate independently or confidently in spoken tasks. Heavily guided writing tasks are counter-productive in increasing pupils' confidence in using the language for themselves. The progress of

some higher attainers is sometimes hampered because activities fail to interest or challenge them sufficiently. Progress is good over all in the sixth form because of the good variety of appropriate tasks and resources well matched to their needs, brisk pace and high expectations by teachers of pupils.

181. Students on advanced level courses are well motivated, concentrate on tasks set and are concerned to do well. They have very good relationships with teachers and are supportive of one another. In both Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' attitudes are in direct correlation to the quality of teaching they receive. Where teaching is satisfactory or better attitudes are generally positive, pupils listen attentively, behave well and concentrate on tasks set. When asked to work in small groups and pairs they work together productively and stay on task. However in a significant number of lessons in French pupils have negative attitudes towards their learning. Many are poorly behaved; at best they are inattentive, noisy and display little interest in tasks set or classroom activities and in many cases some display little respect for their teachers and try to disrupt lessons.

182. The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory. It is inconsistent across the department and ranges from very good to poor. The quality of teaching in German is consistently good. Over half of lessons observed in French, at Key Stage 4, were unsatisfactory or poor. At Key Stage 3 teaching in French is, overall, satisfactory.

183. Teachers have a good command of the languages they teach and use the languages effectively and often extensively to conduct activities; this is effective in developing pupils' listening skills and in challenging the higher attainers. However in some lessons the target language is used erratically and ineffectively; teachers are sometimes too eager to give translations thus eliminating the need for pupils to listen. Objectives are usually clear and lessons are generally well planned for continuity but too often resources and activities are not sufficiently focused on the needs of pupils to be effective.

184. Teachers' expectations are inconsistent across the department. In the more effective lessons expectations are high and pupils rise to the challenge. In the less effective lessons expectations are too low and activities and tasks set fail to provide an appropriate challenge or engage pupils' interest. In the more effective lessons pace is brisk and resources are well used to develop skills. For example, some teachers make good use of the overhead projector and flashcards to focus attention, clarify meaning, elicit oral contributions and increase pupils' understanding of patterns. In less effective lessons pace is often too slow and resources are not adequately adapted to meet the needs of groups of differing ability.

185. Strategies employed by teachers are often limited in range and variety. In the more effective lessons pupils are given the opportunity to practise informally and to use the language for real purposes but this is rare. Games and video clips are also sometimes used effectively to stimulate interest and motivate pupils. Where activities are dominated by teachers, opportunities for pupils to participate or try out the language for themselves are decreased and this is counter-productive to building their confidence and competence. Paired pupil activities are too often limited to rehearsal and pupils are too often encouraged to depend upon written prompts and models.

186. Control and management of pupils are inconsistent across the department and range from very good to poor. In a significant number of classes in French, teachers fail to manage pupils effectively and this severely hampers pupils' progress and makes effective learning difficult.

187. The quality of marking varies across the department. In some lessons teachers monitor individual progress and effectively adapt teaching strategies where necessary, intervening to help individuals, but this is not the norm. The quality and regularity of marking is also inconsistent, some pupils' exercise books have not been marked for lengthy periods and comments fail to indicate how well they are achieving or how to improve. For others marking is regular and informative with helpful comments and a clear idea about how they can improve. In some cases, especially in the sixth form and in some classes in Key Stage 4, good use is made of homework tasks to reinforce learning and prepare for future lessons but in others, little homework is set and often consists of finishing off work begun in class.

188. Schemes of work detail content and ensure progression and continuity through the key stages but are not sufficiently linked to National Curriculum levels and lack detail about how topics and materials should be addressed by groups of differing ability. There is little evidence of use of information technology beyond word processing. There is a clear assessment policy and some pupils are aware of their progress through National Curriculum levels of attainment but this is not consistent across the department and is rarely referred to in marking pieces of work or assessing paired work or listening activities. Reporting to parents is inconsistent in French, giving little information about what pupils know, understand and can do in the subject. It is both detailed and informative in German. Policies such as differentiation, assessment and behaviour, although well documented, are not implemented consistently or effectively across the department leading to a significant amount of variation. There is inadequate support and guidance for less experienced teachers. Development planning does not identify how to raise standards or achieve consistency in teaching and learning nor does it identify how progress is to be monitored or evaluated.

189. There has been insufficient progress since the last report. There has been some recent improvement in GCSE results in French and a significant recent improvement in German. The quality of teaching has improved over all in German and in the sixth form in French. The department now meets statutory requirements for assessment and recording. However, teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 in French has deteriorated, particularly within Key Stage 4, where almost half of lessons seen are unsatisfactory or poor, whereas in the last inspection teaching in French was satisfactory overall. Management of the department remains unsatisfactory since the key issues of variability of teaching and learning and low standards of attainment have not been effectively addressed. Development planning is inadequate and does not identify how standards are to be improved or how inconsistencies in teaching are to be addressed or how department policies are to be implemented or progress evaluated.

195.

## **Music**

190. Pupils' standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 are close to national expectations. By the end of the Key Stage pupils can perform simple individual parts and maintain them in classroom ensembles; their sense of rhythm is well developed and they can copy complex phrases. Notation skills are limited; pupil can identify notes and pick them out on instruments such as the keyboard or recorder, but they usually need to write letter names as well. Composition skills are less developed mainly confined to inventing short melodic phrases. Instrumental pupils achieve average standards with some exceeding national expectations.

191. In Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment is above the national average. The GCSE results reflect this, showing improvement since the last inspection; for the last two years results have been above the national average. The pupils perform on keyboards, piano, guitar and various orchestral instruments and use these in their compositions. For example a violinist wrote a melody for her instrument, developed it and created several modifications of the original idea. The



pupils perform well in ensembles, maintaining independent parts and using notation for performing and for recording their compositions.

192. In Key Stage 3 boys and girls both make satisfactory progress. Pupils of lower prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through practical work that allows them to perform at an appropriate level, but higher attaining pupils could make better progress if more was demanded of them. There is good evidence of continuity from lesson to lesson, but a time allocated to music less than nationally recommended and the fortnightly gap between lessons inhibits pupils' progress.

193. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress and practically all pupils complete the course in one year instead of the customary two. Performance skills improve through individual and group lessons with visiting teachers, ensemble work in class, and extra curricular activities such as the school orchestra. The pupils acquire technical vocabulary which is linked to performance and listening skills and make progress at a level appropriate to their ability.

194. Pupils have a good attitude to music; they are interested and work with enjoyment. At Key Stage 3, behaviour is usually satisfactory but sometimes, when not fully involved in the practical activities, pupils are inclined to chatter and lack concentration. At Key Stage 4 behaviour is very good, the pupils are highly motivated and attend a twilight session and do extra homework to complete the course. In both key stages the pupils have good relationships, listen to each other's performances with courtesy, and collaborate well when required. Take-up for GCSE music is above the national average, take-up for instrumental teaching is in line with the national average and there is good support for extra-curricular activities.

195. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and is satisfactory in Key Stage 3. Half of lessons observed were satisfactory and the remainder good or better, there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and all the instrumental teachers have appropriate specialist skills.

196. Expectations of the pupils are high for the most part but could be more challenging for higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 expectations are high and this is reflected in the good results achieved. Sometimes lessons need more variety of activity to prevent pupils losing interest. Teachers' explanations are usually clear, but sometimes too long, which slows the pace of the lesson.

197. Management of pupils and standards of discipline are good at Key Stage 4, but at Key Stage 3 pupils are sometimes inactive because of unnecessary instrument sharing and this can cause behaviour problems.

198. A wide variety of resources are employed, for example a sequencer is used to provide backing tracks for class performances. A strength of the teaching is the use of tasks that allow pupils to perform at different levels within the same ensemble so that lower attaining pupils are fully integrated into the group work. This needs to be developed to ensure that higher attaining pupils are also fully stretched.

199. The music curriculum complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum but the time allowed for the subject at Key Stage 3 is less than half of the recommended time allocation. This has an effect on standards, which could be higher if the time was increased, and the frequency of lessons improved. The school has addressed the inadequacy of resources noted in the last inspection report and the standard of resources provision is now good.

## 205. **Information technology**

200. Attainment in information technology (IT) at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average overall, a situation that has not improved since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment

is well below average. Throughout both key stages, but particularly at Key Stage 4, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, fail to develop a sound base of essential knowledge and skills. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have limited research and presentation skills. Pupils' use of spreadsheets and data handling meets national expectations in Year 8 computer lessons and these skills are practised within mathematics. The use of computers for control purposes is taught through design and technology at Key Stage 3 and is of a satisfactory standard within the limitations of the software and equipment used, but does not extend more able pupils.

201. Within Key Stage 4, although most pupils can use IT for word processing, their knowledge and skills of the wider aspects of communicating and handling information and are generally unsatisfactory. Few pupils can confidently use IT to organise and present information in different forms and most have a limited understanding of the use of IT for data handling, measuring and modelling and control. Some pupils in Year 11 met data capture, within science, for the first time during the inspection. Pupils who take food technology use databases for a basic analysis of questionnaire answers and graphical presentations, those in textiles technology have opportunities to use programmable sewing machines and in graphics a few pupils are beginning to make effective use of design presentation software in their portfolios.

202. Attainment in the sixth form is satisfactory. Pupils understand the implications of IT for working life and society and can identify appropriate hardware and software requirements when designing solutions to real life situations. One pupil, for example, had designed a programme, capable of working in any format, to update the free-school-meals take up in Coventry. Another had designed a programme to computerise his local parish covenanting procedures. Four pupils were entered for Computer Studies A level in 1999, too small a number with which to make a meaningful national comparison. Of those entered, one pupil achieved grade D and three others grade E.

203. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 and poor in Key Stage 4. Although pupils often make satisfactory progress in individual information technology lessons, their overall progress is unsatisfactory because the school is not meeting all National Curriculum requirements. This is because pupils in both key stages receive too little specific IT teaching time and experience little use of computers in other subjects. In Key Stage 3 pupils receive one lesson per fortnight which, because of holidays and occasional illness, can result in five-week gaps between lessons. Consequently there is insufficient time for consolidation or revision of key skills. In Key Stage 4 there are no discrete IT lessons. National Curriculum programmes of study for information technology are expected to be delivered across all subjects, but there is no plan for this. Consequently, apart from word processing, the programme is inadequately covered. Neither do most other subjects fulfil their requirements to use information technology appropriately to support subject work.

204. Progress in the sixth form is generally satisfactory with A level GCE and vocational courses. However, the use of information communication technology is lacking both here and throughout the school. Although funding and resources for the National Grid for Learning is only just coming into the school many schools have established their own resources over several years, particularly where a sixth form is involved. It is relatively common place to find 11-16 pupils and post-16 students using the Internet for research and e-mailing both within and outside school premises, supporting modern foreign language development and vocational courses.

205. Most pupils have positive attitudes to the use of computers, but some are unable to sustain their enthusiasm because of a lack of basic IT skills and the time lag between lessons. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils generally co-operate with each other when working in pairs or groups.

206. The teaching within IT lessons is never less than satisfactory and in 25% of lessons observed teaching was good. Most lessons are suitably planned and in Key Stage 3 teachers try hard to overcome the difficulties created by the inadequate time allocation. Pupils are managed effectively and are given good support by their teachers who, despite being non-specialists, endeavour to create a positive and enthusiastic ethos within the department. The lunch time, after school and evening computer clubs offer valuable support, particularly to Key Stage 3 pupils who lack sufficient lesson time to complete projects. Advanced level GCE pupils without a computer at home are provided with a lap-top computer. Computers are used effectively in the teaching of mathematics where pupils regularly use them to plot graphs, use spreadsheets and databases and write course-work reports.

207. During interviews with inspectors, pupils expressed dissatisfaction that the school does not offer a GCSE in information technology at the end of Key Stage 4. A small number of pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are entered for the Royal School of Arts Initial Text Processing examination and all sixth form pupils do a basic skills course.

208. The leadership and management of IT overall is unsatisfactory. Whilst development planning is good, the school's current arrangement whereby IT in Key Stage 4 is supposedly taught through other subjects is ineffective. There is no audit of what is or is not being delivered and no monitoring of progress, a weakness highlighted in the last report. In addition there are no detailed plans of how pupils' progress should be assessed, recorded or reported.

209. Since the last inspection the school has made excellent progress in increasing the number of computers and now has a ratio of one machine to every four pupils. This is higher than the national average of approximately one to six. At the parents' meeting parents noted the relatively recent increase in the numbers of computers but were unclear about how much use was made of them or what national expectations and practice were. Good progress has also been made in increasing technician time.

## 215. **Physical education**

210. Pupils' attainment in physical education at the end of Key Stage 3 is good for both boys and girls with a substantial majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, reaching the expected standards. In gymnastics, pupils are able to create individual sequences from linked movements, displaying precision and variation in balances. In swimming pupils have good stroke technique and recognise the importance of body shape in achieving sustained rhythmic breathing when in the water. Attainment in dance is well above the national average. Both boys and girls have a good technical dance vocabulary, are capable of sophisticated compositions of movement and routines and can demonstrate high levels of control and sensitivity in performance.

211. Pupils' levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are very good. Pupils comprehend and apply the rules to a number of games and activities. In soccer, boys can receive, control and release the ball accurately when under pressure demonstrating good mobility and peripheral vision. In netball, girls show a high level of fluidity of movement in open play, notably when feinting an opponent and dodging into space. In swimming, pupils have a good knowledge of the rules of water polo and personal survival techniques. Attainment in dance is well above the national average. Girls can compose and perform sophisticated motifs in a range of styles and can evaluate their own and each other's performance.

212. Pupils were entered for GCSE for the first time in the summer of 1999. Although there are no national comparisons available for 1999, when compared with the 1998 national results the GCSE results are well above the national average. GCSE results in Dance were above the

national average for 1997 and 1998. A-level Sports Studies was introduced in September 1999.

213. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils extend and improve their performance. During the week of the inspection there were over thirty extra-curricular activities involving over four hundred pupils. The school has an enviable record in inter-school competition within the city of Coventry where it has enjoyed success in a number of sports including athletics, tennis, rugby, football-both boys and girls-and netball.

214. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 is good and in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is very good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop the ability to acquire, adapt and apply knowledge, skills and concepts in a variety of movement-related activities. They respond to planned tasks and undertake continual practice to improve. The rate of progress is particularly good in dance, swimming and games due to knowledgeable teaching linked to high expectations.

215. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in physical education are very good. Pupils work hard, show confidence and use sports equipment safely and responsibly. Participation rates are high. Pupils co-operate well in team situations and show a high level of commitment in attending dance and school team practices.

216. The teaching of physical education is good. In 91% of lessons seen, teaching was good or better; in dance, teaching was very good or excellent. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and make progress. Good organisation ensures that little time is wasted. Lessons are carefully planned, are varied and interesting and with clear demonstrations and explanations. Teachers demand high standards of behaviour from pupils and the good relationships that exist in lessons enable learning to take place in a disciplined and safe environment. Whilst pupils' own self-evaluation and target setting is minimal, day-to-day assessment is good.

217. The strong and effective leadership of the department makes a significant contribution to the high standards pupils achieve and the good progress they make. Development planning is detailed and ambitious and good contacts have been established with local sports clubs. The department is currently involved in a pilot curriculum initiative with feeder primary schools in association with the Warwickshire L.T.A. The department's risk assessment audit is thorough and comprehensive. Members of the department are experienced, enthusiastic and committed to attaining high standards; they provide good role models for their pupils. The school's senior management provides effective support and encouragement.

218. Except for dance, accommodation for physical education is excellent. In dance there is no dance studio and the existing accommodation, particularly the concrete floor in the Drama Theatre, is not conducive to sustained usage. Whilst this has not yet affected pupils' learning, it is likely to do so in the long term. Learning resources for physical education overall are good, except in dance where there is no video or camera. Since the last inspection there has been no improvement to the state of the tennis courts, five of which need resurfacing.

## 224. Vocational Courses

219. General National Vocational Qualifications are offered at foundation level at Key Stage 4 and at intermediate level in Year 12. In both cases three options are offered. These are: business, leisure and tourism and health and social care. Business is taught by specialist staff from the business and economics department. Leisure and tourism is taught by staff from the humanities faculty while the health and social care option is provided by a range of staff, most of whom are in the design and technology department. At Key Stage 4, GNVQ options tend to be offered to lower attaining pupils.

220. Pupils' attainment in the vocational courses is variable. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998, attainment at foundation level in vocational subjects was satisfactory, though this judgement masks variations within programmes. In business, attainment was very good but, in the other two disciplines, it was satisfactory. Overall attainment was less in the 1999 examinations. Attainment at the end of Year 12 is likewise variable, but is satisfactory overall. It is good in business.

221. The quality of teaching offered in all vocational areas is good overall. During the inspection period, ten lessons were observed. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 90% of lessons and, in 50% of lessons, it was either good, or very good. In the better lessons, teachers have a good understanding of the subject matter and are prepared to challenge the pupils' understanding. Teachers were observed addressing whole classes, rather than facilitating the work of groups or individuals and this approach supported gains in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Where lessons were less effective, teachers lacked confidence and were unsure about the role they should play. Staff training for GNVQ leisure and tourism is not yet complete.

222. Though outcomes are mixed, the provision of vocational options is a laudable initiative that is offering a significant minority of pupils an alternative pathway by which they can gain academic qualifications. Pupils' progress from their courses in a variety of directions and many proceed to the next stage in the GNVQ ladder. The work experience that is an integral part of vocational education, is helping pupils to be more confident. Indeed, the hotel frequented by many of the inspection team employs sixth form students from the school. Members of the team were impressed by the very good standards and attitudes demonstrated by them.

## 228. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 228. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

223. The school was inspected by fourteen inspectors over a five day period. 176 lessons were observed in whole or part, a sample of pupils interviewed and the work from another sample scrutinised. In addition other pupils' work was inspected in classrooms or on display in other areas of the school. Every teacher was observed teaching and all with responsibilities for subjects or aspects of the school interviewed. A number of governors were interviewed. Parents' views were sort by questionnaire and through a meeting called just before the inspection.

## 224.DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1171	7	181	263

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	67.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

#### Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	75

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	75.3
--	------

Average teaching group size:	KS3	26
	KS4	21

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
-----------------	-----------

	£
Total Income	2 569 272
Total Expenditure	2 574 839
Expenditure per pupil	2 338
Balance brought forward from previous year	106 396
Balance carried forward to next year	100 829

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

750

Number of questionnaires returned:

319

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	24	63	12	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	46	46	5	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	26	44	23	5	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	33	55	9	4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	39	48	9	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	50	5	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	51	41	7	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	39	50	4	5	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	42	45	10	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	36	46	12	4	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	48	43	5	2	2

### Other issues raised by parents

Some dissatisfaction with the style of computer generated annual reports about pupils' work in subjects.