

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE COVENTRY BLUE COAT CE SCHOOL**

COVENTRY

LEA area: COVENTRY

Unique reference number: 103745

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Timbrell

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Rowe  
1695

Dates of inspection: 5 – 9 November 2001

Inspection number: 187873

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Terry Road

Coventry

Postcode: CV1 2BA

Telephone number: 024 7622 3542

Fax number: 024 7655 0927

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: The Venerable Mark Bryant

Date of previous inspection: 13 – 17 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1695	Brian Rowe	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
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10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	English Drama	
6044	Roger Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics	
10561	Angela Fraser	Team inspector	Science Post 16 physics	
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Design and technology	
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20124	Jo Peach	Team inspector	Modern languages	
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language.	
18673	Richard Wilkins	Team inspector	Post 16 religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
31659	Nick Skinner	Team inspector	Music	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Coventry Blue Coat Church of England school is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils and students aged 11 – 18 years, situated in Coventry. The school draws its pupils from both the city of Coventry and the neighbouring county, Warwickshire. In recent years the school has changed its admission policy to admit more pupils from its immediate locality. Pupils have a wide range of backgrounds, but the proportion from advantaged backgrounds is higher than average. There are currently 1,196 pupils on roll, larger than the average sized secondary school. The proportion of boys (608) is similar to that of girls (588). There are 281 students in the sixth form and numbers have increased rapidly in recent years. Thirty one per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority groups, a much higher proportion than average. The largest ethnic minority group (13 per cent) is Indian. About 3 per cent of the pupils are Pakistani, but there are also pupils from several other ethnic minority backgrounds. About 19 per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language, of whom about 2 per cent are at the early stages of learning English. The most common home languages for pupils are Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu and Bengali. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (6.0 per cent) is low when compared to the national average. An analysis of pupils' attainment on entry shows that attainment is above the national average. About 15 per cent of the students have been placed on the special educational needs register, a lower ratio than most other secondary schools. Of these, 34 pupils have statements for special educational needs; this is above the national average. The school is in the process of bidding to gain Arts college status.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The Coventry CE Blue Coat school is highly effective and provides its pupils and students with a very high quality of education. By the time pupils reach the age of 16 they attain academic standards that are well above the average for all schools nationally and also for schools with pupils of a similar background. Standards in the sixth form are well above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They attend regularly, behave very well and develop positive relationships with the teachers and other pupils. The quality of teaching and learning are good throughout the school and of an especially high standard in the sixth form. The overall sixth form provision is cost effective. The quality of management is very good throughout the school, although there is some variation between subject departments. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership that has ensured the school has made very good improvement since his appointment nearly three years ago. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Ensures the standards of attainment are high and continually rising.
- Provides a high level of care for pupils that ensures they develop very positive attitudes to learning and supportive relationships so they get on well together.
- Provides good teaching that ensures pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.
- The high quality of leadership and management promotes improvement in many aspects of the school.
- Provides a very high quality of education in the sixth form.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standards of attainment and provision for information and communication technology (ICT).
- The standards achieved and provision for physical education.
- The level of support given to improve the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996 and since that date has made very good improvement. Most of the recommendations identified in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The school has also made improvements in many other important areas. These include: continually raising levels of attainment; strengthening leadership and management; improving the quality of teaching and learning; and providing greater curriculum opportunities for pupils and sixth form students. The school has also been successful in gaining a number of prestigious awards that include Investors in People status, a school Achievement Award, and the Arts Mark Gold status. A number of building projects have been completed and the school is under-going substantial improvements to the current accommodation and resources.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A		

By the time pupils reach the age of 14 they attain overall standards that are above the national average. In English and mathematics, attainment is well above average and in science it is above average. For the three years prior to 2001, standards remained unchanged, but due to specific measures taken by the school they improved significantly this year. Standards in English are especially high and in 2001 the results of the national tests were well above average for similar schools. In mathematics, results compared to similar schools were above average and in science results were average. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

In 2001 examinations, overall results were well above the national average and also above those of similar schools. Results have improved year-on-year and have been constantly well above the national average. Both boys and girls have performed well, but boys have achieved particularly well in comparison to boys in other schools. In most subjects, the achievement of pupils in the GCSE examinations is higher than could be expected based on their prior attainment when measured at the age of 14. This is a good indication that pupils make good progress by the age of 16 and achieve very well. The overall trend of adding value to pupils' performance is very good. Achievement at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education for a variety of reasons. The standards in the sixth form have been well above the national average for several years. The school has been successful in meeting its academic targets and evidence from standardised assessments indicates that pupils achieve very well, making better progress than that indicated by their prior attainment.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their lessons. They come to school with very positive attitudes and a willingness to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour around the school, in lessons and assemblies is mature and self-disciplined.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves are very supportive. This creates a positive atmosphere for learning in which pupils flourish both academically and personally.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school. Punctuality is very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school and frequently very good. The teaching of sixth form courses is very good. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Teaching in most other subjects is of a good quality, but less effective teaching was observed in a few physical education lessons. Teaching in music is usually very good. Teaching in history is very good overall and at Key Stage 4 it is excellent. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory, but the quality is diminished due to inadequate resources. Teachers have especially good subject knowledge and manage the pupils very well. This promotes learning and pupils make good progress in the skills, knowledge and understanding of subjects. In some subjects the pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to learn independently of the teacher and develop their own research skills. Literacy is taught very well and is helping to raise standards in several subjects. Numeracy is taught well and pupils use their skills to good effect in science, design and technology and geography.

The school makes considerable effort to meet the needs of all its pupils. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, which ensures they make good progress. In most subjects the higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged to achieve the highest possible achievement. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is not so well developed and some pupils do not achieve their full potential.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The curriculum is very well supported by many visits and activities. Statutory requirements are not fully met in design and technology at Key Stage 3 and 4, ICT in Key Stage 4 and religious education in the sixth form.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school provides extensive and effective support for pupils with special educational needs. This includes those with learning difficulties as well as those who need additional academic challenges.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	In need of much further development. A specialist teacher provides good support to those with the greatest need. Beyond that, little extra support is given to these pupils by the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. In particular, their spiritual and social development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures ensure child protection and pupils' welfare. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and there are good systems to monitor and support pupils' academic and personal development.

Parents have very positive views about the school and give it a great deal of support. They receive good information about school life and are always made to feel welcome.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, who is well supported by key staff and governors, provides outstanding leadership and gives a clear direction for the school. Most aspects of the school are very well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is very well informed about school issues. Governors fully understand their responsibility and contribute well to the school's strategic development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has established effective review and monitoring procedures that help to identify both its strengths and weaknesses and provide information about future developments.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school applies good principles of best value for major spending items. It makes good use of a number of specific grants. Financial planning and control systems are very good

The school has sufficient appropriately qualified staff to teach the curriculum effectively, and to meet the needs of pupils and sixth form students. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory, but there is a shortfall in the provision of computers. The accommodation is inadequate for the numbers on roll.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school sent out 1196 questionnaires of which 402 (34 per cent) were returned. Approximately 50 parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection to express their views about the school.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children behave well.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of the pupils.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems.</li> <li>• The school is very well managed and led.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• Providing more information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully endorse the positive views expressed by parents. They do not agree with the views concerning homework and the information provided about children's progress. In both these aspects they found the provision to be good.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form of this large comprehensive Church of England school has 281 students. Numbers have risen very rapidly. It offers a very wide range of AS and A2 courses, and provision has been enhanced since the previous inspection by the successful introduction of vocational courses. Over 80 per cent of students from the main school continue their education in the sixth form, and a significant and increasing number enter it from other schools. Most students entering the sixth form pursue AS and A2 Level courses, or a mixture of AS/A2 and vocational courses, although some follow an exclusively vocational programme of study. Entry to the sixth form is open to all students for whom there are appropriate courses, and who are committed to further study. Nearly 90 per cent of students enter higher education when they finish their sixth form studies.

**HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

This is a very good sixth form, which is cost effective and provides good value for money. The overall standards achieved have been consistently well above national figures for the last four years, because teaching is very good and students have very good attitudes to their work. The very wide range of courses offered meets the differing interests and aptitudes of all students. Very good provision is made for students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers are committed to their students and care for them very well. Students are prepared very well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The rapid expansion of the sixth form in recent years reflects the high overall quality of its provision.

**Strengths**

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very strong, with effective team work promoting high standards.
- Students achieve very well and their levels of attainment are very high overall.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The high level of commitment and care shown to students ensures that they have very positive attitudes and enthusiasm for their study.
- Rich opportunities are provided for students' personal development in their daily life and work in the sixth form and through their involvement with the main school.

**What could be improved**

- The quality of accommodation and resources, including access to information technology.
- Over-sized teaching groups in some subjects, such as AS statistics, mechanics, biology and chemistry, and AVCE business studies.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
<b>English</b>	<b>Very good.</b> Students benefit from a range of courses in English language and English literature, as well as drama and theatre studies. Standards are above national averages. Students achieve as expected considering their GCSE results.
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Good.</b> Results are well above average. Good quality teaching by experienced teachers enables students to make steady progress, despite unsatisfactory accommodation.
<b>Chemistry</b>	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Results have been close to the national level for the past few years. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good teaching. Students' attitudes are good.
<b>Biology</b>	<b>Good.</b> Standards have been well above average over the past few years, but were lower this year. Teaching and learning are good overall. Students' attitudes are very good.
<b>Physics</b>	<b>Good.</b> Standards are well above average as a result of the very high expectations of the subject teacher. Students who remain on the course sustain a great sense of enquiry and fun as a result of some inspirational teaching.
<b>Design &amp; technology</b>	<b>Satisfactory.</b> In 2000, standards at Advanced Level for the small number of students were above average and achievement was good. In the recent 2001 AS examinations there was underachievement. Resources are unsatisfactory.
<b>Business Studies</b>	<b>Very good.</b> Results are impressive and relationships between staff and students are positive. There is a significant value added to students' GCSE profiles.
<b>Information and communication technology</b>	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good and students are very well motivated. Standards reached are satisfactory overall and reflect good achievement.
<b>Health &amp; Social Care</b>	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good, and students are very well motivated. Students reach satisfactory standards in relation to their attainment on entry to the course, and often do better than their teachers predict.
<b>Art and Design</b>	<b>Very Good.</b> The consistently high quality of teaching tailored to the needs of the individual encourages and inspires students and has a very positive effect on achievement and standards.
<b>History</b>	<b>Very Good.</b> Teaching, learning and attitudes are all of a high standard. Staff expertise is very strong and most of the work observed is impressive.
<b>Religious Studies</b>	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils achieve very well and attain standards in line with national expectations because of excellent teaching and the excellent attitudes they bring to their work.
<b>German</b>	<b>Very Good.</b> Standards are high and are better than would be expected given the students' GCSE results. Students' spoken German is especially well developed. Staff have good subject knowledge and teaching is good.

Work was sampled in other subjects during the inspection week. Teaching was very good overall. Provision in economics is good. AS results in 2001 were above average with a 94 per cent success rate, with positive value added from GCSE. The teaching demonstrates secure knowledge and good planning. Leisure and Tourism is a new course building on the previous intermediate course. Teaching is good and students develop their skills effectively. They achieve well in lessons and on visits and trips to develop their knowledge and understanding of the tourism industry. In physical

education, results at AS and A Level are significantly below other subjects for the school and in comparison with national standards. Very few girls opt to study physical education in the sixth form. Students studying drama have gained results consistently higher than the national average, with a gradually rising trend. Notable features have been the pass rate and the proportion of A and B grades. They achieve well, given their average standards when they start the course. Provision in geography is very good. The high quality teaching results in very high standards at both AS and A Level, with a 100 percent pass rate and a very high proportion of Grade A and B passes. French is being taught in the sixth form for the first time this year to AS Level. Pupils are achieving well because teaching is good and the course is carefully designed to build on what they have learnt at GCSE. In economics, examination results have been above average for the last two years. AS results in 2001 were above average with a 94 per cent success rate, with positive value added from GCSE. All students passed the A level examination. In the one lesson observed teaching was very effective due to the good planning. Students displayed a secure knowledge and understanding of the topic being taught. In music, standards are satisfactory overall in relation to national averages and course requirements. The most recent Year 13 A level results were above the national average. However, the latest AS results at the end of Year 12 are disappointing partially because of teething troubles in the organisation of this new course.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
<b>How well students are guided and supported</b>	Students enjoy very good guidance and support from their form tutors and teachers that effectively promote their academic and personal development. A supportive and caring ethos enables students from all backgrounds to make an effective transition to sixth form work, and to achieve their academic and personal potential. Procedures for monitoring attainment and progress have improved since the previous inspection with the use of base line and external data and target setting. Reports are being modified to make it clearer to students how to raise their levels of attainment. A very good programme of careers education and guidance prepares students effectively for transition to the next stage of their education, training or employment. Students have excellent opportunities for developing social and leadership skills in service to the sixth form and the main school, and their learning is enriched by a very wide range of cultural and other activities.
<b>Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form</b>	Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good and have ensured maintenance of high standards during a sustained period of rapid expansion. Pressures on accommodation and resources caused by the growth in numbers have been well managed within the circumstances, and the school is aware of the need to address issues relating to large class sizes in some subjects. There has been a strong focus on raising standards through the monitoring of the quality of teaching and students' progress. Equal emphasis has been placed on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, informed by the Christian values of the whole school. There is a clear vision of the educational direction the sixth form should take to raise standards further.

#### STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The caring and supportive staff.</li> <li>• Teachers who are approachable.</li> <li>• The very good teaching.</li> <li>• Being in a community with students from diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of accommodation.</li> <li>• The provision of learning resources.</li> </ul>

The strengths identified by students are supported by the inspection evidence. The very good relationships engendered between teachers and students, underpinned by Christian values, provide a caring and supportive ethos, in which students can fulfil their academic and personal potential. Teachers know their students very well and are attentive to their individual needs. Relationships

between students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are excellent, and enrich the experience of all. The school is addressing deficiencies in accommodation, and the opening of the new library will lead to an improvement in learning resources. In the meantime, more could be done to plan effectively to reduce over-size classes in some subjects, and to improve the décor and learning environment through display.

### **COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

##### **Main school**

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies between year groups, but overall it is slightly above average when compared with the intake of other comprehensive schools. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with statements for educational need than average, but fewer pupils on its register for special educational need. The school also has many pupils who are academically very able and consequently there is a wide profile of ability in each year group. By the time students reach the age of 16, their attainment is well above average when compared with all secondary schools and also with schools who have pupils from a similar background. Pupils make good progress and achieve very well as they move through the school. In 2001, the post-16 results from A/AS Level and GNVQ examinations were well above the national average and most students exceeded their predicted examination grades.

##### Key Stage 3

2. The 2001 Key Stage 3 tests taken at the age of 14, reveal that the combined average points score for English, mathematics and science is above the national average. Results over the last few years, previous to 2001, have been sustained at a level well above average, but improvements did not keep pace with the national trend of rising scores. The school found it difficult to raise attainment at Key Stage 3 and results reached a plateau. In 2001, results improved considerably due to the impact of summer schools, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, the use of additional funds to increase staffing levels, especially in English, mathematics and science, and improvements in the way the school uses assessment data and target setting.
3. The average points score<sup>1</sup> in 2001 for English and mathematics when compared with all schools is well above average. In science, results were above average. Compared to similar schools the points score for English was well above average, for mathematics above and for science in line with the average. During the last few years there have been some differences in the performance of boys and girls in the individual subjects. For example, in English, girls have outperformed boys, but to a lesser extent than the national difference. In mathematics, boys have outperformed girls, and boys have achieved at a much higher level compared to the national average for boys. In science, there is a similar picture to mathematics. Over the three subjects combined there is no significant difference between boys and girls. Results from the Year 2001 tests indicate an improvement in the overall point score and the school recorded its best ever results. During the inspection, the evidence confirmed that the level of attainment now being achieved is similar to that indicated by these results.
4. By the time students are at the age 14, attainment is well above expectations in English, mathematics, drama, history, modern languages and music. Attainment is above expectations in science, art and geography. In design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education, attainment is average. Students' achievement<sup>2</sup> in subjects is due, in part, to their very good attitudes

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<sup>1</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 3 the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The calculation is similar for the GCSE points score. The only difference is the value of the points assigned to an individual grade, for example, an A\* grade is worth 8 points, A is 7 points, B is 6 points and so on until grade G which is worth 1 point.

<sup>2</sup> Achievement reflects the accomplishments of students in relation to what might be expected of them in relation to their prior attainment.

to learning and the respect they hold for their teachers and school. However, accommodation and resource issues have had an adverse impact on their attainment in both design and technology and information and communication technology. In addition, information and communication technology skills used across subjects are under-developed due to difficulties in obtaining access to computers and a lack of staff confidence and competence in some subjects. Overall, students' achievement is very good in many subjects. However, achievement and progress are unsatisfactory in physical education, as pupils perform less well than they should when compared to standards achieved in other subjects. Students with special education needs make very good progress as a result of the high quality support they receive and the targets for improvement they are set. Pupils with English as a second language make satisfactory progress, but there is room for improvement.

#### Key Stage 4

5. In 2001, the school's total GCSE/GNVQ points score was well above the national average. However, although girls out-perform boys, boys are closer to the average than the girls in relation to national averages. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's average point score per student has risen steadily, and at a higher rate than the national trend. This is attributed to very effective teaching, supportive parents and the high level of the staff's care for and commitment to the pupils.
6. By the time pupils are aged 16, the proportion of them gaining five or more GCSE A\*-C and A\*-G grades in the 2001 examinations was well above the national average. When compared with similar schools the results were also well above average. The number of pupils gaining five or more A\*-C grades over the last three years has improved steadily from 57.3 per cent in 1998 to 66 per cent in 2001. In recent years, the numbers achieving A\* - G grades has remained well above the national average and indicates the success of pupils of all ability. The number of pupils gaining at least one GCSE is very high and this is a testament to the school's commitment to inclusion. The school has made good progress in raising the attainment of both boys and girls during the last few years and in ensuring pupils of all abilities gain examination success. The school easily surpassed its GCSE points score target for the Year 2001. However, targets are sufficiently challenging and based on detailed records of students' prior attainment.
7. Pupils' attainment in English language, as indicated by the 2001 GCSE results, is well above the national average. The results in English Literature were also well above the national average. This is mostly because pupils have very good literacy skills. The results in English are slightly better than those for mathematics and science.
8. The percentage of pupils in mathematics, achieving GCSE grades A\* to C is well above the national average, although results were slightly better in 2000 than in 2001. Boys performed better than girls in 2001, but less well in 2000. All pupils, bar one, attained a grade A\* to G in 2001 – an excellent result.
9. In science, the attainment of pupils as indicated by GCSE examination results is well above average by Year 11. This is because teachers have high expectations for their examination success, preparing them very well through good practical experiences. Standards seen during the inspection matched the level of attainment indicated by the examination results.
10. In most subjects, the achievement of pupils in their GCSE examinations is higher than could be expected based on their prior attainment when measured at the age of 14. This is a good indication that pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4 and achieve very well. The overall trend of adding value to pupils' performance is very good. In information and communication technology and physical education, achievement at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons as highlighted in the specific reports for these subjects in Section D of this report.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress with the support of class teachers and education assistants. For example, one pupil improved his reading age from 6 years 5 months to 8 years in one calendar year. Where this occurs, pupils move down or off the stages of the Code of Practice. Those who do not meet the targets set, move up the stages in order to gain additional support. Pupils' progress has improved since the time of the last report, as has the links made with departments.
12. Pupils who have English as an additional language do not always make good progress. Those who receive support from the specialist teacher do make good progress, but for the majority progress is only satisfactory, and is not as good as that of other pupils. This is because teachers are not aware of their level of language acquisition or how best to support these pupils, as documentation is not provided to alert them to pupils' specific needs. This has led to a high proportion of pupils being placed in the bottom sets, which was noted in the last report and which has not improved. Consequently, some of the pupils with English as an additional language are likely not to achieve sufficiently well.

### **Sixth form**

13. Most students entering the sixth form pursue AS and A2 Level courses, or a mixture of AS/A2 and vocational courses, although some follow an exclusively vocational programme of study. Entry to the sixth form is open to all students for whom there are appropriate courses and who are committed to further study. A high proportion of students who attended the main school stay on to undertake post-16 courses. Nearly 90 per cent of students enter higher education on completion of their sixth form studies.
14. The average points score for students taking two or more GCE A/AS courses is well above the national average. The school has achieved this same high level of attainment for at least the last five years. Although boys have frequently outperformed girls with regard to the total points score, both perform well in examinations. Most students achieve very well in their chosen subjects and gain better results than could be predicted from the grades of GCSE examinations. The level of value-added achievement is very good. Students are making good progress with developing their key skills, with the exception of opportunities to use computers at school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

#### **Main school**

15. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive and are a clear strength of the school. They are highly motivated and show a keen interest in their studies. They suggest ideas confidently and are articulate when expressing their views. They are able to sustain concentration for long periods, working well individually and also when working in pairs or groups. They are willing to share ideas and they support each other well in lessons. The high quality of most of the teaching and the very clear expectations which prevail throughout the school are very powerful influences in this respect. A very positive work ethic is well embedded and there are clear benefits for pupils' progress. Pupils take pride in their work and this is reflected in the high standards of presentation of much of their written work.
16. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Respect between teachers and pupils is almost universal and is demonstrated in the shared commitment to achievement. Pupils know that their teachers want them to do well and respond accordingly. Similarly, relationships between pupils are mostly very good. This is a well ordered community which functions well for the good of all. It is clear that bullying is not tolerated and where it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils of different ages, ability, gender and ethnic background mix well together and this results in a harmonious working environment.



17. Where opportunities are provided, pupils are clearly able to show initiative and take responsibility for both their actions and their learning. In geography, they carry out independent research and in mathematics were seen to organise resources in readiness for lessons. In some subjects there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independence; for example, in modern foreign languages, pupils are sometimes given too much help from teachers.
18. Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong and make a positive contribution to the orderly, social environment. They respond well to the high expectations in terms of trust and courtesy and behave with maturity. In lessons, behaviour is almost always very good and often excellent. On occasions the use of accommodation where staff use two separate rooms to teach large classes can have an adverse effect on behaviour. Movement around school is smooth and pupils show due regard for others, even on congested stairways. During break and lunchtimes the school hall is used for the consumption of snacks and packed lunches and pupils use this time very well to develop social skills. One unsatisfactory aspect of this arrangement is the amount of litter they leave on each occasion.
19. Instances of permanent exclusion from the school are very rare. Although numbers of fixed rate exclusions have risen since the previous inspection, this is due to the more rigorous approach to the monitoring of behaviour.
20. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to school. They want to learn and this was seen in a phonics lesson when a pupil asked if they could do the word game again. They behave very well in lessons and around the school and are involved in all school activities. For example, a group is regularly involved in music. On an individual basis, every effort is made to boost these pupils' self esteem by providing them with activities in which they can be successful. For example, this has been achieved through a programme of work experience, when the pupil talked with tremendous enthusiasm about her experiences with animals at the local agricultural college. Pupils who have English as an additional language have a positive attitude to school and are fully included in the life of the school. They are very well integrated and attend regularly.
21. Attendance at the school is very good with rates well above those achieved nationally. Rates of unexplained absence are low and punctuality to school and to lessons is good.

### **Sixth Form**

22. Sixth form students are conscientious, committed and have very positive attitudes to their work. They quickly take on new ideas, making valuable contributions to discussions and co-operating very well with each other and with their teachers. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic in their studies with some very positive attitudes from boys studying modern foreign languages.
23. Students show a very high level of maturity, demonstrating independence in their learning and taking a very responsible approach to their study. Course work and assignments are completed on time and great care is taken. They organise their time well and take pride in their finished work. A significant strength of the sixth form is the quality of the relationships both between teachers and students and between the students themselves. Students work well together and integrate well both in lessons and during study and social times. Students who are new to the school settle in quickly. Students value the time and commitment of staff who are genuinely interested in the students and have appropriately high expectations.
24. Sixth form students are actively involved in main school, carrying out a variety of responsibilities and making an effective contribution. Some students help in Year 7 tutor groups, organising credits and acting as confidantes to younger pupils. They

organise social events and carry out charity work. They help with extra curricular activities and during inspection some were observed assisting in a pre-school session involving pupils with dyspraxia.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

### **Main school**

25. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. During the inspection, in Key Stages 3 and 4 the quality of teaching was good in 44 per cent of lessons, very good in 23 per cent, excellent in 5 per cent, satisfactory in 24 per cent and unsatisfactory in the remaining five lessons. Consequently, this represents a good profile of teaching. The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school and has contributed to the raising of standards in the school since the last inspection and ensuring pupils perform well in their examinations. Teaching has a direct and positive impact on pupils' learning and ensures they acquire knowledge and skills, and develop their understanding of subject content and concepts. In addition, the teaching has a positive impact on the very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Teaching in most other subjects is of a good quality, but less effective teaching was observed in a few physical education lessons. Teaching in music is usually very good and in history it is very good overall and at Key Stage 4 it is excellent. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory and the quality is diminished due to inadequate resources. Examples of excellent teaching were seen at Key Stage 3 in design and technology, physical education and history, and at Key Stage 4 in history. Examples of very good and good teaching were seen in most subjects at both key stages.
26. In literacy, the quality of teaching is often good at both Key Stages 3 and 4. In English, pupils are taught in broadly based ability groups from Year 7 onwards and so standards of literacy vary between classes. Overall, standards are above average. Pupils apply their literacy skills well in other subjects, when required. Literacy skills are actively developed in many subjects. Many teachers have a secure understanding of the school's literacy strategy. They plan thoroughly, identifying clearly how expectations for different abilities are to be covered. Teachers plan effectively with support staff and they give good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Many teachers recognise the primary importance of literacy and create effective links between English and its application to other subjects.
27. The quality of teaching in numeracy across the curriculum is often good, but not as well developed as that of literacy. Pupils use numeracy effectively in many subjects. For example, in science, geography, and design and technology, pupils show very good skills. In Key Stage 3 they complete calculations of pressure and velocity and make very good use of triangular shapes in work on structures. In Key Stage 4, pupils produce graphs to show the length of a spring as it stretches and complete calculations on power very quickly.
28. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge, which is passed on to pupils with interest and enthusiasm. The purpose of the lesson is shared with pupils and contributes well to their understanding of their own learning. Planning is very good, matching the scheme of work and ability of the pupils. Teachers use demonstration and explanation skills well to put across key teaching points. Lesson introductions are challenging and require pupils to think and give answers to teachers' questions; for example, in mathematics, where they are expected to explain how they find answers to mental arithmetic problems.
29. A significant strength of teaching is the successful management of pupils' behaviour. This is a result of the very good relationships between the teachers and pupils and also the high expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning. In most lessons the pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In particular, pupils take great care in presenting

their work. Teachers' effective planning means that work is matched successfully to pupils' learning needs and pupils are challenged in their learning. Because relationships are very good, pupils are confident and secure with their teachers and support staff.

30. Teachers usually try to use resources and time well to support pupils' learning. In some subjects the allocation of teaching rooms and lack of resources available makes this difficult. For example, the way the school allocates accommodation and uses resources for information and communication technology affects how well pupils are taught information and communication technology skills and the application of those skills in other subjects.
31. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and their constructive and helpful comments guide pupils in their future learning. Teachers use the results of marking to plan future lessons as well as the assessments they make of pupils' learning. Homework is used well to support the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
32. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is never less than good, with one in two lessons very good. In withdrawal lessons, no time is wasted and a variety of activities ensure that pupils maintain their interest. Good relationships encourage pupils to try, and praise gives them confidence. For example, one pupil who was very serious about his work, beamed with pleasure when told that his answer was correct. In lessons, the education assistants provide invaluable support to these pupils, so that all can work successfully in the subjects studied. This was seen in a physical education lesson, where the excellent support enabled a pupil to participate fully. The majority of teachers know the targets set in these pupils' individual education plans, which encourages pupils to strive to meet them. However, where teachers are unaware of these targets, opportunities are lost to reinforce pupils' efforts to improve. Targets are specific and attainable, such as 'to proof-read work', and 'to identify syllables in a spoken word'. When education assistants are provided with a scheme of work and a fully differentiated curriculum, as in history, this enables them to provide maximum support for these pupils and, consequently, pupils make excellent progress. For example, two Year 10 pupils have improved their work to provide well argued essays and their National Curriculum levels have risen by two grades in six months.
33. Pupils who have English as an additional language have support from the specialist teacher. This is primarily through support in the classroom. Apart from the specialist teacher's input, these pupils do not receive additional opportunities for speaking and listening, nor are they provided with effective models of spoken and written English. The school does not provide extra support staff for these pupils.

### **Sixth form**

34. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout both years of the sixth form. During the inspection the quality of teaching was good in 48 per cent of lessons, very good in 28 per cent, excellent in 6 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining 18 per cent. Consequently, there were no unsatisfactory lessons and this represents a very good profile of teaching. The high quality of teaching is a significant strength in the sixth form and has contributed to the success in examination courses at a much higher level than the national average. In addition, the very good teaching has a positive impact on the support and guidance given to students and prepares them very well for the next stage of their educational career or employment. The school is teaching key skills effectively through a well organised programme and subject courses. Teaching was reported as exceptionally good in the last inspection and the quality has improved since that time.
35. In the sixth form, teaching is very good in English, business studies, art and design, drama, history, religious education and German. In mathematics, biology, physics, design and technology, information and communication technology, travel and tourism, health and social care, and music it is good. Teaching was satisfactory in chemistry

and physical education. Examples of excellent teaching were seen at Year 12 in drama and religious education, and Year 13 in history and religious education. Examples of very good teaching were seen in most subjects in both years.

36. The particular strengths of teaching are the high level of staff subject expertise, the very good relationships between the teachers and students and the effective preparation for examination courses. Teachers have high expectations of the students and provide very good support and guidance for them. In return the students respect this commitment by their teachers and respond by working hard in lessons and on their course work assignments. The quality of teaching and development of students' independent study is restricted at times by the poor accommodation and shortfall of resources. The school is aware of this and making every possible effort to remedy the current shortfalls.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

### **Main school**

37. The school and its governing body plan well together to provide a good curriculum that is effectively organised to meet the needs of all pupils. At Key Stage 3, there is a good range of relevant subjects to study that includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, enhanced by drama. Pupils can study two foreign languages in Years 8 and 9, and Latin is available in Year 9 outside normal lesson time. At the time of the previous inspection, the requirements of the National Curriculum were not fully met in a number of subjects because of lack of teaching time. The school has effectively addressed this issue through extending the length of its day and restructuring the timetable, although the time allocated to ICT and physical education remains too low.
38. There has been good improvement to the Key Stage 4 curriculum since the previous inspection, when it was too narrow. It has been broadened through the introduction of vocational courses to complement GCSE provision. All pupils study a core of GCSE English, mathematics, double science, German, information technology and religious studies, together with non-examination courses in physical education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). They then choose three other subjects from a wide range of options in GCSE geography, history, music, drama, art, French or German, design and technology and physical education, and GNVQ information technology and the RSA Initial Award. The school has had the support of parents in officially withdrawing 70 pupils in each of Year 10 and 11 from the National Curriculum requirement to study technology. The school and parents agree that it would be better for pupils to study other subjects. The curriculum is not, however, fully compliant with requirements for design and technology and ICT, because pupils cannot access it effectively through all subjects.
39. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Every pupil with special educational needs has access to the full curriculum and very few have part of the National Curriculum disapplied. When this occurs in Key Stage 4, it enables these pupils to spend additional time on other GCSE subjects. The school works closely with external agencies, including the medical, educational psychology, sensory support, behaviour support and minority ethnic support services to ensure that pupils' needs are identified and met. Special educational needs staff, classroom teachers and learning support assistants work very effectively as a team. A good balance is struck between providing in-class support for pupils with special needs and withdrawing them from lessons for support, for example, in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to prior attainment.
40. The school makes a considerable effort to be inclusive, and pupils who have English as an additional language receive the same curriculum as other pupils. Pastoral support

for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good, but their academic needs are less well met.

41. The school accords a high priority to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There is a clear policy and a very effective strategy for teaching literacy across all subjects, and good provision for numeracy. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is sound and improving. A co-ordinator has been appointed and gifted and talented pupils have been clearly identified. A number of strategies have been developed to stretch higher attaining pupils, for example, summer schools, entry to national competitions and extension work in lessons.
42. The school provides a rich variety of extra-curricular activities to support pupils' learning in lessons. These include residential experiences, field trips, activity days, musical and dramatic activities, sports clubs and competitive teams, and working with and for the local community. Pupils value them and the participation rate is very high. At Key Stage 4, pupils' learning is further supported through extra lessons for those taking three sciences, history revision classes, technology project workshops, the ICT 'Open House' and the homework club. Access to the library is poor and currently does not support learning adequately. This will improve with the opening of the new library in Easter 2002.
43. The governing body's admission policy ensures the inclusion of 15 percent of pupils from faith communities other than the Christian. The policy reflects the school's very strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is a comprehensive equal opportunities policy that is disseminated well through departments and public examination results are monitored closely by gender and ethnicity. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are very well supported and their needs well met. There is off-site provision for reluctant learners, for example, at Tile Hill College, and two pupils with special needs attend a day a week at the agricultural centre to develop their basic and social skills. The governing body subsidises music tuition and extra-curricular activities for pupils who are financially disadvantaged to ensure their full inclusion in the life of the school.
44. There is a very well planned and effective programme of personal, social and health education (PHSE), which is delivered by form tutors. Ethical issues, including those pertaining to sexuality and relationships, are sensitively handled in a Christian moral framework. Pupils' personal development is also very well fostered through the awards system, assemblies, residential experiences and extensive opportunities for showing initiative and taking responsibility. The mentoring system introduced since the previous inspection ensures that there is a unified approach to monitoring both pupils' academic and personal development, and that appropriate targets for both are set and met.
45. The school provides effectively for work-related education at Key Stage 4, through vocational courses and a well-planned programme of careers education and guidance. This is delivered within the framework of the PSHE programme, which at Key Stage 4 is expanded by an additional two periods a fortnight, to allow for input from specialist staff and visitors. The school works closely with the pupils' personal adviser from the *Connexions* Careers Service of Coventry LEA to support pupils well in planning their 13+ option choices, and continuing education, training or employment post-16. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own action planning, and are given very good opportunities to experience the world of work through a well-planned programme of work experience in Year 10.
46. The school has excellent links with partner institutions in the local community that enrich the curriculum. There are named staff for primary school links in the core subjects and 72 primary schools are visited by a team of 11 staff to prepare Year 6 pupils for the transition to secondary education. *New Opportunity Fund* courses provide a bridge with primary schools in key areas. There are excellent links with local colleges of further education and with Warwick University for initial teacher training.

There are very good links with local faith communities, sporting associations and caring agencies.

### **Sixth form**

47. The sixth form curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The wide range of subjects offered at AS/A2 Level has been enhanced by vocational courses to meet the needs of a wider range of students. GNVQ courses have been successfully introduced in business studies, travel and tourism, and health and social care. Around two thirds of pupils follow a Key Skills course in Year 12, while around half follow the AS general studies course in Y13. In Year 12, re-sit examination courses are available in the core subjects.
48. Provision for students with special educational needs is very good and they achieve very well in relation to prior attainment. Very good provision for gifted and talented pupils is reflected in the high proportion of students gaining A-B grades in a wide range of subjects.
49. Students' learning benefits from the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered in the main school, many of which they take the lead in organising. In addition, they can take part in the very successful *Young Enterprise* Scheme. The modern languages department offers students two weeks' work experience in Dresden organised in conjunction with Coventry Cathedral, and an extended visit to Munich in conjunction with other schools.
50. Main school provision for PSHE is extended into the sixth form and students' personal development is also very well fostered through the tutoring and mentoring system, and very wide opportunities for taking initiative and developing leadership skills.
51. There is a very effective programme of careers education and guidance, embracing the higher education application process, alternatives to higher education, job insights, work shadowing, visits to university open days and sixth form conferences.
52. There are excellent links with community and other organisations that enhance students' learning, including, for example, with Coventry and Warwick universities. The curriculum meets external requirements, such as those of higher education. It is also responsive to local circumstances, as is well evidenced in the student apprenticeship scheme with the Jaguar car manufacturers.

### **Equal Opportunities and educational Inclusion**

53. The school has made substantial efforts to include all pupils in every aspect of school life. It meets the learning needs for virtually all pupils in the school, especially in the sixth form. However, it does not fully meet all the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language, due to insufficient monitoring and lack of extra support staff. There is a programme of monitoring for all pupils to help track progress and ensure they reach their individual targets. Good relationships exist between the pupils and staff and between the pupils themselves. The well-being of all pupils is important to the school. The school encourages pupils from other faiths to apply for admission and successfully supports and integrates some pupils excluded from other schools. There is racial harmony throughout the school and good relationships between all social groups.
54. There is a very strong commitment to the provision of equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum with a clear emphasis on social inclusion. There is no formal GCSE entry bar to the sixth form: it is open to all pupils for whom there is an appropriate course and who show a commitment to work. Over 80 per cent of pupils from the main school choose to enter the sixth form. Students value the social, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of the sixth form as enriching their experience.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

### Main school

55. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' spiritual development. It is a worshipping community and its daily life and work are informed by the experience of a relationship with God through prayer. Pupils assemble twice weekly for worship in their year groups and on other days meet in their tutor groups for prayer and reflection. The great majority of acts of worship are Christian in character, but the school places a high value on the religious experience of other faith communities.
56. Assemblies have excellent Christian and spiritual content. There is much excellent practice as, for example, in the involvement of pupils in their planning and delivery, the use of visiting speakers, music, and biblical texts and prayer well-linked to thought provoking addresses on relevant themes. This was very well evidenced during the inspection week in, for example, pupil performance of music and song in Years 8, 9 and 10 assemblies, and a Year 9 assembly led by a visiting speaker from the Coventry Mission. Pupils respond very positively to such opportunities for worship, listening attentively and joining with respect in prayer and reflection, as was well seen in a Year 10 assembly linking Remembrance Sunday with Christian teaching. Each year group has a Chaplain attached who normally leads worship once a week.
57. Form tutor time also does much to promote pupils' spiritual development through very good opportunities for prayer or reflection. For example, during the inspection Year 7 pupils held a discussion on prayer for others and then wrote their own prayers using suggestions from the class.
58. In addition to these daily acts of worship, the Cross of Nails Litany is observed weekly, there are termly celebrations of the Eucharist in year groups, whole school acts of worship planned by the Chaplaincy Team on special occasions, and several major acts of worship during the year. These are the Commemoration Service held in Holy Trinity church, the Celebration of Blue Coat and Prize Giving in the Cathedral or Methodist Central Hall, the Christmas Carol Service in the Cathedral, the Easter Celebration, the Ascension Day service and the end of summer term Celebration.
59. Many subjects promote pupils' spiritual development in lessons, and particularly religious education, history, geography, science, music, art, and drama. For example, in religious education pupils explore worship, pilgrimage and the concept of the sanctity of life. Music constantly addresses the spiritual, whether in lessons or in reflection and prayer on residential visits. The importance of worship and the spiritual life is written into the PSHE programme. There is a flourishing Christian Union and a prayer support group. The school's provision for spiritual development is much enriched by its extensive links with local faith communities.
60. The school makes very good provision for the moral development of pupils. It has clear values, rooted in Christian teaching, that inform all aspects of its life and work. It has a clear behaviour, anti-bullying and anti-racism policies, and effective strategies, including both rewards and sanctions, for encouraging positive behaviour. Assemblies make an important contribution to developing pupils' moral awareness. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils and the majority of pupils behave very well.
61. The school encourages pupils to give practical expression to the values of caring in very good support for a wide range of charities, which they choose through their Year Councils. For example, Year 8 and 9 are currently supporting the education of a Ugandan and a Kenyan pupil. The School Council determines the charities supported through termly non-uniform days, for example, UNICEF and Comic Relief. Recently, £1200 has been raised for the school's link school in Bethlehem, while a music group has raised £300 for a local hospice.

62. A very well planned programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils very good opportunities to explore a wide range of moral issues, including those relating to health, substance abuse, relationships and prejudice. Challenging issues are sensitively explored in a Christian moral framework. Many other subjects also address moral issues in lessons. For example, geography challenges pupils with ethical issues relating to development, population and sustainable resources, while history confronts them with the moral dilemmas arising from conflict between nation states, and anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. In English, they explore issues relating to prejudice through texts such as *The Merchant of Venice*.
63. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. It publicly recognises their achievements in all areas of its life and raises their self - esteem through a very well planned awards system, including credits, merits, bronze, silver, gold and platinum commendations, and letters of special mention. Pupils' achievements are regularly celebrated by their peers and teachers in assemblies.
64. The school gives pupils excellent opportunities to develop their social skills. All pupils have the opportunity to benefit from a residential experience during their time in the school. The wide range of sports clubs and teams, outdoor and adventurous activities, Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, field trips and educational visits do much to develop their skills of living and working together. Most subjects provide pupils with very good opportunities for developing the skills of collaborative working in pairs and small groups.
65. The school also provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn to take responsibility and show initiative through, for example, the School Council, where they have been able to make positive changes in areas such as outside amenities and girls' uniform. Such opportunities extend to the daily life of the school, where pupils prepare their own assemblies, act as guides at open evenings and are on duty in reception.
66. Social issues are very well addressed in the programme of personal, social and health education, including those relating to citizenship, human rights, politics, the environment and parenting. Cross-curricular days at Key Stage 3 have social themes, for example, law and order in Year 8 and Human Rights in Year 9. There are Magistrate mock trials and a Key Stage 4 mock parliament, with visits to Westminster. Pupils are challenged with social issues in other subjects, for example, in the study of rites of passage in religious education, people in the workplace in business studies and in history, the human cost of progress.
67. The school makes very good overall provision for pupils' cultural development. It affords them excellent opportunities for developing skills in the creative and expressive arts. For example, the highly successful choir has performed at Hereford, Wells, Worcester and York Cathedrals, and at Westminster Abbey. Pupils can also develop skills in instrumental music, through individual tuition, and membership of a wide range of bands and ensembles. Bi-annual school productions afford opportunities for developing skills in music, dance and drama, and performing for an audience. Pupils' cultural awareness is raised through visits to theatres, museums and art galleries.
68. The school promotes pupils' awareness of other European cultures through holidays and visits abroad, while a yearly cruise to the Holy Land introduces them to Near Eastern culture. A range of subjects raise pupils' awareness of cultures other than the Western European. For example, religious education introduces pupils to the major world faiths. Music raises their awareness of music from other cultures, such as Latin American, Caribbean and African. Food technology uses recipes from other cultures and explores dietary rules and customs, and textiles traditional dress and colours, for example, in Asian weddings. History introduces pupils to the contribution of Islamic culture to the development of contemporary Western civilisation. The school could, however, do more to celebrate its cultural and religious diversity in display, where opportunities are missed to enrich the learning environment.



## **Sixth form**

69. The school makes excellent provision for the spiritual development of students, through their participation in the spiritual life of the main school, enriched by dedicated activities. Students meet twice weekly for worship as a sixth form and on other mornings in their tutor groups for prayer and reflection. Representatives join with main school pupils for the Friday Cross of Nails Litany and celebrate the Eucharist with staff in the lunch hour. Students also make an excellent contribution to the spiritual life of the main school. For example, during the inspection a Year 13 student led a Year 8 assembly, speaking confidently about his faith.
70. There is very good provision for students' moral development. The religious education department makes a strong contribution through the study of ethical issues relating to medicine and genetics in the Year 12 key skills programme, and in the Year 13 AS general studies course. Students are often challenged with moral issues in other subjects; for example, history explores the causes, nature and consequences of religious change and conflict. Relationships are excellent.
71. The school makes excellent provision for students' social development, giving them particularly good opportunities to learn to show initiative, take responsibility and develop leadership skills in work with main school pupils. There is a Head Boy and Girl, with deputies. Students run the School Council and the Christian Union, and organise charitable and social activities. Year 12 students mentor Year 7 pupils and run their Credits system, following through with them into Year 8. They support special needs pupils with their reading. Students also benefit from exploring social issues in the PSHE programme, run by form tutors with support from outside speakers, and are challenged by them in a range of subjects.
72. Provision for students' cultural development is very good. They benefit from, and often take a leading role in, the main school provision for the creative and expressive arts. The study of German is enriched by two weeks' work experience in Dresden. Students value the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity of the sixth form and relationships are excellent.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

### **Main school - *pastoral support***

73. The school has a very effective pastoral system that is a strength. Teachers know pupils well and have a very good understanding of their needs. A caring, Christian ethos permeates the school. Pupils are valued and respect is shown for what they have to say. Form tutors often deal with pupils' concerns and heads of year are fully involved, ensuring that pupils' individual needs are met. There are good links between pastoral and academic staff, ensuring that practical help is provided for those who are experiencing difficulties. Instances were seen during the inspection where staff dealt sensitively with pupils who were concerned and procedures are in place to ensure that all pupils have a member of staff whom they can approach for help and guidance. Although morning registration and tutor time is used well to provide personal support for the younger pupils, this time is not used so effectively as they move through the school. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds feel that they are well supported and this has a positive effect on their learning.
74. The school does not have all of the appropriate procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils and does not fulfil statutory requirements in this matter. Although most of the deficiencies of the last report have been fully addressed, despite the efforts of the school the dust extractor in the design and technology department has once again become potentially hazardous. Chairs are stacked in the gymnasium in a way that could cause an injury to the pupils. The school does not carry out and record necessary risk assessments in subject areas. Although safe practices were observed in lessons and around the school, the school should take urgent steps to ensure that it

fulfils its legal obligations in matters of health and safety. First aid arrangements are in place and effective. Child protection procedures are in order and local guidelines followed. There is good contact with supporting agencies.

75. Good behaviour is expected, promoted and achieved. There is a clear system for monitoring instances of unacceptable behaviour that is well understood by pupils. The school takes very seriously any reports of bullying or harassment and they are dealt with quickly and effectively. In accordance with the recommendations of the last report, anti-bullying procedures have been clarified. Incidents involving racist behaviour or language are rare, but when they occur are recorded by staff. Attendance is monitored well, both at whole school level and for individuals, resulting in very high attendance rates.
76. There are very good links with primary schools, and the co-ordinator for special educational needs attends, where possible, the annual review of those pupils. This ensures that their needs are fully met. With the support of the careers service, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or work
77. The support and provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is under-developed. The specialist teacher provided by the authority assesses pupils and provides good support to those with the greatest need. Beyond that, no extra support is given to pupils by the school. There is a clear rationale to the allocation of support, which is to those at the earliest stages of language acquisition in Year 11, then to pupils in Year 7, mainly in English, mathematics and science. The aim is for these pupils to be seen at least once a week. Subject teachers know the names of these pupils, but little else, and are, therefore, unable to provide the continuing support that they need. The provision of such information is essential to enable them to continue to make progress. Those at the stage of 'appearing to be coping' seldom progress further, and, therefore, do not reach their full academic potential. For example, a Year 12 pupil was encouraged to make comments in a design and technology lesson. He was able to speak fluently, but clearly struggled with understanding the topic. Bilingual dictionaries are available for departments, and these pupils are encouraged to take a GCSE in their mother tongue. The school does not provide support assistants, who could assist them to make further progress. In addition, the specialist teacher is not provided with a base from which to work. The result is that these pupils are unable to access the help that they need, for example, with understanding homework set. A lack of a learning base also does not allow those on the higher levels to receive the intensive language support that they need to access more complex and technical language. This would enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.

### **Sixth Form - *Advice, support and guidance***

78. Students in the sixth form are very well supported by committed and caring staff who work hard to ensure that individual needs are met. Staff make themselves available to students as often as possible, ensuring that students have good access to their tutors. Students appreciate the care and concern shown to them and report that they feel secure and valued. They feel that their tutors genuinely care for them and want them to do well. They are provided with impartial advice regarding courses followed and careers guidance. Tutors ensure that students are fully supported when making choices about higher education and completing applications.

### **Assessment**

#### **Main School**

79. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the previous inspection and are now good overall. The collection and analysis of assessment data have improved. The school makes good use of benchmark data, the results of standardised tests and public examination results to analyse pupils' performance and set targets for achievement.

80. Pupils are formally assessed for achievement and effort at least four times annually, with assessments being related to National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 and GCSE grades at Key Stage 4. Assessments are submitted to the school's assessment co-ordinator in uniform fashion. Practice is much more consistent than at the previous inspection, with the exception of geography, where Key Stage 3 assessments are not adequately related to National Curriculum levels.
81. Good use is made of assessment data in target setting for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to set their own targets in lessons, and with their subject teachers at the time of formal assessments. Overall targets are set jointly with parents at the time of annual reports. There is a clear policy for marking, which is focused on raising achievement and guiding teacher planning. There is a consistent approach to correcting spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax that helps to develop pupils' literacy skills.
82. Good use is made of assessment data to inform planning at whole school and subject level. For example, its use to identify weaknesses in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 led to the introduction of vocational courses, and it informs pupil choice in the 'disapplication' process.
83. The school provides effective support and advice for pupils informed by monitoring of their academic progress. There are personal review sessions informed by assessment data in all years, which form part of the Records of Achievement process. At Key Stage 4, pupils also have two annual mentoring sessions with their form tutors. The school has identified pupils on the borderline of four GCSE passes and the senior management team regularly reviews their progress. The daily meeting of the senior management team and year heads also reviews progress.
84. The school has very effective systems for assessing and monitoring pupils with special educational needs. These include a variety of tests and effective monitoring by teachers. Assessment takes place on entry to the school and the results of tests throughout the school are used to measure pupils' progress. The use of weekly reports ensures that pupils who have emotional or behavioural problems are identified early. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs have their needs fully met as outlined in their statement. Assessment for pupils with English as an additional language takes place on their admission to the school, in order that support is provided according to need.
85. Annual reports give pupils and parents a good idea of strengths and weaknesses, and targets for improvement, and give pupils a good opportunity to evaluate their own performance. Pupils' Records of Achievement effectively complement the very good academic and personal guidance they receive.

## **Sixth Form**

86. There are effective procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress, which are being further developed to take into account the demands of the new AS/A2 examination structure. The school makes good use of benchmark data and public examination results to analyse and monitor students' performance and set targets for improvement.
87. There is effective advice and support for students, informed by monitoring of their academic progress, and diagnosis of their individual learning needs, through formal mentoring by form tutors and senior management, and at individual subject level. For example, the performance of individual students is well tracked in biology and appropriate targets set. It is, however, less secure in physics, where procedures are sound, but the needs of quieter students are sometimes overlooked.

88. Good use is made of assessment data to inform planning at both whole sixth form and subject level, as is well evidenced in the introduction of vocational courses to meet the needs of differing groups of pupils.
89. Reporting procedures are being modified and in future there will be October and February reports in Years 12 and 13, which will give an estimated examination grade based on GCSE performance, standardised data analysis and form tutor analysis. There will also be a 'traditional' summer term report for Year 12 that will include overall targets.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

90. The school has maintained the very effective partnership with parents, leading to a shared commitment to succeed. Parents are very supportive of the school and their views are very positive in almost all aspects of the school's work. They are especially pleased with the teaching, behaviour, expectations and management. Almost all parents feel that their children like school. Areas about which some parents have reservations are the amount of homework provided, information on progress and extra curricular activities provided. Inspectors found homework to be sufficient and relevant, information on progress to be mostly satisfactory and the provision of extra-curricular activities, including visits, to be very good.
91. Most students in the sixth form express very positive views about the school. They value the very good relationships with staff and the support they receive from them. The aspect of the school that they feel could be improved is the accommodation. Inspectors fully agree with these views.
92. The school seeks the views of parents and has conducted its own survey. The results of this survey were very positive and the school has taken action to address any concerns. Information about the school and its work is mostly very good, but the annual governors' report to parents has insufficient information about the provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those with disabilities. In these respects it does not meet legal requirements.
93. Information on pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and annual written reports to parents are now personal and informative. They now fully meet legal requirements. Some reports are not produced before the parents' consultation evening. Although parents can request an opportunity to discuss the report, some feel that the timing of the consultation evening could be revised to provide them with more detailed information, but inspection evidence suggests that parents are well served by the school. The school takes adequate steps to ensure that all parents, including the parents of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, are kept fully informed. Every October, there is a special consultation evening for parents of students identified as under-achieving in their school assessments and examinations.
94. Parents' support of their children's learning is reflected in the very high attendance rates achieved by the school. Parents also raise considerable sums of money to provide extra resources. They also provide good support on out-of-school visits and concerts.
95. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved at all stages of their children's progress through the school. All parents and carers attend the annual reviews and contribute to the targets set. Parents know that they can contact the special needs co-ordinator before and after school and at parents' evenings.
96. The school has good arrangements for parents of pupils who have English as an additional language. If necessary, letters are translated and an interpreter provided for

parents' evenings. This, combined with personal phone calls made by form tutors, has been successful in raising the numbers of parents who attend.

97. The partnership between parents and the school is very effective and makes a good contribution to the work of the school. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

### **Main school**

98. The previous inspection report was very critical about several aspects of the school's management. These aspects have now been addressed and the quality of management in the school is very good. The headteacher has been in school for less than three years and has demonstrated outstanding leadership. He has a clear vision for the future of the school and is determined to ensure a continual improvement to the quality of education provided for the pupils and students. The school has a clear set of aims and objectives that are expressed in the school's mission statement. The school is successful in implementing its aims to ensure the educational and personal progress of its pupils and sixth form students. The school has a very strong spiritual ethos and this permeates all aspects of school life.
99. One person alone cannot provide the necessary support for teachers to promote consistent improvement. In this respect the school is well served by a hard working, cohesive and dedicated senior management team. Since the last inspection, there have been very good improvements in many important aspects of school life. The senior management team is aware of the weaknesses that have to be addressed.
100. The management structure is now far more effective and the school has established clear roles within the senior and middle management team. The work of all academic and pastoral managers is supported through an appropriate structure of meetings that ensure good communication. The heads of department are efficient and have ensured improvements have taken place within their departments, although management needs to be strengthened in design and technology, physical education and more support given to information and communication technology. The school has been successful in gaining and maintaining a number of important management accreditations. These include Investors in People, Art Mark Gold status and an 'Achievement' Award. The school has also submitted a bid to gain 'Arts College' status.
101. At the time of the previous inspection the communication systems between the governors and senior managers were under-developed. This context has now changed and communication is very good. Consequently, the governors are now aware of their responsibilities to meet all statutory requirements and for the overall performance of the school. However, currently, they do not fully comply with all curriculum requirements in design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education in the sixth form, and there are a few minor omissions on the annual report to parents. In addition, risk assessments are not always recorded in sufficient detail. The governing body has a strategic view of the school's development due to the active involvement of many governors who are regularly in school. Governors are confident about fulfilling their role. They are committed to the school's improvement and work hard in well-organised committee structures to ensure continuous development. The governors are well informed about the school's successes and areas for development.
102. The governors maintain close monitoring of finances and make informed decisions based on accurate budget information. The chair of finances works closely with the finance officer to keep track of all expenditure. Both senior managers and governors are clear about the cost of developments and the identified targets in the development plan. The school applies best value principles effectively. Currently, there is a substantial amount of money in reserve. This has been raised by parents and is to be spent on building and equipping the new library facility.

103. The quality of the school's development planning and the systems for monitoring have improved considerably since the last inspection and are good in many departments. The extensive school development plan has been written after a process of review, involving the staff and the governors. The school's development plan identifies appropriate targets to raise attainment based on regular review procedures. The planning is linked to staff appraisal and their training needs. The school is in a good position to maintain the current high level of pupil achievement and secure further improvements.
104. The area of special educational needs is very well led and managed by an experienced and committed co-ordinator. There is a very clear rationale to the allocation of support. The specified needs of the pupils with statements are first met. Priority is then given to Years 10 and 11 pupils, then to English, mathematics and science in Years 7,8 and 9. Support is still given in other subjects according to the needs of pupils. This organisation has the flexibility to meet needs as they arise. Withdrawal is kept to the minimum. The new 'Progress' programme takes place outside lessons and specific support in English takes place in the silent reading or basic skills lessons. All departments are kept fully informed about the pupils that they teach and copies of their individual educational plans are provided. These are excellent, with full details of the nature of the pupils' difficulties as a background to the targets set. Provision by the school includes support for specific needs. For example, the school operates physiotherapy sessions for pupils with muscular problems, which is highly successful. The governor for special educational needs is kept fully informed about this area of provision. The school receives excellent support from a variety of agencies, including those for autism, behaviour, speech and language and sensory support.

### *Staffing*

105. The school's recent receipt of the *Investors In People* Award reflects its very good arrangements for the induction, appraisal and professional development of its teaching and non-teaching staff.
106. There are clear policies and effective strategies for the induction of teachers new to the profession and to the school, which are extended to support and ancillary staff. The school's policy for appraisal and performance management meets statutory requirements and there is a voluntary system of appraisal for non-teaching staff. Staff feel ownership of the policy, which was arrived at collaboratively through training sessions.
107. Provision for the professional development of staff is very good. There are effective procedures for identifying whole school, departmental and individual training needs. Training is very well planned and matched to need, and outcomes are effectively disseminated and rigorously evaluated. The school is very well supported by the Coventry local education authority, for example, in the provision of training courses in literacy, numeracy, and gifted and talented pupils and students. The professional development needs of non-teaching staff are also well met.
108. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training. It has a well-established relationship with Warwick University, and trains six students a year in English, science, ICT, history and religious education.
109. The school has a co-ordinator for special educational needs and a committed team of 15 education assistants. One of the assistants is paid for by the school, that shows the commitment the school has to this area of provision. They attend relevant courses supported by the school, such as those dealing with dyslexia or autism.
110. The school has sufficient appropriately qualified staff to teach the curriculum effectively and to meet the needs of pupils and sixth form students. The high proportion of very experienced teachers ensures continuity of experience for pupils and students. There is a very strong team ethos within the staff, underpinned by a shared commitment to

the school's values and aims, which has a positive impact on standards in all areas. The school is also very well served by its support and administrative staff, who provide very good support to pupils and students, teachers, parents and governors.

### *Resources*

111. The expansion of the school and sixth form, introduction of new courses and changing examination requirements at AS/A2 levels in the sixth form have inevitably placed considerable pressure on the school's learning resources. However, the school has planned well to address the issues, and there has been a significant improvement in the overall level of learning resources since the previous inspection.
112. At subject level, resources are good in history, art and physical education, unsatisfactory in design and technology, and elsewhere satisfactory. At a whole school level, resources have been improved for information and communication technology, but are still inadequate in most subjects. The opening of the new library in Easter 2002 will remedy the current very poor library provision for pupils and sixth form students alike. Supporting teaching and learning with appropriate resources has a high priority in the school's development planning.

### *Accommodation*

113. The school has made significant improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection, including the replacement of all of the windows in the main school and the refurbishment of science laboratories. Disabled access has been improved and a new library/resource centre is currently being constructed. The school has worked hard to secure the necessary funding for these improvements and has been successful within the existing financial constraints in improving the quality of the accommodation. The school is very aware of the many deficiencies that still exist in the accommodation in most subject areas and has taken these into consideration in development planning.
114. The popularity of the school and the increase in pupil numbers have resulted in overcrowding and this leads to the restriction of learning activities, for example, in music and modern foreign languages. There remains a shortage of space in science laboratories and preparation rooms are small. Only the great care taken by staff when moving equipment prevents health and safety problems. In design and technology, specialist accommodation is outdated. The special educational needs department is situated on the first floor, restricting access for disabled pupils. The teacher who supports pupils with English as an additional language has no base in the school. The library is currently inadequate but accommodation for careers education is good.
115. Classroom space is not well used for exhibiting pupils' work and many areas in school are not enhanced by displays, appearing uninspiring and dull. The accommodation for the area of special educational needs is inadequate. It consists of one small classroom, which is partly divided to provide a separate area for individual tuition. This is an unsatisfactory arrangement, for often both areas are in use and other facilities are difficult to find. Withdrawal sessions are also held in unsuitable rooms, such as those used for design and technology. In order that pupils benefit from specialists' input, a separate quiet area is essential. The accommodation is situated on the first floor, which would make access by disabled pupils difficult. The school has access for disabled pupils, parents and visitors on the ground floor of the buildings.

### **Sixth form**

116. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good and have ensured maintenance of high standards during a sustained period of rapid expansion. Pressures on accommodation and resources caused by the growth in numbers have been well managed within the circumstances and the school is aware of the need to address issues relating to large class sizes in some subjects. There has been a strong focus on raising standards through the monitoring of the quality of teaching and

students' progress. Equal emphasis has been placed on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, informed by the Christian values of the whole school. There is a clear vision of the educational direction the sixth form should take if standards are to be further raised. The sixth form is cost effective overall. Examination groups vary considerably in size from some that are too large to others that have a limited take up by students in Year 13.

117. Accommodation in the sixth form building is unsatisfactory. Numbers have increased to such an extent that there is inadequate space for students. During lesson time, students need to either vacate the communal area or remain exceptionally quiet. There are too few classrooms and no quiet area for students to study. The existing accommodation is shabby and unattractive.

118. Value for money

Taking into account:

- the progress made by pupils and the high standards achieved;
- the improvements since the previous inspection;
- the good quality of teaching and learning;
- the arrangements for personal development;
- the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils;
- the leadership and management;

the school is judged to give good value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

119. In order to further improve the standards of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

### Main School

- 1) improve the standards and provision for information and communication technology\*\* by:
- increasing the allocation of curriculum time in Year 8 and for GCSE examination courses;
  - providing more computers to ensure greater use by pupils across the curriculum;
  - increasing the rigour of monitoring the effectiveness of ICT;
  - improving the assessment procedures to track pupils' progress;
  - further develop teachers' expertise in other subjects through training;
  - providing additional technical support to manage the computer network;
  - ensuring statutory requirements are fully met at Key Stage 4;
  - smaller class sizes in Years 8 to 11 would improve learning and make better use of accommodation;

(paragraphs 174-187)

- 2) raise attainment and the provision for physical education by:
- improving the leadership and management of the department by raising expectations and sharing the good management practice that already exists in other departments;
  - establishing a programme of regular review and monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching throughout the department and the quality of pupils' work and learning;
  - establishing systems to assess pupils' work accurately, setting pupils challenging targets and giving early support when any under-achievement is diagnosed;
  - increasing the allocation of time given to the subject;

(paragraphs 210-217)

- 3) raise the standards achieved by pupils with English as an additional language by:
- ensuring subject teachers have all relevant information about their language targets;
  - providing additional teaching support for those with the greatest need;
  - establishing a teaching and administrative base for staff and pupils;
  - analysing and tracking pupils' progress in order to set them challenging targets;

(paragraphs 12, 33, 40, 77 and 114)

- 4) ensure all statutory requirements outlined in this report are fully met:
- in design and technology in Key Stages 3 and 4;
  - in information and communication technology in Key Stage 4;
  - in religious education in the sixth form;
  - including the other minor requirements highlighted throughout this report;

(paragraphs 38 and 101)

### Sixth form

- 5) improve the quality of accommodation and resources;\*\*  
6) the time allocated to examination courses and size of teaching groups.\*\*  
(paragraphs 111, 117, 221, 242 and 253 )

## OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Governors may consider including the following less important issues in their action plan:

- promote more independence of learning by pupils and improve their research skills;
- enhance the learning environment through improving the quality of display throughout the school;
- utilise the existing accommodation to best effect;
- use tutor time more effectively to achieve the planned programme.

\*\* The school has already identified these as items for improvement.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

## Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	127
	Sixth form	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		80

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
<b>Years 7– 11</b>							
Number	6	29	57	30	5	0	0
Percentage	5	23	44	24	4	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	4	17	30	11	0	0	0
Percentage	6	28	48	18	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

## Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	915	281
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	72	0

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	31	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	145	13

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	229

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	7.7

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	98	88	184

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	80	77
	Girls	82	66	65
	Total	169	146	142
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	91 (72)	79 (69)	76 (69)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	60 (35)	54 (42)	40 (37)
	National	32 (28)	43 (41)	34 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	73	69
	Girls	79	60	66
	Total	157	133	135
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (76)	78 (69)	76 (68)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (39)	48 (38)	46 (40)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	75	98	173

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	48	74	75
	Girls	66	94	96
	Total	114	168	171
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	65.9 (67.5)	97.1 (96.3)	98.8 (99.4)
	National	49.8 (49.2)	86.6 (86.8)	95.7 (95.5)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	48.9 (48)
	National	39.1 (38.9)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and The percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	7	100
	National		N/A

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	115	113	228

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	16.5	18.6	17.6 (21.5)	1.7	2	1.8 (3.5)
National	19.2	19.8	19.5 (19.3)	3.1	3.4	3.2 (3.3)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	25	80
	National		N/A

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	17
Black – African heritage	14
Black – other	2
Indian	153
Pakistani	27
Bangladeshi	12
Chinese	6
White	829
Any other minority ethnic group	61

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	6	0
Pakistani	4	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	31	0
Other minority ethnic groups	7	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	67.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7:1

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	580

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.6
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	25.1
Key Stage 4	24.0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	2,852,519
Total expenditure	2,772,867
Expenditure per pupil	2,638
Balance brought forward from previous year	113,109
Balance carried forward to next year	192,761

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	?

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 33.6%

Number of questionnaires sent out	1196
Number of questionnaires returned	402

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	4	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	40	3	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	51	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	53	11	1	1
The teaching is good.	50	43	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	42	11	3	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	30	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	40	9	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	57	34	3	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	37	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	40	7	1	10

### Other issues raised by parents

- There were differences in the opportunities for boys and girls to participate in extra-curricular activities. There were more opportunities for the girls. .
- The amount of curriculum time for re-sits of GCSE in year 12/13 are too low (1 hour)

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

### **ENGLISH**

Overall, the quality of provision in English is very good.

#### **Strengths**

- Results are consistently well above national averages. Pupils are achieving well.
- Teaching is good, with many very good features and no significant weaknesses (an improvement since the last inspection).
- All pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning, and work hard.
- Provision in drama, including the teaching, enhances the quality of provision in English.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Developmental planning with a closer focus on specific strategies to raise standards (this has not improved enough since the last inspection).
- The proportion of pupils gaining the highest possible examination grade.
- Provision of information and communication technology and for research/independent study.
- The deployment of rooms for teaching English.

120. The standards of attainment on entry to the school are above the national averages. They are well above average when measured by the Key Stage 3 national tests, taken when pupils are aged 14 years. In both 2000 and 2001, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well above average, and for those achieving beyond that level it was also well above the national figures. Boys as well as girls do better than average. Pupils' overall performance in English is better than in mathematics and science. Results are well above the expected averages for similar schools. At the time of the last inspection, standards when pupils are aged 14 were well above the national averages. These high standards have been maintained. Both lower and higher attaining pupils now achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the provision made for them, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

121. Most pupils make good progress between the ages of 14 and 16, and the GCSE results are consistently well above the national average. The 2000 and 2001 results have improved since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in 2000 was about 20 per cent above the average for all schools and compare very favourably with similar schools. This improved further in 2001. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve well. Pupils' performance in English was not significantly different to the average of the other subjects they entered. Boys as well as girls performed well above the national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades of A is above average, but the number of pupils attaining A\* is not as high as it should be. This is the only disappointment and the department is aware of the strategies they can use to address this issue. Almost all pupils gained a grade within the A\*-G range. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the provision made for them, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

122. During the inspection, the standard of work seen in all lessons was high and reflected the good achievement made by pupils. By Year 9, pupils' speaking and listening, as well as their thinking, skills are well above average with effective use of 'mind mapping' and 'brainstorming' activities in many lessons. Reading is also well above average with regular opportunities in lessons for focused reading, as well as the critical evaluation of texts. Writing is above average, with all pupils having very effective note taking skills, which become increasingly helpful as pupils move through the school. By Year 11, boys and girls of all prior attainments continue to make good progress in reading and writing, but especially in speaking and listening. These are above average for those

pupils who study drama. Their level of independence also improves and they approaching their work with maturity.

123. All teachers require high levels of attention and participation. They involve the pupils and usually manage the classroom effectively. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the provision made for them, as do those identified by the school as the ablest. From Year 7 on all pupils are taught in classes organised only broadly by prior attainment. The lower and average attaining pupils especially benefit from these arrangements. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some older boys did not make the progress they should.
124. The teaching of English is good overall. The, overall, quality is improved since the last inspection and all of the shortcomings identified have been addressed. There have been several changes in staff since then. Many very good lessons were seen during the inspection. Some excellent features were also seen. The consistency of the teaching is a significant strength, with good teaching lessons seen throughout the school, including drama, which is taught as a separate subject.
125. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of the way pupils develop basic skills are good. Lesson planning, including for the development of oracy, is good and lessons routinely involve a great deal of genuine discussion. Teachers usually enjoy very good relationships with pupils and since they engage the pupils in purposeful, clear and interesting tasks, they respond very well, as when Year 11 pupils used 'Barbie' to learn about stereotyping in advertising. The department does not use information and communication technology on a regular and planned basis. Standards of literacy are very good and teachers' expectations in this are usually high. Formal assessment, including for those with special educational needs, is good. Marking is more variable, but is sound overall and usually informs pupils of what they need to do to improve. Teachers respect pupils' efforts. Reports on progress over the year are satisfactory. Pupils value homework and this is regularly set, making a positive contribution to the good progress made by individuals. The organisation of classrooms is poor partly because teachers give it inadequate attention, but more significantly due to the very poor standard of accommodation, which does nothing to contribute to the high standards seen of both work and behaviour.
126. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good and often excellent, especially in Years 9 and 10. All lessons are characterised by an atmosphere of purposeful activity. There are many opportunities for collaborative work and pupils are not over-reliant on the teacher. All pupils are well used to taking notes and do so without any fuss. Teachers trust them to do this, which means that they can focus on more important things.
127. The management of the subject is good. The high standards achieved so far are still improving and since the last inspection good progress has been made in tackling the shortcomings then identified.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

128. In English, pupils are taught in broadly based ability groups from Year 7 onwards and so standards of literacy vary between classes. Overall, standards are above average. Pupils apply their literacy skills well in other subjects, when required. Literacy is well co-ordinated. While provision has been audited for the younger pupils, it has yet to be formally monitored and evaluated throughout the school.
129. In information and communications technology, pupils in Year 8 use web-publishing tools. In design and technology, an appropriate emphasis is placed on the correct spelling of technical vocabulary. In Year 7 they develop their literacy skills during a whole day focused on 'newspapers', while Year 9 pupils explore similar issues during a 'Citizenship day'. In science, younger pupils use writing frames, while in mathematics and modern foreign languages they use vocabulary or grammar books. In geography and history, strong emphasis is placed on key words and spelling, and these are also



well displayed in modern foreign languages. In religious education, the younger pupils do discursive writing. In music, written text is analysed and pupils are required to give attention to the purpose of their writing. Sixth form students produce their own notes of good quality from listening to teachers in English, biology and chemistry. Teachers encourage all pupils to work neatly and give good guidelines on presentation in science and modern foreign languages.

130. Information to parents (in the monthly 'Headlines') also contains good examples of how the pupils' literacy skills are developing well. For example, in two issues this term the impact of literacy on standards in history and design and technology have been highlighted. One area for development is to implement the literacy strategy in conjunction with all of the other curriculum initiatives in Key Stage 3.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

### **Strengths**

- Pupils' attainment at both key stages is well above the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitude to their work in mathematics are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good in both key stages.
- Teachers have a commitment to very high achievement for all pupils.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The use of plenary sessions, as part of the National Numeracy Strategy, is under-developed.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in mathematics.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and there is too little pupils' work displayed.

131. When they come to the school, pupils' standards in mathematics are just above the national average, although this varies slightly from year to year. They make good progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 11 are working well above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good headway, with nearly all pupils achieving at least a grade G in the 2001 GCSE examinations.

132. Pupils' attainment in 2001 mathematics tests at the end of Year 9 is well above the national average. Results have improved every year since 1996 with a slight dip in 2000. The results in 2001 improved markedly because two extra mathematics sets were created in Year 9 and staff were deployed more judiciously. Pupils' performance in tests is above that for similar schools. Pupils achieve better results than in science, but not as well as in English. In 2001, boys' results were better than girls, but there was little difference in earlier years. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\* to C is well above the national average, although results were slightly better in 2000 than in 2001. Boys performed better than girls in 2001, but less well in 2000. All pupils, bar one, attained a grade A\* to G in 2001 – an excellent result.

133. Inspection evidence shows that, overall, attainment by the end of Year 9 is well above the national average. More able pupils confidently apply their understanding of direct and inverse proportion to a variety of problems. For example, encouraged by the teacher, top set Year 9 pupils seek out an alternative short-cut approach rather than blindly using the unitary method on every occasion. They also understand and use positive and negative powers and determine interior angles of polygons. Middle ability pupils have well-established algebraic skills, but are relatively less secure in geometric work. Lower ability pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of number in their work on odd, even, square and negative numbers. A few pupils need help to complete the multiplication of a two-digit number by a one-digit number using a written method. They can draw and interpret a range of basic statistical graphs and diagrams.

134. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is well above the national average. Pupils in the top set are particularly strong in algebra, nearly all skilfully factorising quadratic expressions and the best solving simultaneous quadratic and linear equations graphically. They use the sine rule to solve acute angled triangles, calculate the standard deviation of a distribution and use algebra effectively to investigate magic squares. Middle ability pupils understand and use bearings competently to describe direction and they have a good understanding of probability in practical examples. Lower ability pupils investigate patterns of triangular and prime numbers on a 100 square, but do not provide a cogent written commentary explaining their conclusions. They solve linear algebraic equations and interpret a line graph. A few pupils struggle with real-life examples involving decimals.
135. Pupils' attitude to work and their behaviour are very good in nearly all lessons. They show considerable respect for their teachers, attempt class-work tasks very conscientiously and are fully involved in class discussions. Pupils show commendable initiative, typified by the way middle ability Year 11 pupils collected extension worksheets from the front of the class without prompting from the teacher, once they finished their textbook tasks. Pupils' diligence of this kind enables lessons to move seamlessly without any untoward hiccups. Relationships between pupils themselves and between teachers and pupils are very good so that pupils make the most of what teachers have to offer and achieve well. For example, lower set Year 10 pupils made rapid headway in their perception of transformation geometry in a very well taught lesson where the teacher had established very good rapport through sensitive and adept use of praise.
136. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages. Teachers have very secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and are enthusiastic about the subject. This brushes off on the pupils, enabling them not only to make steady progress in their grasp of mathematics but to enjoy the subject themselves. Most teachers incorporate challenging questions to sharpen pupils' knowledge and understanding and take trouble to provide well-planned exposition that clarifies and explains the topic that is being studied. For example, in a very good Year 11 revision lesson on factorising quadratic expressions the teacher, clearly enjoying teaching, brought a potentially boring topic to life by incisive explanation interspersed with quick-fire questions of the pupils. The pupils paid rapt attention and were fully involved in the to-and-fro of discussion, thus making very good progress in their appreciation of the topic.
137. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, overall, but there are weaknesses. Key words are occasionally stressed in lessons, but could be more prominent. The department has started to include methods from the National Numeracy Strategy to raise pupils' achievement. Mental skills feature at the start of many lessons thus sharpening pupils' skills, but the use of plenary sessions, to summarise and review what has taken place, is under-developed. Teachers only make limited use of information and communication technology so pupils have too little opportunity to appreciate its potential.
138. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and have high expectations of what pupils know, understand and can do. For example, in a very good Year 9 lesson on sequences the teacher devised a table that illustrated the difference method in a very helpful way significantly enhancing pupils' ability to find formulae for the  $n$ th term. In the same lesson the teacher had a very good eye to inclusion, taking pains to make sure that a West Indian boy, just arrived from another school, was fully involved in the lesson. Most lessons move at a brisk pace, but a few tail off too much towards the end of the one-hour session. Teachers give appropriate support to pupils with special educational needs and in certain lessons there is a support assistant to provide more individual help. Less help is given to pupils with English as an additional language.
139. The department is managed effectively and it shares a commitment to very high achievement for all pupils. There has been satisfactory progress, overall, since the

previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in using and applying mathematics is now as high as in other attainment targets. Numeracy across the curriculum is better established. Teachers' marking is of a higher quality, although some is still cursory. Accommodation remains unsatisfactory. Mathematics classrooms are scattered across the school site so that valuable time is wasted as teachers walk between lessons. Also, the scattering of the department restricts cohesiveness. There is a good display of photographs of teachers and pupils at work in the department, but the opportunity to raise the status of mathematics further in the school, by displaying a full range of pupils' written and ICT work, is missed.

### **Numeracy across the curriculum 11-16**

140. Pupils use numeracy effectively in other subjects. In science, pupils show very good skills. In Key Stage 3 they complete calculations of pressure and velocity and make very good use of triangular shapes in work on structures. In Key Stage 4, pupils produce graphs to show the length of a spring as it stretches and complete calculations on power very quickly. In geography, pupils confidently construct and interpret various bar charts, line graphs and pie charts and understand and use contours on maps. In ICT, pupils interpret spreadsheets and databases appropriately and present graphs effectively, although these are insufficiently labelled on some occasions. In design and technology, pupils produce accurate orthographic drawings of parts of a bag in textiles and calculate the percentage of fat in various foods in food technology.

### **SCIENCE**

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

#### **Strengths**

- Students achieve very good standards in knowledge and understanding because teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve and prepare them very well for external examinations.
- Relationships between teachers and their students are very good, encouraging them to achieve their best.
- The department has a clear direction for the future with leadership qualities that are successful in motivating a committed team to take a full share of responsibility for continuing improvement.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Approaches to investigation and enquiry in Key Stage 3 are not yet refined enough to ensure all pupils develop good enquiry and evaluative skills.
- Use of assessment within teaching and learning does not give pupils a clear understanding of their progress through National Curriculum levels.
- Resources for information and communication technology are insufficient and this has an undesirable effect on the quality of learning.

141. Inspection evidence confirms national test and examination results. Attainment of pupils is well above average by Year 11 because teachers have high expectations for their pupils' examination success, preparing them very well through good practical experiences.

142. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 9. Pupils understand scientific ideas well as a result of good development of practical, language and mathematical skills. They report practical procedures very well, but do not systematically take responsibility for planning and evaluation. A top set in Year 9 had a good understanding of balanced forces, calculating results competently. Similarly, a lower set of pupils was successful in measuring the pressure exerted on the floor as a result of very good support from the teacher. By Year 11, pupils of the highest ability argue their case very clearly to explain the power of electrical circuits, completing calculations very efficiently. Boys and girls take considerable care with the presentation of written work, using good

scientific vocabulary to explain experimental findings. Achievement is good because schemes are improving to ensure pupils build on earlier learning. Pupils in Year 7 gained a good understanding of variety in animals as a result of a challenging group task, requiring them to use knowledge from primary schools. Boys and girls achieve equally well. It was a pleasure to read such well-presented work from the ablest boys and girls. Gifted and talented pupils reach high levels of competence, bringing mathematical and language skills to bear when explaining concepts. This was seen in a Year 8 lesson, when the ablest pupils used their knowledge of triangles to strengthen a structure, arguing their point very successfully in teams. A lower set of Year 10 pupils made good progress in practical observation, successfully plotting a cooling curve using earlier knowledge of chemical change. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers as a result of very good support from teachers and educational assistants. At best, they achieve superbly well, as seen in a Year 9 class when they solved a practical problem by using information about the difference between two types of chemical reaction. As a result of such good support, pupils with special needs achieve well in external examinations by Year 11. Those who speak English as an additional language are supported by class teachers, but they do not have sufficient guidance over the best teaching and learning styles to secure rapid gains in understanding scientific ideas.

143. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers love their subject and pupils respond well to their expectations. Pupils are seriously minded about their work, sustaining impressive effort throughout lessons. As a result, they develop very good practical skills, taking impressive care with equipment. They quickly become experts in measuring, weighing and recording information. They have some opportunity to record experimental changes using data recorders, but they need more frequent access to computers to analyse and interpret experimental data. In the best lessons, pupils experience a good variety of teaching approaches, but this is an area for improving consistency throughout the department.
144. Teachers generally match work well to pupils' needs, enabling most pupils to reach expected standards or better. They review key aspects of pupils' learning at the end of the lessons, but the review sometimes lose its impact because teachers have not left sufficient time for pupils to speak about their successes and their difficulties. Pupils develop very good study skills as a result of meticulous preparation by teachers and clear guidance about test and examination requirements. Teachers make insufficient use of assessment in lessons and do not set shorter-term targets for improvement that closely link with National curriculum statements. Marking is not sufficiently instrumental in giving pupils a clearer view of how to improve, maximising the progress of each individual.
145. Good leadership and management support a committed and hard working team in reflecting the aims of the school in its work to raise the achievement of pupils further. Attention to equal opportunities is generally very effective. The quality of work provided by technicians is very good, but they are very pressed for time in the light of ever-increasing demands for teaching. The department has improved from the last inspection. Standards have risen because teaching and learning have improved. Accommodation has improved as a result of some refurbishment and the building of two additional laboratories has begun. However, laboratories are widely spaced, preparation space is cramped and it is difficult for technicians to move between rooms in complete safety. The demand for space continues to increase and future planning will need to take full account of this issue.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is good.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- By the end of Year 9 the majority of pupils are achieving above the national expectation.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well at both key stages.
- Relationships and attitudes are very good.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported and achieve well.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment at Key Stage 3.
- The sharing of criteria with pupils and greater involvement of pupils in the use of levels.
- Further development of information communication technology as an integral part of the departments' work.

146. Standards have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils are achieving above the national expectation. By the end of Year 11, attainment and GCSE results are also above the national average. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement.

147. The emphasis given to a comprehensive skills based course in Year 7 compensates very well for the low skills and knowledge base of many pupils on entry to the school. Drawing and the use of colour are given a high priority, as are the needs of the individual in all aspects of the art and design curriculum. During their Key Stage 3 course, pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of specialist language is increasing, as is their use of a wide range of media including graded pencils, pastels and paint. Pupils work with increasing confidence, skill and imagination. For example, in the Year 7 project on pattern the strong emphasis on the control of line, blending of paint and the use of a variety of implements to produce, repeat and rotational patterns based on stained glass windows. Pupils have knowledge of a wide range of artists from different cultures and times including Pollock, Lichtenstein, Mondrian and Bridget Riley. Pupils use the styles, colour and line quality of these artists works in many of their projects as a starting point or stimulus. For example, in Year 9 the project on modern composition design based on abstract expressionism using the works of Pollock and Kline. The discussion and study of artists' work is adding a strong cultural dimension to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the art and design curriculum. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to bring together ideas and skills learnt and well practised. Pupils make visual decisions with increasing confidence and produce a wide range of quality outcomes.

148. In Years 10 and 11, pupils build upon the rich and varied experiences gained in their Key Stage 3 course. They make good progress and achieve well. They can sustain themes and develop ideas and adapt well to a different style of working towards their GCSE examination. Pupils make very good use of homework to practice skills and develop ideas relating to coursework projects, for example preparatory studies of the works of Mondrian's paintings of trees and Bridget Riley's use of line. Pupils are able to discuss their work with confidence and give reasons for visual decisions made and how their work is going to develop.

149. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. The consistently good and very good teaching is having a high impact on pupils' learning, attitudes and achievement and has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is a strength of the department. Teaching is conducted with sensitivity to the needs of the individual, including pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers are confident and have a depth of specialist knowledge and expertise. There is a strong emphasis on quality and high expectations of all pupils and a good balance between help for the whole group and for individuals. Lessons are carefully thought through to cater for the wide range of

abilities. Learning is supported by discussion, directed questioning and visual material. For example, in a Year 11 class, pupils discussed the works of Mondrian and the development of structures in trees for early works to a more abstract approach. These features, challenging tasks and the high level of teaching expertise in a friendly supportive atmosphere, encourage and enthuse pupils to experiment and explore ideas within a structured framework of projects designed to give an in-depth coverage of syllabus requirements. The high quality individual help given ensures that all pupils are involved and included.

150. Pupils' attitudes are very good throughout. Pupils enjoy their art and respond very well to the opportunities provided. Relationships are very good and there is a very good interaction between pupils and teacher. Older pupils take a pride in their work and its presentation, and show considerable initiative and ability to organise themselves.
151. The Key Stage 3 curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides good opportunities for all to follow a GCSE course in art and design. The number taking a GCSE course in art and design is increasing. The comprehensive course is enriched by visits to galleries, exhibitions and visits abroad. At Key Stage 3, the use of assessment to support learning and the accurate use of levels at the end of the Key Stage is not yet secure. The use of information and communication technology is not yet fully integrated into the work of the department.
152. The art and design department is well managed. The head of department has a clear view of the subject's direction in the spirit of the new National Curriculum orders. Leadership is supportive and enthusiastic and has very considerable impact on the subject's good performance. Staff are well qualified and have the relevant expertise to deliver the curriculum and take the subject forward. Staff work well together, they are enthusiastic and hardworking in their efforts to raise standards. The range of displays in the department celebrates pupils' achievement and provides an atmosphere that supports visual investigation.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory. There is good teaching and standards are above the national average in GCSE examinations. Statutory requirements, however, are not met fully at Key Stage 3 and the subject is only provided as an option at Key Stage 4.

### Strengths

- Results in public examinations.
- Teaching.
- Work in food technology and textiles.

### Areas for improvement

- Co-ordination of the department.
- The use of information and communications technology.
- Resources to meet National Curriculum requirements.

153. Standards in Key Stage 3, overall, are in line with national expectations. They are above average in food and textiles. The number of pupils achieving a Level 5 last year in teacher assessments was above average, but the number achieving the higher Levels 6 and 7 was below average for both boys and girls. Since the time of the previous inspection, standards have improved. Overall, pupils' achievement is good within all the units of work. Progress in developing skills and knowledge is affected over time by the frequent changing of groups from one material area to another. Pupils make some use of computers for writing, but are not able to use computer-aided drawing and design software.

154. Standards by the age of 16 are above the national average for those pupils who opt to study the subject. Pupils are able to study topics within the areas of food technology, systems and control technology, graphics and resistant materials. Results, overall, in the 2000 GCSE examinations for the higher grades were above the national average for both boys and girls. The relative performance of boys in relation to their other subjects was better than that of the girls. Results in resistant materials improved in 2000 and were significantly improved in systems and control. Results for the higher grades were best in graphics, but like those in food technology, fell in comparison to the previous year. Some pupils took a short course in either graphics or food technology and results were very good. Since the time of the previous inspection, standards have been steadily improving and the trend of improvement in higher grades was sustained, overall, in 2001.
155. In work observed during the inspection, standards by the age of 14 are in line with national expectations and achievement is good. Pupils design and make a range of products using processes and materials that include food and textiles. They handle tools and equipment safely. Designing skills are often the weaker aspect of the work. Pupils can, in most cases, develop simple designs and refine and improve these to realise their ideas through practical making. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are of a level that enables them to make notes, draw diagrams, follow written instructions and evaluate their work. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to achieve by the structured nature of the units of work and good support for the development of literacy skills. There is particularly good inclusion of these pupils in food and textiles lessons. For example, in a Year 8 textile lesson the pupils developed their literacy skills through discussion and written work linked to their previous practical work. Boys and girls, many with special educational needs, enthusiastically demonstrated good recall of their prior learning in response to questioning by the teacher. Similarly, Year 7 pupils developed their knowledge of sensory analysis in a food lesson through practical tasting. Boys were particularly well motivated through questioning by the teacher and the clear explanation and structure of the task. Boys and girls made good progress recording their judgements and discussed and compared their findings with other pupils. In some lessons, particularly textiles, teachers actively encourage and guide pupils to use computers. Pupils have insufficient experience of computer-aided design, manufacture and control because ICT resources are limited across the department.
156. Work seen in lessons and folders during the inspection indicates that standards by the age of 16 are above average in food and graphics and broadly in line in resistant materials, but with variation across the different groups. Achievement is good overall. No pupils in Year 11 currently study systems and control technology, but pupils studying it in Year 10 are making satisfactory progress. Practical work is very well developed alongside research and written evaluation in food. Good progress was made by pupils identifying the criteria to be used for a research assignment in food technology because the teacher developed their awareness of the topic very effectively through question and discussion. Expectations were high and the coursework that has been completed to date contained many examples of independent use of ICT to present and analyse data. In contrast, pupils in resistant materials were constrained by the set task of making a pair of bookends. Teaching had not taken sufficient account of prior learning and experiences. There was very little independent research opportunity, and very similar solutions so that very little challenge was posed. Similarly, in Year 11, pupils had poor levels of motivation because they had been directed to make sample joints. Standards of illustration are better in graphics. Pupils researched a variety of graphical solutions for marketing, produced card mock-ups and models of their ideas and applied their drawing skills to refine and improve their work. Pupils' understanding and awareness of the course requirements was good. Many pupils show good levels of independence. Knowledge and use of computers to design and manufacture products are weak because the use of ICT is underdeveloped.
157. Pupils have very good attitudes in lessons. Their behaviour is good and they respond positively to teachers and work and achieve well in their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are often very motivated when teachers ensure that the work is well

matched to their abilities and there is good individual support for them. When they are given opportunities to work together pupils show respect for the ideas and feelings of others and this makes for productive and harmonious lessons.

158. At the time of the inspection the head of department had just resigned and the member of staff temporarily in charge was absent. Consequently, two fifths of lessons were being taught by part time and temporary supply teachers. Teaching by the regular full time staff is good overall at both key stages. Teachers provide very clear expectations for behaviour and work and manage pupils sensitively but firmly. This leads to good relationships, attitudes and progress in lessons. There is good use by most teachers of verbal assessment and feedback during lessons that enable pupils to understand what and how to improve. There is no assessment across Key Stage 3 that enables work to be matched more effectively to the pupils' stage of learning. There is clear guidance for GCSE coursework at Key Stage 4 through the pupil study guide. For some pupils the text is a barrier to their understanding.

159. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved at Key Stage 4 and been maintained at Key Stage 3. There is a lack of whole department co-ordination that ensures a more consistent approach and shares good teaching methodology. There is a significant resource issue with respect to information and communications technology to support computer-aided design and manufacture, and the new demands of the National Curriculum are not fully met at either key stage. The department has been the subject of a recent review. Plans for improvements are on hold pending the arrival of the new head of department in January.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

### **Strengths**

- The quality of teaching, which results in high standards of achievement.
- Pupils learn well and are enthusiastic.
- The department is well led and managed.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Assessment in Key Stage 3 based on National Curriculum levels.
- Provision for extended learning, which would assist in raising standards further.

160. The provision in geography caters for all pupils in Key Stage 3, and 94 pupils in Key Stage 4, who are following the GCSE course. The most recent GCSE examination results were well above average. Almost all pupils gained a C grade or above, with almost half of the pupils gaining A\* and A grades, which is an excellent result. No pupil gained less than a D grade. Results have steadily improved over the last four years.

161. The observation of pupils in lessons and an analysis of samples of their work shows that at the end of Year 11 the standards achieved by pupils are above the national expectation. Pupils show a good understanding and knowledge of topics in both physical and human geography. They clearly explain the issues surrounding areas such as Holderness, where a balance has to be struck between the needs of the land owners and the cost of sea defences. Their knowledge extends beyond Britain to include the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, where tourism is having an adverse effect on the ecosystem. Pupils work confidently on coursework, collecting and recording data, and they use that data to arrive at valid conclusions. The presentation of their work is good, with relevant use of ICT. At the end of Year 9, the standard achieved is good, above national expectations. Pupils have a good understanding of hazards and their impact on people, such as in the Kobe earthquake in Japan. Their knowledge of cities is comprehensive and they accurately apply models of the structure of towns to cities such as Coventry. Their work on Castleton shows good use of maps and photographic evidence to support conclusions relating to the function of the area. Few



pupils start the course in Year 7 with the level of knowledge and understanding that is expected nationally. Therefore, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress to reach good standards at the end of Year 9, and further very good progress to reach high standards at the end of Year 11. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is with the support of the class teachers and the education assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language make only satisfactory progress as class teachers have no knowledge of the specific support that they need and few of these pupils receive additional support.

162. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is never less than good, with three out of eight lessons very good in Key Stage 3, and one in four lessons very good in Key Stage 4. All lessons are well planned, which ensures that the most important features are learnt and consolidated. Questioning is probing, which enables pupils to arrive at the correct answer. This was seen when the growth of Coventry was examined, and the questioning continued until the pupils concluded that it was employment prospects that caused the growth. This ensured that pupils thought about the question and learnt from the answer. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully included in the lessons, and this was seen particularly in the question sessions. This feature has improved since the time of the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations to which pupils respond, which contributes to the high standards achieved. For example, one homework set was for pupils to act as teachers and to explain how to use a four-figure grid reference. This tests their understanding and ensures that pupils consolidate their learning. Relationships are very good and this encourages pupils to work hard. The very good lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, so that much is covered and pupils give the lesson their full attention. Also, where there are a variety of activities, pupils are fully involved. For example, in a particularly lively lesson, pupils acted the opposing views to quarrying activities, which involved their understanding of the issues. They became extremely animated and excited about taking sides and this led to a secure understanding of the issue. Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments and targets set to enable pupils to improve. This has improved since the time of the last inspection.
163. Pupils learn well. They listen carefully and tackle the tasks set with quiet application. Pupils in all years talk with interest about the topics that they have studied. For example, Year 7 were fascinated with the map of Coventry, and delighted in finding places that they knew and working out the types of housing shown by the street patterns. Pupils are tremendously enthusiastic about the fieldwork assignments and are very keen to discuss their work. Pupils also challenge the usefulness of census data that is over ten years old, showing a growing maturity in the use of evidence. They also take great care with the presentation of maps, diagrams and written work.
164. The department is well led and managed. The curriculum includes relevant fieldwork, which is important to pupils' understanding of landforms and associated issues. The focus of the department's area of development is to revise the Key Stage 3 curriculum. This will provide an opportunity to develop assessment that will accurately reflect National Curriculum levels. These levels should be understood by all pupils. This should assist in raising standards at Key Stage 3. In addition, the units of work should include differentiated tasks for those pupils with special educational needs, and extension work for the able pupil, the study of which will enable them to reach the higher levels. This was noted in the last report and has not yet improved. Resources are sufficient to deliver the curriculum, with the exception of ICT facilities, the provision of which is planned. The accommodation is good and the displays are stimulating and contribute to pupils' awareness of geography. However, some lessons are being taught outside these rooms, which is unsatisfactory as the subject is resource based. The difficulty of moving all necessary resources limits pupils' experiences. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development through the study of issues relating to the environment, and also to pupils' numeracy skills through using and interpreting data.

## HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is very good.

### Strengths

- Teachers have secure knowledge and plan all lessons well, with clear and shared objectives. Teaching is very good overall, and at Key Stage 4 is excellent.
- Pupils of all abilities, including the gifted and those with learning difficulties, make very good progress.
- There is very effective use made of assessment, and the information is fully shared with pupils.
- There is excellent leadership of the department.
- The department makes a valuable contribution to literacy in school and to other cross-curricular themes.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils, especially at Key Stage 4, are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- The support and guidance for teaching strategies within Key Stage 3.
- The support for pupils who use English as an additional language.
- Access to computers and improved maintenance of those available.

165. Standards at Key Stage 3 are very good and well above national standards. In 2000, an impressive 18 per cent of Year 9 pupils achieved Level 7 or Level 8. There has been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection with boys and girls achieving equally well. Results in 2000 and 2001 at GCSE were excellent, with 91 per cent and 89 per cent respectively achieving grades A\*-C. In 2000, boys and girls did equally well. In 2001, boys achieved 100 per cent A\*-C grades with 52 per cent of grades at A\* or A. These results are outstanding and well above national standards. Results have improved significantly since the last inspection.

166. Standards observed in lessons and during the scrutiny of work at Key Stage 3 are good and above national standards. There are many examples of excellent attainment. The standards observed are consistent with recent results and reflect the results of both boys and girls. The evidence shows that pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress, including those who are gifted and those with learning difficulties. One pupil, with clearly identified learning difficulties, progressed from Level 4 to Level 6 during a five month period in Year 9. With the exception of pupils with English as an additional language all those with special educational needs are given very good support in their lessons. All teaching and learning observed is satisfactory or better and much is excellent. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge, use appropriate encouragement and praise and challenge pupils to achieve the highest possible standards. This has a very positive impact on learning. This was apparent in a Year 9 class when pupils were considering why men enlisted so readily at the outbreak of the First World War.

167. Whilst a few pupils in some lessons displayed an unsatisfactory response, most demonstrated strong motivation and interest. Where the response was unsatisfactory, this was because a lack of effective teaching strategies meant that learning was adversely affected. Year 7 pupils were able to explain the problems facing William the Conqueror after the Battle of Hastings and how he overcame them, whilst many Year 8 pupils understood why Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. A large proportion of the pupils make good use of ICT skills when completing assignments and are able to express their ideas with confidence orally. The restricted access to computers at school has a detrimental effect on both teaching and learning.

168. All pupils at Key Stage 3 are challenged to evaluate their own written work and have a very good understanding of the relevant criteria for the different levels of attainment. Written work is thoroughly and constructively marked. Pupils are encouraged to consider difficult issues. In Year 9 they study with interest the international prejudice

towards Jews across time and consider whether the British bombing of Dresden was justified. Year 7 pupils successfully study the contribution made by Islamic culture to western Europe.

169. At Key Stage 4 the majority of written work is of a very high standard, consistent with recent results and well above national standards. Excellent teaching is the norm and contributes significantly to the pupils' success. Teachers engage the pupils' imaginations, resulting in highly motivated boys and girls. There is a direct relationship between excellent teaching and impressive learning. These positive relationships and dynamic teaching inspire confidence. For example, pupils in Year 11 were able to evaluate and articulate the importance of food shortages, price increases and other factors when assessing the causes of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Their understanding of demanding concepts such as bourgeois, autocratic, proletariat and capitalism is impressive. Year 10 pupils demonstrated excellent listening and speaking skills when discussing the use of propaganda during the First World War. They were able to understand and explain clearly why different types of propaganda, including cigarette cards, persuaded the British people to 'accept' the carnage of the war.
170. Boys and girls participate avidly in lessons, inspired by the energy, humour and expertise of their teachers. Pupils of different levels of attainment, including those with identified special educational needs make very good and in some cases excellent progress.
171. Overall, teaching and learning are very good and excellent in Key Stage 4. The particular strengths are the relationships between teachers and pupils, the use made of assessment to set pupils challenging targets and the way teachers manage the class to inspire high achievement. Teaching makes an invaluable contribution to cross-curricular issues, including literacy. This is achieved through spelling strategies, key vocabulary, writing frames for pupils of different levels of attainment and other initiatives. Spiritual and moral experiences are provided through the curriculum and include a Year 10 visit to the battlefields of the First World War. The very effective teaching ensures that behaviour in class was often exemplary.
172. The leadership of the department is first class. There is an absolute commitment to getting the very best for the pupils. It is a reflective department in which all the teachers give freely of their time, use stimulating resources for boys and girls and employ their individual strengths to best advantage. There is a clear and effective policy on marking, monitoring and setting targets for improvement. By sharing openly with the pupils all information on the skills needed for each level of attainment the pupils quickly accept a shared responsibility for their own learning.
173. Remarkable progress has been made since the last inspection in 1996 when the GCSE A\*-C success rate was 43 per cent for all pupils and only 27 per cent for boys. Between 1996 and 2001 the number of pupils choosing history at GCSE has risen from 43 to 86. Resources, including textbooks and computers, have been improved, although access to ICT at school remains unsatisfactory and the quality of accommodation and resources are only just adequate. Visiting speakers have been introduced, independent learning developed and a highly effective assessment system introduced.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision is satisfactory, although time-tabled lesson time and technical support are insufficient. Statutory requirements for ICT in some subjects are still not fully met because computers are not always available for use.

### Strengths

- GNVQ and sixth form teaching is good because classes are smaller.
- Achievement of pupils on GNVQ and AS level courses is very good, and pupils show particularly positive attitudes to their work.
- Music teachers use a recent substantial investment in computers very effectively.

### Areas for improvement

- There are not enough computers to ensure greater use by pupils across curriculum subjects and ensure statutory requirements are fully met.
- Standards of attainment are not high enough.
- Lesson time in Year 8, and Years 10 and 11 for GCSE is insufficient.
- Increase staffing and high quality technical support.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' work. Marking of pupils' work is too infrequent in Years 7 to 10 and they do not keep adequate records of their own progress.
- Teachers' expertise of ICT in other subjects.
- Class sizes in Years 7 to 11 are often too large.
- Use made of the accommodation.

174. Pupils in Years 7 and 9 have a weekly ICT lesson, but Year 8 pupils have only one lesson a fortnight. All Year 10 and 11 pupils have one lesson a week to study for a GCSE qualification, either short or full course, and a small number opt for additional GNVQ lessons. ICT lessons provide a basis for extending competence in other subjects, but there is not enough lesson time for the majority to attain grades of C or above, and most classes are too large for pupils to achieve well, despite enthusiastic and supportive teaching. GNVQ pupils have sufficient periods and classes are small. Computer provision, overall, has improved. As new equipment is installed, most subjects plan to use ICT more in lessons. Provision in music is excellent.

175. Standards by the age of 14 are in line with national expectations and reflect satisfactory achievement in the limited lesson time available for girls and boys, including those with special educational needs. Pupils' National Curriculum levels have improved since the last inspection due to additional computers, more lessons in Year 7, better practice in primary schools and more specialist teaching. However, a significant minority of pupils underachieve because of limited time on computers, particularly in Year 8, and having to share computers in classes that are too large for the available accommodation. Teachers assessed pupils' national curriculum levels in 2001 as above average by the end of Year 9. Inspection evidence suggests levels were overestimated in using ICT to test predictions, model problems with spreadsheets and sharing and exchanging information, although assessments were otherwise generally accurate, showing improved standards in communicating and handling information since the last inspection. Pupils gain satisfactory basic skills in specific ICT lessons, but currently have insufficient opportunity to extend skills in most other subjects because some computers are not readily available and some teachers lack sufficient expertise and confidence.

176. Although the overall number of computers has increased to just below the national average, the rapid expansion of specific ICT lessons in all years has not been matched by sufficient staffing, computers or technical support for the many large classes. The availability of computers for other subjects has declined in the last two years, apart from in music, which has recently benefited from a grant to set up computer based music technology. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are already improving their composing skills effectively.

177. The majority of pupils develop, explore and communicate information well, particularly through integrating text and graphics, and creating databases. Their skills in responding to and controlling events by planning, testing and modifying sequences of instructions are less secure because subjects have found it difficult to get access to computers. Severe technical problems with the new network have affected pupils' overall achievement.
178. In the specific ICT lessons seen, the majority of girls and boys of all levels of attainment, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, progress satisfactorily in the limited lesson time available. The latter do better when helped by a learning assistant. At least a third of girls and boys progress well because they use computers at home or in the lunchtime clubs, but the majority are adversely affected by lack of lesson time. Year 7 pupils produce a simple spreadsheet with basic formulae. In Year 8, pupils discuss data processing and explore the net to develop web publishing skills, although, even for higher attaining pupils, limited lesson time, large classes and the lack of technical support severely restricts their progress. Year 9 pupils produce projects on topics of their choice, assessed for their national curriculum levels, although because of shortage of time and technical problems they have not done much research on web sites or applied their skills in other subjects. One pupil produced a series of animated power point slides about a space odyssey, incorporating photographs from the web, but this was at lunchtime. Many pupils provided clear user guides to the software they used, including appropriately-sized screen dumps. In a very good Year 9 lesson the majority of pupils explored power point to produce their own slides, but progress was limited because they had to share computers.
179. Lower-attaining pupils' pace of learning in large classes is reduced in Years 7 to 9 because of insufficient time. Much of their work is incomplete. In most lessons, some pupils come off task when they have to use computers in adjoining rooms whilst waiting for the teacher to help them. Some lose interest and chat, although they generally behave responsibly. In other subjects there are only occasional examples of ICT use, except in music where pupils compose music using the excellent computer links to keyboard. By the end of Year 9, pupils show average standards of communicating and handling information when integrating text and graphics in brochures and adverts. Statutory requirements in design and technology, art, modern languages, English and science are not yet fully met mainly because equipment has not been available. A large proportion of pupils of average ability have underachieved because of the limited opportunities they have had to use ICT in all subjects.
180. By the age of 16, pupils' standards of ICT capability in 2001 were below average, overall, because most pupils only took a short course GCSE and less than half attained grades A\*-C. The few who took the full GCSE course, working in their own time, achieved above the national average for grades A\* to C. All but three pupils obtained pass grades. Attainment in GCSE ICT was less than in most other subjects because of insufficient lesson time and previous classes in lower years being too large, allowing less practice time. The achievement of pupils in GNVQ and the lowest attaining GCSE groups is good, however, because teachers can give pupils in the small classes better support. Some pupils with special educational needs and an African refugee have made very good progress, and have a good understanding of how agendas and minutes of meetings operate. Their files include accurate letters and business cards. These pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, because they don't have to share computers and get a good deal of support.
181. The limited GCSE lesson time for ICT hinders the drive for higher standards for most pupils, although one pupil identified as gifted and talented attained a B grade in GCSE in Year 9. Planned opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are inconsistent, other than in music, but are beginning to improve as new equipment is installed. During the inspection, no evidence was seen of pupils' use of CAD/CAM in technology lessons, data logging in science or modelling using spreadsheets in mathematics.

182. Overall, ICT standards in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory for the majority of girls and boys of all levels of attainment by the time they reach the school leaving age. This is because of limited ICT lesson time, lack of opportunity in other subjects and insufficient technical support. Despite these problems, the majority of pupils behave well and enjoy working on computers. Pupils who use computers in lunch times or at home, work well independently and develop good competence in ICT. Most pupils are good at helping each other. In lessons seen, pupils in all years, including some pupils in Year 11 who would otherwise be disaffected, develop satisfactory skills of working on their own and taking responsibility for improving the standard of their work. In GNVQ lessons, pupils' attitudes are very good because teachers can give them more time and individual support. Although there has been some overall improvement in standards since the last inspection and nearly all pupils in Years 10 and 11 obtain pass grades at GCSE, standards could be higher with better resources.
183. Teaching and learning, overall, are satisfactory, and good in GNVQ lessons. Two thirds of all lessons seen in all years were good. Where teaching is less than good it is largely because of over-large classes with too few computers. Teachers are well qualified subject specialists, who relate very well to pupils. As pupils respect them, they gain positive attitudes to learning, even when they might be disaffected towards school life or have behavioural problems. Teachers manage pupils well, although their task is made harder by the large classes which have to spread into other rooms. Pupils generally co-operate well with teachers. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, some of whom have the support of learning assistants in class, use equipment safely and are usually keen to use computers, even when sharing.
184. Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is good in Year 10 and upwards, meeting examining boards' requirements very well, but little improvement has been made in regularly marking work in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection because of pressure of time and very large classes. Day to day assessment and marking by teachers is impracticable, as pupils share computers and move from room to room.
185. Teachers generally plan lessons well. In the best lessons, teachers share clear objectives with pupils, review previous work and explain topics clearly. This helps individuals, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, keep on task. Teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to be creative by exploring their own designs and evaluating software programs. In specific ICT lessons, teachers sometimes set homework in order to extend research out of the classroom. Marking is not frequent enough to help individual pupils in Years 7 to 9 who find learning difficult or who need more short-term targets to experience success.
186. Few planned opportunities for pupils to extend ICT skills were seen in subjects, other than in music. Science teachers are beginning to use new equipment for data logging. English teachers do not yet use ICT systematically to extend pupils' literacy skills. Although spreadsheets are used to develop numeracy in ICT lessons, they are not used to model problems in mathematics and science lessons. Teaching and learning have shown some improvement, overall, since the last inspection as there are more specialist ICT teachers and all pupils in Years 7 to 11 have ICT lessons.
187. Overall, management of ICT in the school is just satisfactory because expansion has been too rapid for the staff, time and machines available. The ICT department itself is well managed by an experienced teacher, co-ordinating the work of less experienced colleagues effectively. Subject management is adversely affected because there is no systems manager or technician and the co-ordinator is overloaded. Accommodation is spread throughout the school. It shows some improvement in quality since the last inspection, but its use by over-large classes needs review. The number of computers available to pupils overall is slightly below the national average, having risen significantly since the last inspection. The huge increase in demand for computers, as all pupils now have separate ICT lessons in each year, means that there is too much pressure on staff and computer rooms. The co-ordination of ICT use in all subjects is

insufficient. There are plans for further computers and a new learning resource centre is being built. There is a good selection of software for pupils and internet access is well-regulated in lunchtime clubs. The school has a web site which needs to be updated. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall; good improvements in teaching quality, equipment and Year 9 standards have been balanced by shortages of lesson time in Years 8, 10 and 11, over-large classes, the lack of adequate technical support and inadequate training and computer availability for other subject teachers. New planned resources should lead to higher standards.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is good.

### **Strengths**

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and preparation for the examination.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Boys have very positive attitudes to learning languages and their results at GCSE are very good.
- Speaking skills are well developed.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The very highest attaining pupils are not extended enough in reading and writing.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology in lessons.

188. German is taught as the first language and French has been introduced recently from Year 8 in the school. All pupils study two languages from Year 8 and a small proportion continue with two languages in Key Stage 4.

## **French and German**

189. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in full course German and French in the GCSE examination in 2001 was well above the national average. Results in the short course for German were poor. This trend has been stable over the past three years for German. French has not been taught to GCSE until 2001. More than twice the percentage of pupils was entered for German than was nationally the case, but the number of pupils entered for French was very low compared to national averages. Few pupils achieved the very highest grade in either language. Girls did better than boys in German, but boys nevertheless did significantly better than would be expected nationally. In French, where the number of boys entered was small, boys did better than girls. Almost all pupils were entered for the GCSE and all achieved grades A\* - G.

190. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 are well above the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally in both languages. This represents good achievement; pupils have positive attitudes and quickly make good progress with the good teaching that they receive. All pupils study two languages from Year 8 and make good progress in both despite having only one hour a week for French. By the end of Year 9, all pupils improve their speaking and writing skills in both languages and understand a range of topics such as describing their families, telling the time and talking about holidays they have been on. Most writing is short but accurate and very well presented. Pupils are able to hold short conversations with good pronunciation and understand at least two tenses. Higher attainers make satisfactory progress in speaking, but in writing they are not often asked to work from memory and there is little imaginative work undertaken. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in writing because they are carefully supported with helpful phrases provided for them to use. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language are doing as well as their peers.

191. Pupils are attaining well above the standard expected nationally for both German and French by the end of Year 11. This represents a high level of achievement as pupils

continue to make good progress, building on what they have achieved by the end of Year 9. Pupils no longer study for a short course so all have sufficient time to make progress. Pupils cover a range of topics such as describing their surroundings and their school life. A few higher attaining pupils in the current Year 11 in German can write very accurately using some complex language to express their opinions, but the opportunities to do this often only arise as part of the examination work and so are not widespread. Speaking skills are satisfactory for the highest attaining pupils but again they do not practice holding sustained conversations often enough in class. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are often among the high attainers, are doing as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in writing and speaking, because of the good individual support provided by teachers. All pupils make less progress in reading longer texts because they are not often asked to do so.

192. The quality of the teaching is good in all year groups in both languages and this brings about good learning. There are no significant differences between the teaching of French and German because staff share ideas and all staff teach both languages. One of the key strengths of the teaching is the good relationship that have been fostered with pupils. Most pupils are enthusiastic about learning languages, many take part in trips and exchanges as well as other events where there is a language focus and this has a particularly beneficial effect on their spoken work. Boys have especially good attitudes to learning languages and have responded well to being assessed throughout the course. They especially enjoy elements of lesson where they are regularly pitted against the girls. This was seen, for example, in a French lesson when there was a competition to be the quickest to give a French number between 60 and 79. All pupils are very well prepared for the demands of the GCSE and have plenty of practice using past papers before they are examined. Another strength of the teaching is that instructions are clear; pupils know exactly what they have to do. Teachers use French or German during most of the lesson and this gives pupils a good model to follow and leads to good pronunciation by pupils. Teachers use a range of well designed materials and in the best lessons teachers move swiftly between a variety of activities which means that pupils are kept busy for the full hour of the lesson. All pupils are encouraged to keep their work neatly and they have separate books to record grammar and vocabulary notes which they often refer to when doing homework or revision. Teachers plan lessons well, they know all the pupils individually and are particularly good at meeting the needs of pupils who find the work difficult by breaking tasks into more manageable sizes and by being very clear about how to complete tasks.
193. In the very few lessons where learning was less successful, pupils were not clear about what they had to do and they were not made to listen carefully to the teacher. At times, the work is too easy for the most able who finish tasks quickly and are not given other work to do, or given the opportunity to do things from memory or at greater length. In the best lessons this does not happen because the teacher has planned different activities for different groups of pupils. An example of this was seen during the work on illnesses in Year 11 German when all pupils were expected to understand and use the key vocabulary to say what was wrong with them. The more able pupils were expected to give further details about why they felt ill and had to do this without prompts, which they did eagerly.
194. Opportunities for pupils to read materials such as magazines, books or articles are rare as the department does not have enough space to store these materials so that pupils can have easy access to them. In some lessons the variety of activities is restricted because teachers have to teach in classrooms which are unsuitable, such as the textiles room. Here the acoustics are poor so listening to tapes is difficult and teachers have to carry all the equipment they might need with them, including overhead projectors and text books. This means that teachers do not always plan such a wide variety of activities because they cannot carry all the materials necessary. Almost half the teaching takes place in rooms that are not specifically language rooms, but the school is aware of this and a new building programme is under way.



195. Homework is set regularly and frequently, which helps to reinforce what has happened in class. Marking in books is satisfactory, but does not always suggest how the work could have been improved. Pupils are given much more helpful feedback about their performance during tasks in lessons. Currently, very little information and communication technology is used in lesson time because access to the computer suite is difficult.

196. The department is very well led and managed. Results have improved and the head of department has, for example, ensured that pupils continue to get good grades by transferring all pupils to the full course GCSE rather than the short course so that they have enough time to gain the higher grades. French has been introduced as a second language and the many activities that take place outside the lesson time contribute to pupils' enjoyment of the subject. All staff are committed to working hard to improve still further and there are plans to increase the opportunities to use information and communication technology as soon as facilities become available.

197. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. The dutiful attitudes to learning languages in Key Stage 4 have been overcome and boys' results in particular have risen.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

### Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Standards that are well above average.
- Excellent music technology resources.
- High quality extra-curricular programme.

### Areas for improvement

- Increasing the range of musical styles and cultural experiences.
- Improving the approaches to composition.
- Quality of the accommodation.

198. Pupils by the age of 14 attain standards that are well above average. This is similar to the time of the previous inspection. Results for GCSE music remain well above the national average. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, boys and girls achieve equally well.

199. Lower ability pupils in Year 9 achieve satisfactory levels of attainment. In Key Stage 3, pupils are generally able to play electronic keyboards well. For example, in one Year 8 class observed, the theme to Haydn's 'Surprise Symphony' was fluently played. Pupils of lower ability in this class did not fully understand how accompanying triads are constructed at the keyboard. The highest attaining pupils in Year 9, however, confidently added more complicated chords in their 'Blues' compositions.

200. Pupils in Key Stage 3 generally sing confidently in several parts and have a satisfactory and sometimes good grasp of music notation. When discussing music they correctly use a wide range of technical vocabulary. In the best lessons at this key stage, teaching is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and attitudes to work. Many pupils can remain involved in musical activity for sustained periods. For example, in one lesson the whole class stood and conducted to recorded music for most of the lesson. The music used in this lesson was imaginatively selected. This excellent activity was much enjoyed by the class.

201. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good at Key Stage 3. This is despite the fact that strategies for individual learning are under-developed. However, in some lessons

deliberate attempts were made to involve pupils with special educational needs. For example, the teacher refused to accept answers to teachers' questions if they came only from high attaining pupils. This was the case throughout the department. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. In one Year 8 lesson, a pupil on the special educational needs register sang an unaccompanied solo to the class. This was achieved as a direct result of a clearly structured lesson with effective learning in a supportive environment. A lunch time club for pupils with special educational needs has been a useful recent development in this area.

202. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are able to compose music effectively in groups and to play their pieces to a high standard. For example, some precise and polished small group percussion exercises were invented and played in a Year 11 lesson. However, when composing music, pupils are rarely able to convey a developing personal style or to exploit a wide range of instrumental possibilities. There are examples of this high level of achievement and these were very well demonstrated in a department concert.
203. Results for GCSE music are well above the national average and the department has maintained this achievement since the time of the previous inspection. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The most recent results show 20 entries for GCSE music with 95 per cent of candidates achieving grade A\* to C and the remainder grade D. The department has attracted pupils of widely differing abilities to its GCSE course. One autistic pupil in the Year 11 GCSE group received substantial amounts of individual teacher time that effectively kept him on task and led to good progress. As in the previous key stage, very good teaching is meeting the needs of individual pupils well.
204. Many pupils choose to study GCSE music and all are able to build effectively on their earlier work. For example, pupils continue using keyboards as the main starting point and tool for composition work. The Year 11 session on rhythm and the invention of patterns mentioned earlier showed clear progress from a Year 9 class observed on rhythm work. However, at times lesson planning and teaching strategies limit the attainment achieved by the most able pupils. For example, in a Year 9 and Year 11 class, the most able pupils, including those on the school's gifted and talented register, completed the tasks set them very quickly. As there was insufficient extension work available their learning and progress were restricted. But, overall, the progress made by gifted and talented pupils is very good.
205. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned with very good use made of the resources. For example, in work on the classical era a video extract of a period drama with music was able to set the scene quickly for the lesson to follow. ICT is also used well and a recent substantial investment in computer based music technology is already facilitating access to music for pupils of a wide range of ability.
206. In both Key Stages 3 and 4 there are insufficient learning opportunities offered to examine music beyond the Western tradition or culture. The lack of non-western interest is unsatisfactory and should be addressed in the music curriculum. Approaches to composition tend to be tightly structured and while this often leads to high quality results, the inclusion of more open tasks such as improvisational elements or freer exploration of sound could provide further worthwhile development.
207. The high quality teaching leads to very good pupil attitudes and behaviour. Pupils from all years respond instantly to teacher instructions. Teacher-pupil relationships are very good.
208. The department is very well led and managed and this again is having a beneficial effect on the quality of learning and the department's improvements. Limited accommodation has played a part in restricting important small group work. For example, in the large GCSE classes there is a severely limited number of places to which small groups can be sent.

209. The department contributes to a very strong spiritual development in its pupils, yet largely ignores the various ethnic backgrounds within the school. A team of peripatetic teachers offers a very good range of orchestral instruments, but does not include non-European instruments. In recent years there have been occasional sitar workshops. More significantly, a steel band and Djembe club have been included in the extra-curricular programme. These developments represent part of the very good progress since the previous inspection. The string orchestra plays to a high standard. A number of other ensembles, notably the concert band, regularly rehearse. There is an excellent choir. Under the direction of department staff, the choir has studied a broad range of music from the choral repertoire and regularly performs to the highest standards to be found in secondary schools.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is unsatisfactory. Standards are not as high as they should be in this school.

### Strengths

- Teachers have good relationships with pupils which results in positive attitudes and enthusiastic participation in lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. A wide range of well planned activities mean that they can work well at their own level and achieve success.
- The department has good resources and accommodation. Equipment is of high quality and is sufficient for all class sizes.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well in lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, GCSE, AS Level and A Level are not as high as they should be in this school.
- Time allocation for physical education in the curriculum is insufficient to offer a wide and varied range of activities to all pupils.
- The leadership and management of the department do not adequately focus on ways of raising the attainment of pupils.
- Systems for accurately assessing pupils' work and monitoring progress do not focus sufficiently on giving early support when it is needed.
- There is a lack of planned regular review of the quality of teaching and so good practice observed in lessons is not always shared.

210. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are slightly above the 2001 national average for teacher assessment in physical education. Boys perform at the national average, but girls perform slightly above. However, physical education appears to be the lowest performing subject in the school based on end of Key Stage 3 assessments. Both boys and girls perform competently in basic skills. In boys' gymnastics especially, standards of work were good compared to national expectations. Control, precision and fluency of movements were part of each aspect seen in gymnastics and demonstrations of work by pupils were good. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve similar standards as other pupils in physical education.

211. At GCSE the average points score suggests that, compared to national results, standards are above average. However, most pupils, especially boys, perform below average when compared to the results achieved by all other subjects in the school. Results have improved slightly every year and all pupils continue to achieve at least a pass grade in the subject. Standards of performance of both boys and girls in core physical education at Key Stage 4 are sometimes unsatisfactory. For example, in badminton pupils demonstrated a poor grasp of basic skills and so were unable to improve their level of performance. Written examination work does not allow higher

grades to be achieved, as it does not contain sufficient analysis of issues in depth. Few girls choose to take physical education at GCSE level.

212. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is overall satisfactory and sometimes good. The good relationship between the staff and pupils results in positive attitudes and enthusiastic participation in lessons. Teachers use praise and encouragement throughout lessons and this ensures that pupils try hard to do their best. Demonstrations by the teachers and precise explanations ensure that pupils know clearly what they need to do in order to improve their performance. In gymnastics, boys were given work cards showing counterbalances and were encouraged to plan a sequence and perform these to the rest of the group for comments. This meant that improvement in performance took place quickly. Pupils with special educational needs are included effectively in all lessons. A wide variety of activities ensure that they can achieve success working at their own level. In football all practices had different levels of skill and these were explained clearly to the class so that those who could pass quickly and accurately were challenged but those who could not pass the ball very well could still succeed. A pupil with a learning support assistant was given good support in a gymnastics lesson and produced a short sequence of movements. This was recognised by the rest of the class as being outstanding for this pupil.
213. At Key Stage 4, teaching was just satisfactory, but some lessons were slow to start and this led to pupils chatting to each other and then not starting work quickly enough. Some explanations were rather lengthy and pupils did not concentrate on what they needed to do. Non-participation in lessons was often high and pupils were not always given activities to do that related to the lesson they were missing. This was also an issue at the last inspection. However, relationships between pupils and staff were positive and supportive and pupils generally worked hard. Where teaching was effective, lessons had a brisk start, contained a variety of activities and the teacher used lots of praise and encouragement. This meant that pupils could quickly learn the skills being taught. However, where the basic skills of pupils did not match the planned content of the lesson, then learning did not take place.
214. There has been insufficient progress since the last inspection in a number of areas. The time allocated to physical education is insufficient to cover the National Curriculum programme and still needs to be increased. This will allow the range of activities required to be given to all pupils. Staffing has improved, but not sufficiently. This leads to large class sizes and some inefficient teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 3. Standards since the first inspection have risen, but still remain below the standards of other subjects in the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, but now contains some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4.
215. There is poor provision for ICT in physical education. This affects the delivery of examination courses. For example, there is insufficient use of video recording, CD ROMs, measuring equipment for cardio-vascular performance and access to the internet in order to gain the higher grades in examinations. A formal and recorded risk-assessment for physical education has not been completed. The National Curriculum eight-point scale for assessment in Key Stage 3 has not yet been incorporated into reports to parents.
216. Systems to assess and monitor pupils' work effectively and accurately are not in place. Underachievement is not always diagnosed at an early stage. Support is not given in sufficient time to ensure pupils achieve standards in line with their capabilities. The analysis of performance data is not sufficiently used to predict future performance and set pupils targets for improvement. Value added analysis of pupil attainment has yet to be undertaken. There is no planned programme for reviewing the effectiveness of teaching throughout the department and its effect on the quality of pupils' work.
217. Facilities for teaching the subject are good. There is good provision of quality equipment for all class sizes. The department has identified gifted and talented pupils and support for them in lessons is now being developed. Where expertise does not

exist to support higher levels of practical work, then consideration should be given to employing coaches or staff from outside the school. There has been insufficient in-service training of specific sports for staff teaching examination courses.

**PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM**

In the inspection, 15 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

### ***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	35	62.9		37.1		5.3	
Biology	40	92.5		35.0		5.8	
Physics	20	90.0		35.0		6.0	
Chemistry	32	84.4		37.5		5.2	
Design and technology	9	77.8		0.0		5.3	
Business studies	13	84.6		53.9		3.7	
ICT	16	100		18.8		4.9	
Health and social care	7	100		0.0		3.1	
Art	11	90.9		63.7		7.2	
Music	6	66.7		16.7		4.7	
Drama and theatre studies	9	100		33.3		5.1	
History	17	82.4		41.2		7.4	
Religious studies	7	85.7		14.3		3.1	
English	39	100		43.5		2.6	
German	10	100		40		6.8	
Economics	12	91.7		41.7		5.0	
Geography	13	100		61.6		5.0	
Physical education	15	73.3		6.7		2.5	
Psychology	38	73.7		18.4		3.0	
Sociology	25	84.0		32.0		5.9	

### ***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	15	86.7		60.0		7.3	
Biology	24	91.7		41.7		5.6	
Physics	10	90.0		30.0		5.3	
Chemistry	21	95.2		28.5		5.5	
Design and technology	10	100		20.0		5.4	
Business studies	7	100		85.7		9.1	
Art	14	100		28.5		5.7	
Music	4	100		25.0		6.0	
History	22	86.4		31.8		5.1	
Religious studies	3	100		33.3		5.3	
English	33	100		51.5		6.4	
German	8	87.5		0.0		3.5	
Geography	13	100		53.9		6.8	

General studies	63	79.4		17.4		3.7	
Further mathematics	2	100		100		9.0	
Physical education	8	62.5		0		2.0	
Psychology	14	92.9		35.7		5.1	
Sociology	11	100		45.5		7.3	

***Intermediate vocational qualifications***

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
	2	100	n/a	100	n/a	n/a	n/a
Business Studies	11	100	n/a	63.6	n/a	n/a	n/a

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focus was on mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry.

#### Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

##### Strengths

- GCSE A-level results are well above average, especially the percentage of A grades.
- Students are very positive about mathematics and the individual help provided by teachers.
- Teachers have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject.

##### Areas for improvement

- Less capable students are not brought into discussion enough in lessons.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

218. GCE A-level results are well above the national average. In 2001, nearly half the students attained a grade A and well over a half A or B. Nearly all students attained grades A to E. Results were even better in 2000, all students gaining grades A to E. GCE AS-level results in Year 12 in 2001 are in line with the national average. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 13 students are very competent in a range of topics in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. They can rearrange partial fractions, use trigonometric identities to solve equations and determine roots of equations using numerical methods. Students demonstrate firm understanding of binomial and normal distributions. They complete questions on work, energy and power and on the statics of rigid bodies. In the further mathematics course they complete questions on advanced topics such as hyperbolic functions.

219. Students' attitude to the subject is very positive. They are highly conscientious, listen intently and take copious notes. Students make very valuable contributions to discussion in the course of lessons. Most are very articulate and forthcoming, but a few are less so. Students collaborate on tasks very effectively, helping and supporting each other readily.

220. Teaching is good and, as a result, students learn well. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of A-level pure mathematics, statistics, mechanics and further mathematics so problems which students encounter are swiftly and competently answered. Teachers are particularly skilful in expositions and explanations that draw on their GCE examination experience, enabling students to maximise the potential marks gained from answering particular questions. This is further enhanced by the enthusiasm teachers have for the subject and their very positive relationship with students who appreciate the availability of their teachers outside lessons in providing individual help. In the best lessons, teachers fully involve students in discussion as a key part of the lesson. For example, in a well-taught Year 13 lesson on the binomial distribution the teacher's self-deprecating humour encouraged students to contribute confidently to the lesson. In some cases, teachers feel under such pressure to complete, particularly the Year 12 AS-level, but also Year 13 A-level, courses in the limited time available that they involve students too little or restrict their attention to the more able students who can answer questions more readily. This means that some other students struggle to keep pace with the drift of the lesson. Teachers plan lessons well so that there is very rapid pace and challenging material. There is too little use of information and communication technology in the work of the subject.



221. There is a strong commitment in the department to very high standards and teachers give freely of their time to helping students realise their potential. The sizes of Year 12 AS-level classes in both statistics and mechanics are too large so that teachers are over-stretched and students do not receive the individual attention they require. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Staff and students make the best they can of their nomadic existence, although time is sometimes lost because teachers have to move across the site to take sixth form mathematics lessons.

### **Numeracy across the curriculum 16-18**

222. Students use numeracy well in other subjects. Its use is of high quality in physics, but some students struggle in chemistry and biology. In geography, students use numeracy effectively; for example, in calculating Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. In GNVQ Health and Social Care, students construct graphs to show changing patterns of meals-on-wheels referrals over time. There is too little data logging of health and fitness measurements in physical education.

## **SCIENCES**

The focus of the inspection was on biology, physics and chemistry.

### **Biology**

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is good.

#### **Strengths**

- The staff are well qualified, experienced and have a good knowledge of the subject.
- The attitude of the students is very good.
- There are very good relationships between the staff and students.
- The syllabus is suitable and lessons are well prepared.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The process of review and monitoring to develop the range of teaching styles.
- There is insufficient use of computers and information technology.
- The size of some groups is large, limiting access to the available resources.

223. The GCE A-level examination results this summer were just above the national level having been well above this level in the previous three years. Nearly all of the students who took the examination gained a pass grade with 58 per cent of the students gaining a grade between A-C. When compared to their GCSE results, over half the students did better than expected. Some students with lower GCSE grades did very well. On the other hand, some students obtained lower grades than might be expected from prior levels of attainment. The AS level results this year are very encouraging with most students achieving above their predicted grade based on their GCSE grades.

224. Year 13 students produce work that is above average. The majority of these students are achieving at or above the level expected when compared to their GCSE grades. In the lessons seen, the students were attentive and completed all the tasks set. They were able to explain, in full and with confidence, the role of mitochondria in energy transformations in a whole class discussion. Other Year 13 students were able to apply their knowledge of muscle structure from their studies in A level physical education to the class discussion in a constructive manner.

225. Year 12 students had only just started their course, but were finding the transition from GCSE easy to cope with. Students were confident to enter into class discussions and were able to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject. An example of this was seen when these students described the theory behind the concept of optimum temperatures for enzymes based on the tertiary structure of proteins.

226. The teaching in biology was good. Although the majority of lessons were teacher led, the staff maintained the students' interest by demonstrating a clear enthusiasm for the subject linked with a good subject knowledge and experience. The teachers were able to involve most of the students in well-organised class discussions. This gave the students the opportunity to demonstrate what they understood. However, some students were either reluctant or unable to join in with these discussions and the teacher did not always remedy this. This was due, to some extent, to the large size of some of the classes. The large group sizes, especially in Year 12 makes it difficult for teachers to monitor the progress of individual students during lessons. Practical sessions were carried out in a careful and safe manner.
227. The marking of homework and other assessment tasks is detailed with constructive comments and grades. The students appreciate the high quality of assessment and are aware of their potential and their targets. The teachers are willing to offer extra help and support to any student who requests assistance. However, students who are struggling with the subject and do not ask for help are not always identified and supported by the teachers.
228. The attitude of students in biology is very good. The written work of the students is complete and of a high standard. In class, the students were attentive, polite and confident in contributing to class discussions. This was particularly noticeable in Year 13 where students demonstrated a very mature attitude. All teachers enjoy a very good relationship with the students and this gave rise to a general overall feeling of co-operation. The attitude and behaviour of the students were commended from the organisers of the very effective field study held each year in North Wales.
229. The management of the department is satisfactory. There is some review and monitoring of teaching and learning, but not enough to identify fully any weaknesses and promote improvements. The good practice within the department is not sufficiently shared between staff. There is inadequate use made of information technology into the subject.

## Physics

Overall, the quality of provision in physics is good.

### Strengths

- Very good examination results have been sustained over time.
- Student achievement is good, some showing extremely high levels of motivation.
- Teaching of the best quality results from high expectations for students' accomplishments.
- Strong management has successfully introduced new examination courses.

### Areas for improvement

- Students in Year 12 do not have individual guidance early enough to resolve difficulties they encounter.
- Variable quality of teaching has a measurable impact on students' results in some modules.
- There are not enough resources in information and communication technology for students to improve standards using computers for research.

230. Standards are well above average. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades is well above the national average because the subject leader offers additional revision days in preparation for external examinations. Results have improved further in the current year and show consistent improvement over the last four years. The first year of the AS course was encouraging with a high proportion of students continuing into the second year of the advanced level course.

231. Students reach very good standards because teachers generally communicate subject expertise with considerable skill, preparing them for examinations with great care. Students formulate good concepts when teachers make appropriate connections with other science subjects and ensure they can apply mathematical skills to physical problems. Course work shows competence in the use of information and communication technology, but resources are insufficient for students to regularly improve standards through research. When teachers go beyond the requirements of the course, students gain interest and motivation, as seen in a Year 13 lesson where students reached very good standards as a result of a rich and meaningful practical experience of electromagnetic induction.
232. Achievement is good. Most able students sustain good progress from GCSE because they are highly motivated, working at a very high mathematical level. Similarly, a number of lower attaining students rise to the challenge of the group and flourish to gain commendable results. However, some students find aspects of the course very difficult and make lower than expected progress by the end of Year 12. Similarly, some individuals in Year 13 perform less well than might be expected because they do badly in some modules due to less effective teaching. Although the number of girls participating in the course is small, as individuals they achieve creditable results.
233. Teaching and learning are good. At its very best, the teacher has very high expectations, asking probing questions, provoking students into argument, requiring them to offer logical explanations. With this level of challenge, high ability students have a thirst for exploration, with mathematical abilities that enable them to enter into high quality discussion of theory. However, when the teacher simply reads notes that have been carefully prepared for students, the same students become very passive and the teacher does not know how much they have understood because no questions are asked of them. Assessment of students' work is of good quality, with positive feedback to those who have gained good practical measurements. Year 12 students feel well supported. Those from other schools have integrated well, supported by very positive attitudes from welcoming peers. All students are offered revision sessions, but some do not make best use of such opportunities. Those who find the course difficult would benefit from personal guidance that helps them resolve problems in good time before external examinations.
234. The subject leader inspires confidence in students and has managed the demands of the new syllabus very well. There is currently insufficient monitoring of teaching to ensure students consistently receive experiences of high quality to ensure equally good performance in all modules.

## Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- The staff are well qualified and have a good knowledge of the subject.
- The attitude of students is very good.
- There are good relationships between the teachers and the students.
- The marking of assignments is good and understood by the students.

### Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching styles is limited.
- There is insufficient use of computers and information technology.
- Some teaching groups are large, especially in Year 12.
- The systems to review students' progress.
- A significant proportion of students fail to reach their potential grades in the examinations.

235. The 2001 GCE A-level examination results were close to the national level and have remained at this level over the past three years. Students who took the examination gained a pass grade with over half the students gaining a grade between A-C. When compared to their GCSE results, over half the students did better than expected. Some students with lower GCSE grades did very well. On the other hand, some students with higher GCSE grades did not obtain the grades indicated by their prior attainment.

236. The first AS level results this year are satisfactory with some students attaining grades above those predicted. However, other students achieved grades below those expected based on their GCSE results in science.

237. The achievement of students in lessons is wide ranging reflecting their varied abilities and previous GCSE grades. Overall, the standards seen in both Year 12 and Year 13 were at the level expected. Students in Year 13 responded well to the teaching and showed the ability to be able to explain the data contained in the traces from nuclear magnetic resonance analysis. Some of these students could also explain the relative position and size of the peaks obtained. Students in Year 12 have recently started the course, but could describe in detail both ionic and covalent bonding in the context of structures. They were also able to explain and use the concept of the mole, although some students found difficulty with the calculations.

238. The written work of the students was well presented, complete and formed a useful resource for revision and examination preparation. The homework set was a logical extension of the work covered in class and was completed by most students.

239. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching being seen. Most lessons were teacher-directed and linked with effective question and answer sessions. These sessions enabled the teachers to gauge, in a limited manner, the understanding of the students. Most students were confident in answering questions and entering into class discussions. However, a number of students were passive in class and this made it difficult for teachers to ensure these students had understood the topics being covered at that time. The department has not devised sufficient ways of engaging the students to ensure better understanding for all the students, especially in the large classes.

240. The marking of homework and other tasks is thorough, with narrative comments and grades that the students understand. The students receive good support from the teachers when they ask for extra help or further explanation. The staff are aware of the potential of the students from the extensive data available. However, the teachers do not, on a continual basis, review the students' progress and achievement to identify those who do not fully understand the topic being covered. The department must

implement a system of assessment that will identify these students at an earlier stage in the course to ensure they receive the necessary support required for success.

241. The attitude of the students is very good. They are attentive, polite and act in a mature fashion. The staff and students enjoy a very good relationship and there is a pleasant working atmosphere in all lessons.
242. The management of the department is in a state of change and this needs to be resolved quickly in order to review and implement the changes necessary to improve the attainment of the students. A full review of teaching styles with the incorporation of the use of computers is required in order to introduce a more varied teaching and learning approach. Another task will be to examine the group sizes and composition, especially in Year 12, as the large groups restricts access to the necessary resources during practical sessions.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

The focus of the inspection was on design and technology.

### **Design and Technology**

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory. In 2000, the standards for the small number of students were above average and achievement was good. In the 2001 AS examination there was significant underachievement.

#### **Strengths**

- Results at Advanced level examinations.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The links with local industry.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- AS level results.
- Students' contribution to discussion and their own learning.
- Resources for the examination course.

243. The GCE examination results for 2000 were above average. The two boys who entered the examination both achieved a grade A representing very good progress from Key Stage 4. In 2001, 10 students took the examination, but no student gained an A grade. Achievement based upon performance at Key Stage 4 was satisfactory overall and good for some students. Girls achieved more of the higher grades than did the boys. The AS examination results for the first year of the course in 2001 show significant underachievement particularly by boys.
244. Standards of work of current students in Year 13 are below expectations overall with limited progress over Year 12. Folders of work submitted for the AS examination demonstrate limited development of graphical skills and illustration techniques and insufficient linking of knowledge to design work. In the lesson seen, students were making satisfactory progress developing their knowledge of properties of materials. Many of them had extensive sets of notes about materials that they had produced for homework. General levels of participation, however, were limited. Students had researched their selected material and were able to present their findings to the rest of the class. In some cases, presentations lacked impact because understanding was weak and relied too much upon reading text rather than confident discussion and explanation.
245. Students in Year 12 have in contrast made a very good start to the course. A visit early in the term to a local automotive design department has inspired them and they showed very good awareness of a range of graphical presentation techniques. They are already beginning to develop appropriate critical analysis skills. In one lesson they

were fully involved because the teacher provided a range of everyday products, carried out an example analysis which helped with understanding. As a result, students worked well together to evaluate and discuss the products, developing their knowledge of materials through discussion. The teacher provided helpful comments on how they might extend their research through homework. In another part of the lesson very good guidance by the teacher and the opportunity to discuss the syllabus requirement lead to improved understanding about course expectations.

246. Attitudes to the subject are good, overall, particularly in Year 12. Those students in Year 13 who achieved low grades in the AS examination have been somewhat demoralised, but have in most cases remained determined about resubmitting their work for examination in January. Some boys lack personal motivation and application to their independent research and are too content to let teachers and others do all the talking.
247. Teaching is good overall and is shared between a full time member of staff new to the school in September and part time cover provided by the teacher in charge last year. Teaching is most effective when students are fully involved and challenged through questioning. In the best lessons, good use is made of the double lesson by structuring a range of activities such as discussions and practical work that sustain the pace of the lesson. There is a clear outline of the various course components and the timetable targets for completion of work, but not a scheme of work with detail of how the learning is to be developed and progress monitored. Teachers give good individual support to students in lessons, which helps them make progress. Where teaching is less effective there is a lack of involvement and too much talking by the teacher that encourages students to be passive. For example, in a Year 12 lesson about printing techniques the teacher provided a great deal of information in the form of text and photocopied materials, but did not involve students sufficiently or check that the technical terms were understood. Illustrations lost their impact as they were given at the end of a long period of talking. Links to other aspects of the syllabus and related knowledge were not emphasised. The range of resources to illustrate and exemplify the processes was limited. The teaching of how graphical skills can be combined with knowledge and understanding in the presentation, development and refinement of design ideas is not given sufficient emphasis.
248. The independent work students are able to carry out is constrained by the lack of suitable textbooks and supporting design texts. The use of computer aided design software is a weakness particularly in Year 13 where students have very little understanding of its use and make very limited use of Information and communications technology to support their work. Leadership of the examination course is on hold until the new head of department takes up the post in January. Lack of information from the examination board about the new syllabus and provision of good quality graphical materials, resources and equipment to enable the course to be taught properly have impacted upon the quality of AS work to date.

## BUSINESS

The main focus of the inspection was on business studies, but it was also possible to sample work in economics. In economics, examination results have been above average for the last two years. AS results in 2001 were above average with a 94 per cent success rate, with positive value added from GCSE. All students passed the A level examination. In the one lesson observed teaching was very effective due to good planning. Students displayed a secure knowledge and understanding of the topic being taught.

### Business studies

Overall, the provision for business studies is very good.

#### Strengths

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan lessons well.
- Students have a positive attitude to their learning.
- There is a good range of AS and vocational courses.
- There are good links with local business.
- There is good leadership of the department.

#### Areas for improvement

- There should be better analysis of students' potential based on their achievement at GCSE.
- There is insufficient access to computers on site.
- The large number of students and wide range of ability in the Year 12 AVCE is a significant problem.
- Strategies for the positive recruitment of girls for business courses should be considered.

249. The standard achieved at AVCE in 2001 was outstanding with all four candidates achieving a distinction, equivalent to an A grade. This represents a very significant improvement for each student, based on his or her GCSE achievements and excellent progress in standards since the course was introduced in 1998. Intermediate GNVQ also achieved a positive added value with 75 per cent obtaining a pass or merit grade, whilst the Year 12 students did well at the end of their first year of the AVCE course. Ten of the 12 candidates passed the examination, with most achieving well above their predicted grade based on their GCSE achievement. Standards have been consistent during the four years that this course has been offered.

250. Standards observed in lessons and in written work are good, overall, with examples of very good attainment. These standards are consistent with examination successes over the last few years. Students at intermediate level in Year 12 and advanced level in Years 12 and 13 respond positively to these vocationally based courses. For example, advanced level Year 12 students have successfully designed questionnaires to facilitate the marketing of their individually selected products. These students are able to reflect intelligently on the decisions they made and how they could have been improved. Year 13 students are able to discuss in detail the implications of joining the 'Euro' and each has canvassed a different local business and investigated the likely effects on that business.

251. Teaching standards are very good and have a positive effect on the students' learning. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise in planning effective lessons. With their teachers' support and encouragement, students readily accept responsibility for their own coursework and enjoy the challenge. This independence has led to students making very good progress in obtaining information and evaluating their research. Information and communication technology skills are used to good effect, although the provision and maintenance of computers on site is inadequate and inhibits both teaching and learning. The level of resources and accommodation available are barely adequate for the effective delivery of the programme of study in business education.

252. Many of the students are able to discuss their individual assignments in a meaningful way. They are competent in the use of subject terminology. For example, Year 12 advanced students could explain the meaning of 'a product's life cycle' and how this might be extended and were familiar with the term 'marketing mix'. They were also able to relate these to their individual assignments. There is appropriate use made of case studies and the teachers ensure that these are matched to appropriate levels of understanding and ability. Marking and assessing are efficient and used constructively in order to facilitate continuing progress. The monitoring of target grades is in place, but insufficient attention is given to measuring student achievement through the use of value added analysis, based on their attainment at GCSE.
253. Leadership of the department is good and has a positive impact on learning. This ensures that good use is made of the available resources and accommodation and there is a determination to provide all the business students with a valuable learning experience. Boys outnumber girls on each of the courses offered, but there is no significant difference in the standards achieved. Girls participate equally in discussion and demonstrate the same levels of interest and commitment. There are 31 students in one Year 12 advanced class. This large number of boys and girls is a serious impediment to effective teaching and learning, is unacceptable and should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The curriculum opportunities available in the sixth form for business related courses are very good, giving students the chance to choose between traditional advanced and vocational options. An indication of the success of the intermediate Year 12 course is that 16 of the 38 candidates since 1998 have been successful enough to be able to proceed to advanced courses. Business education was introduced into the curriculum in 1998 and, therefore, is not included in the last inspection report in 1996 for comparison.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The focus of the inspection was on information and communication technology.

### **Information and communication technology**

Overall, the quality of provision of Information and communication technology (ICT) on the new sixth form AS/A2 course is good.

#### **Strengths**

- Results in AS level ICT are in line with the national average. This represents very good achievement from previous GCSE attainment for the students taking the course.
- Students have a good grasp of basic theory and confidently produce interesting projects applying skills to meet the needs of end users outside school.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and very good relationships with students.
- Most students are well motivated to learn, and work well together in lessons.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Students do not track their own progress very effectively, particularly in Year 12.
- Some students from other schools lack recent experience of ICT applications.

254. The new sixth form AS/A2 IT courses build on full and short GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11 but are open to all students, whether or not they have taken a full GCSE in the subject. All sixth form students also have the opportunity to obtain key skills qualifications that are not reported here.

255. The AS-level results in 2001 in information and communications technology (ICT) were just in line with the national average, with all students gaining pass grades. Considering the students' relatively low GCSE achievements before they started the sixth form course, this shows very good achievement over time.



256. In their last year's AS level projects, Year 13 students presented work to a good standard and showed all-round competence in a number of software applications. An outstanding project featured a database system for a famous international Sikh singer and composer so he could keep records of his fan club. Another good example was a database for a local hockey team, featuring innovative design specifications that clearly met user requirements. Creativity and challenge featured strongly in students' design specifications and testing was well built in. Evaluation was constructive and well considered. Students showed a good general understanding of customer needs and knew why customer identities needed to be checked (referential integrity).
257. Well-focused questioning by teachers helped Year 13 students to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the normalisation of data from previous lessons. They could describe the main features of database management systems accurately. Several students plan to base major projects on their minor AS projects, but add a relational element to the database or financial costings that involve spreadsheets.
258. It was only possible to see a small sample of current Year 12 students' work as the inspection took place in the Autumn term. Achievement appeared to be satisfactory in the large classes, but many students enter the course with low levels of previous attainment in the subject when they join from other schools and have no GCSE qualification. In the Year 12 lessons, students drew accurate data flow diagrams of industrial stock control systems to help them prepare for their own coursework assignments and eagerly discussed the nature of human computer interfaces, freely volunteering ideas. Most students, including one with special educational needs and several who had not used computers for four years, ably annotated word functions on a screen dump.
259. The overall quality of teaching and learning was good in the small sample of four lessons seen. In the Year 12 lessons, although the teaching is effective, it is made more difficult because a significant minority of students have come from other schools and some have not studied ICT for several years. Some students still require more help both in making written responses to questions about case-studies and in having these assessed each lesson.
260. Year 13 students show considerable interest for the subject, when working individually on computers and when working with each other to develop project ideas, frequently from AS level minor projects. Teachers have high expectations, expect students to extend project work by working on their home computers, and give them extra tasks. Although students can send work home electronically, they cannot yet work on school software from home.
261. The pace of learning is very good when teachers stop the class to check whether students properly understand the terms and processes used before moving on, and, in all lessons seen, teachers gave students a variety of tasks mixing theory and practical work. In a very good Year 13 lesson seen, the teacher made coursework project requirements very clear, gave students a series of short tasks to work in pairs to develop their project ideas. However, opportunities to redraft responses on a word processor were not given. Assessment is generally satisfactory, overall, and meets examining board requirements.
262. Information technology is well managed in the sixth form. The three staff involved work well as a team and their specialist interests are well matched to units taught. They have clear vision for further improvement. Technical support is not yet available and the ICT co-ordinator has to take on this role at the moment. This reduces her teaching time. A well-organised system of recording individual progress and comparing current standards with previous attainment and predicted grades is used to help monitor individual students' progress and identify possible underachievement.

263. Teachers regularly meet to discuss students' progress. Training for the new A2 course, though limited, has taken place and good, new text books are being used. The first AS level results on this new sixth form course have been encouraging and, given appropriate resources, the ICT department is well placed to improve further.

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

No subjects in this curriculum area were inspected in depth, but it was possible to sample travel and tourism and physical education.

264. The new course of travel and tourism builds from the successful GNVQ Intermediate course taken in the last year where the pass rate was 100 per cent and all students obtained a merit grade. In lessons seen, students work conscientiously on personal projects to explore world wide travel destinations. They use a variety of sources to obtain information about holidays in countries of their own choice. Students develop key skills well through their assignments. They use ICT (information and communications technology) effectively to research data from the net and to present their work. Numeracy is improved through their analysis of holiday data and students develop communications skills through presenting their findings to each other. They are fully aware of the effects of modern technology on the tourism industry. Teaching is good and teachers use their very good subject knowledge enthusiastically to support individual students' progress. This applies both in lessons and outside school where they go on a variety of school trips such as the German exchange and skiing trips abroad. These help extend students' learning about the travel and tourism sector. Teachers help students evaluate their findings so they know how to improve.

265. Examination results in physical education at A/S Level and A Level are significantly below the performance of other subjects in the school and in comparison with national averages. For example, at A/S Level the national A-C pass rate was 47.9 per cent compared to the school's 2001 results of 33.3 per cent. At A Level the national average was 49.8 per cent compared to 12.5 per cent for the school. Four pupils, all boys, were ungraded at A/S Level and three pupils were graded N at A Level. There are significant numbers taking A/S Level, but this reduces considerably when transferring to the A Level course in the sixth form. Few girls opt to take the subject in the sixth form. In the one lesson observed at Year 13, teaching and learning were satisfactory and students displayed positive attitudes to the subject.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The focus of the inspection was on the Advanced Certificate of Vocational Education course in health and social care.

### Health and social care

Overall, the quality of provision in health and social care is good.

#### Strengths

- Results indicate good achievement for the students taking the course from relatively low GCSE grades.
- Students have a good grasp of basic healthcare theory and use work placements well to develop their key skills.
- Teaching is good, overall, and often very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and excellent relationships with students.
- Students are very well motivated and work well in lessons and on placements.
- The course well meets the needs of students who wish to enter the health care professions.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students do not keep sufficient track of their own overall progress.
- Students do not use ICT (information and communications technology) sufficiently to present and analyse their work, including work on graphs and statistics.

266. The recently established AVCE course is open to all students. It consists of three units in the first year, one of which is tested by external examination, and three in the second. The AVCE is equivalent to one A-Level course.

267. Results for the first year of the new AVCE course, which is equivalent to AS level, represent good achievement for all students from comparatively low starting grades at GCSE. Students' results in health and social care, where 100 per cent passed in 2001, compare favourably with those that they obtain in their other school subjects, and, for at least half of the class, were better than predicted. It is not valid to compare the small cohort of students (seven) to national averages. Teachers expect students to complete the course successfully and achieve in line with national expectations for A2 in 2002.

268. In a sample of Year 12 AS level projects seen, students present work to a high standard and relate their experience in local care settings very well to theory learnt in schools. Students are good at evaluating their own progress in achieving knowledge and skills necessary to successfully relate to clients for whom they are caring. Students select clients to have meaningful interaction with. They develop interpersonal skills and key skills of communication and ICT (information and communications technology). There is little evidence in coursework of the use of ICT to develop numeracy, for example, by recording and analysing health care statistics or fitness levels.

269. In their coursework descriptions, students put forward good ideas for improving case situations, and, in the best work, students can relate theory learnt in class to their own situations. They provide realistic action plans for improvement and a detailed bibliography of resources used. Students use word processing well to present their work, although no evidence of the use of other applications such as spreadsheets (for graphs), desktop publishing (merging text and images) and databases was seen. The ability to use these applications is desirable where students are preparing for further health studies. Students do make increasing use of the web to research health care information, although weaker students do not read around topics sufficiently.

270. Students' written evaluation is not always covered in sufficient depth, for example, when they do not consider alternative theoretical approaches that they could use in

their work. However, they do attempt to appraise honestly the practical methods they use when relating to the people for whom they care, either children or old people. It is evident from their well-chosen work placements that they make very good progress since starting the course. Year 12 students seen on their placements in local primary schools, related very well to nursery children in a class with which they were helping, and in a one-to-one interaction an AVCE student enthusiastically encouraged a four-year old boy to draw a man.

271. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and half of the four lessons seen were very good. The enthusiasm of teachers creates a positive environment for learning. Teachers and students have very good relationships, strengthened through other related school activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Students bring ideas from outside school into the classroom, readily exchanging ideas and views with each other and teachers. Teachers are experienced and well qualified. They make lesson expectations very clear, and in a very good Year 13 lesson they gave students a series of short deadlines on ways to analyse and present data in order to improve numeracy skills. Tasks were well planned to consolidate understanding of techniques of data collection and recording. Teachers helped students develop sampling techniques through a case study survey on a residential home where they drew accurate line graphs and pie charts showing monthly referrals for meals on wheels. Students calculated mean and modal results well.
272. Students enthusiastically joined in class discussions about research methods they could use on their practical work in care settings, helped by teachers' challenging questions, which reinforced their knowledge of ethical considerations for research. They related principles of informed consent to their own situations when observing children. Students taped role plays of interview practice and openly evaluated each others' strengths and weaknesses. In lessons, students show considerable interest for the subject, when working individually on their projects or when working with each other to solve problems. Most intend to progress to higher education courses to prepare them for careers in the health care sector. Students' work is constructively and regularly marked so they know how to improve.
273. Leadership and management of health and social care are good. Staff involved work well as a team and have clear vision for further improvement. Assessment is well organised and meets examining board requirements very well. A good system of recording individual results for each unit is in operation, and students' current standards are compared to predicted grades in order to monitor individual students' progress. Teachers regularly meet to check the quality of students' assignments. Year 12 students are arranging their own work placements and teachers carry out monitoring visits. Teachers' expertise is enhanced by training, although last year training was not organised in time by examining boards, and courses were insufficiently well planned. The new AVCE course is proving popular and is well placed to improve further

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design, drama and music.

### Art and Design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is very good.

#### Strengths

- Very good quality teaching tailored to the needs of the individual student.
- Improved examination results since the last inspection.
- Examination results above the national average at AS and A Level.
- Very good attitudes and relationships. Very good interaction with teachers.
- A mature approach and confidence in visual decision-making.

#### Areas for improvement

- To increase the number of A and B grades.
- To increase the use of information communication technology.

274. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection and the numbers taking A Level are increasing. Results show an upward trend and A to E grades are above the national average. The department are aware that the proportion of students gaining the higher grades needs to be increased. Students with GCSE grades A, B and C are accepted into the AS course, and students who have not followed a GCSE art course are accepted provided they show aptitude and commitment and a willingness to succeed. There are no significant differences in the attainment with regard to gender or ethnicity.

275. In Year 12, students are adapting very well to a new and different way of working. They are becoming good independent learners, well able to transfer skills from one media to another and experiment with new ideas relating to colour, texture and line. They use the elements of drawing and painting skills in much greater depth and apply them with imagination and sensitivity. Sketchbooks and personal studies demonstrate a wealth of research and experimentation that is translated into high quality final works in a variety of scales and media including oils, fabric and pastels. Students understand how colour and line can reflect moods and feelings and how light and shade has a strong visual impact in many paintings. For example, a Year 13 project on figures and portraits looked at the works of Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Cézanne. Students' studies are followed through in considerable depth. They use their own interpretation of works by artists such as Braque and Picasso and the use of shape, tone and texture. Students are very articulate. They can discuss their work with confidence and considerable knowledge with reasons for decisions made and future developments in their paintings. There is a wealth of in-depth experimentation and a very good understanding of design and composition principles.

276. The quality of teaching is very good and has a high impact on students' learning. There is a very good mixture of group and individual quality help. The history of art element of the AS course is brought alive by enthusiasm and a good knowledge of many periods of painting and architecture such as Italian Renaissance painting and the works of Giotto and Brunelleschi. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of individual students and the ways they work. The teachers have sufficient expertise to encourage and develop the interests of students and help them to reach their full potential in their chosen media. Students have access to a wealth of information and visual resource material. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their students. They monitor their progress and achievement on a regular basis and set targets for future development. Students know what they need to do to improve. They take a pride in their work and its presentation.

277. Students respond very well to the individual high quality help given. They use their time well and organise themselves. They show increasing independence and maturity on their approach and value their time in the department. Students remain motivated throughout their course, they work well together, discussing their work and benefiting from the challenging and interesting projects and activities set, which are relevant to course requirements. Currently, they make insufficient use of information communication technology

278. The effective management of the department is extended to the sixth form. The quality time spent with individuals contributes greatly to the very good provision and high achievement. A high proportion of students continue through to A level and the department hopes to increase the numbers taking AS level.

## Drama

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is very good.

### Strengths

- Results are above national averages.
- The standard of work that students produce is above average. They are achieving well.
- Teaching is very good and consequently students are highly motivated and work hard.
- The department is well managed. Teachers work well as a team.
- The contribution of sixth formers to the wide range of dramatic productions and activities.

### Areas for improvement

- Improve the range of vocational qualifications alongside subjects such as music.

279. The drama department does well for its sixth form students. They have gained results consistently higher than the national average, with a gradually rising trend. Notable features have been the pass rate and the proportion of A and B grades. This represents good achievement, given the average standards of students when they start the course. The take-up of drama is representative of both female and male students. Teachers provide positive role models, and more students are beginning to take the subject, building on the good provision for drama in the main school, where it is taught as a separate subject.

280. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' folders confirms this. The quality of students' oral and especially their written work is above average and the high standards at the last inspection have been improved. Male and female students do equally well. Students value the many extra curricular opportunities that are available. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but are achieving well. They are successfully moving on from their GCSE work into new areas. They have a good understanding about the original context of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Students in Year 13 are benefiting from successes already achieved in their AS work and are responding well to the demands of the more advanced work. They have a good understanding of characterisation as instanced by their work on unseen scripts *Hedda Gabler*).

281. Teaching is very good. Of the three lessons seen, two were very good while the third was excellent. Students benefit from the enthusiasm and expertise of the teachers. Teaching is developing a genuine interest in the theatre for all students.

282. Lessons always have clear objectives. Teachers structure lessons well, keep up a fast pace and provide high levels of challenge. Consequently, students work hard and are highly motivated. They work co-operatively in pairs and small groups, and freely contribute in discussions involving the whole class. Marking of students' work contains enough detail to help students to see how they can improve.

283. The drama department is very well managed. The teachers are committed to improvement and work well together. Students are justified in their confidence that they will be taught well.

## Music

The, overall, quality of provision for music is good.

### Strengths

- Good teaching that ensures pupils are keen to learn.
- Excellent technology resources.
- Courses open to students of a wide range of musical abilities.

### Areas for improvement

- Increase students involvement with practical aspects of the music studied.
- The quality of accommodation.

284. Overall, the standards attained are satisfactory in relation to national averages and course requirements. In the most recent Year 13 A level examinations, of the four candidates who entered one achieved grade B, two grade C and one grade D. The latest AS examination results taken at the end of Year 12 are disappointing, partly because of teething troubles in the organisation of this new course. There were six AS candidates in total, of whom one received grade B, one grade C, one grade D, one a grade E and two were not graded. One further Year 13 candidate following the AS course achieved a grade N. The numbers of students in the groups are too small to significantly note any differences between boy and girl attainment. Students' attainment also benefit by access to the large team of visiting instrumental tutors and to the very good extra-curricular programme.

285. At the time of the inspection, a second AS group had recently started. The course has had good uptake by a group of 23 students. The students on this course bring with them a wide range of musical abilities. Consequently, there is good access to music in keeping with the intentions of the syllabus. Three pupils on the special educational needs register were able to work well thanks to some well judged teacher interventions.

286. Some students have joined the sixth form courses without having previously studied GCSE music. Although some of these students were experiencing difficulty in composing using a computer, most students were able to discuss ideas and were confidently proceeding with the task. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds do not have sufficient opportunity to develop and explore music from their own culture. Most students analyse set scores and use an impressive range of technical language

287. The quality of teaching and learning are good. All staff have good knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. For example, an unexpected question from a student led to a fascinating answer from the teacher on the subject of composer's awareness of sound reverberation in buildings with particular reference to St. Mark's Basilica, Venice. An exceptionally large selection of computer-based music technology is providing an important learning tool for all post-16 students. Students use the machines competently and are, therefore, able to participate directly with the music at their own levels of ability. At times the tasks set are appropriately open ended, for example, presenting a start to a composition and then asking students to continue it. Such useful approaches that draw on the students' imagination need to be developed further. However, learning is significantly limited when teaching is too over-directed or the teachers allow discussion and written work to lose sight of the practical nature of the topic being studied. Consequently, at times, students' performance and participation of the set pieces and related works, is under-developed. For example, in a lesson on Messiaen's 'Louange à L'Immortalité de Jésus' pupils considered the composer's innovative attitude toward scales by way of a technical analysis shown on the whiteboard rather than direct reference to sound itself. Here the teaching limited

musical learning and students' progress. The teacher did not then give the extracts from the score that would have illustrated in sound the points made. This does not always meet individual students' needs.

288. Lessons are well planned and are delivered in a highly organised manner with excellent use of resources. The management of the courses is very good. Students have been supplied with scores and useful written guidelines showing key words and concepts to be covered. However, the progress of various groups of students, such as those with special educational needs, including gifted and talented students, and students for whom English is an additional language, is not sufficiently monitored. In some sessions there were no rigorous checks on the level of students' understanding and progress. The department finds this difficult when student numbers are high, as the accommodation is inadequate.

289. Teacher-pupil relationships are excellent and lead to the very good attitudes and behaviour of all students. Students are keen to emphasise their appreciation of the high quality of advice and guidance, which is always made available to them by the music department. A significant proportion of students plan to continue their music studies beyond A level. The department is very well managed, for example, in the impressive increase in ICT since the last inspection. Resources for the post 16 courses are very good.

## HUMANITIES

The main focus of the inspection was on history and religious education, but geography and sociology were also sampled. In sociology, AS results in 2001 were above average with a 84 per cent success rate, with students achieving better than expected considering their GCSE results. All students passed the A level examination with over 40 per cent gaining the higher grades A/B. In the one lesson seen the teaching was good and ensured that students made further gains in their understanding of the course content.

Provision in geography is very good. The high quality teaching ensures very high standards at both AS and A Level, with a 100 percent pass rate and a very high proportion of Grade A and B passes.

### History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is very good.

#### Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and lesson planning.
- Excellent relationships between teachers and students.
- Strong student interest, motivation and independent learning.
- Very high standards of written work and understanding.
- Excellent leadership.

#### Areas for improvement

- Improved provision of computers.

290. Standards in recent AS and A level examinations have been very good and well above national standards. In 1999, students at advanced level achieved an average of 7 points per candidate compared with a national average of 5.4 and in 2000 Blue Coat students averaged 6.8 points per candidate compared with a national average of 5.4. In 2001 the AS and A level pass rates were 82 per cent and 86 per cent respectively, consistent with national pass rates. The average points per candidate at advanced level in 2001 was 5.1 which is marginally above the average achieved in the other subjects taken at school. In 2001, examination results were adversely affected by the large size of this teaching group. There have been no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls during this period.



291. The standards of written work and levels of understanding observed are very high, with frequent examples of excellence. The quality of work is above national standards and consistent with the very good results achieved in recent years. The higher attainers in Year 12 showed maturity and insight in discussing Henry VII's relationship with his nobility and the alternative interpretations of the character and ambitions of Charles V of Spain. In discussion they were able to demonstrate depth of knowledge and understanding. When given an exercise in determining how Henry should deal with specific nobles they showed their ability to think independently and apply judgements.
292. Students have a strong sense of shared responsibility about their learning. This results from the excellent relationships that exist between teachers and students of differing levels of ability. Assessment and target setting are used to good effect and are very well understood by the students. Lower attainers and higher attainers are directed towards appropriate and different sources of evidence. As a result, all students remain focused and make very good progress.
293. Year 13 are able to demonstrate a very good range of writing, including detailed notes taken from different sources and assignments based on wide reading. There are several excellent examples of personal studies written to the highest standards, including 'How far has the Spanish Inquisition been exaggerated through protestant myth?' and 'To what extent did the position of sixteenth century women in Germany improve as a result of the Lutheran Reformation?'
294. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and use a range of effective teaching strategies in order to motivate their students. In a Year 13 class the students were encouraged to 'get to know' Charles V of Spain. The structure of the lesson, use of excellent handouts and ability to engage all of the students resulted in effective learning. The students were constantly challenged regarding their views and there was good use of humour in explaining how interpretation is critical for developing understanding.
295. Students use their ICT skills well to enhance the presentation and content of their work, although the availability and provision of computers on site are inadequate. Departmental leadership is excellent and the teachers work extremely effectively together. They make best use of the resources and accommodation available and this has a positive impact on learning. The members of the department are committed to doing their very best for the students and this creates a shared responsibility for learning.
296. Students are encouraged to attend conferences and to make use of the facilities and resources at Warwick University for their personal studies. Students are also challenged in considering moral and spiritual issues. The chosen A level syllabus enables students to develop an understanding of the nature and consequences of religious conflict and prejudice including heresy in Germany and France and the treatment of Muslims and Jews in Spain.
297. During the lessons observed and in conversation with many of the students it was evident that boys, girls and students from different ethnic backgrounds and levels of attainment all make very good progress

## Religious education

Overall the quality of provision in religious education is very good.

### Strengths

- Students pursuing AS/A Level achieve very well and attain standards in line with national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is at AS/A Level excellent, and students' attitudes towards their work are excellent.
- The quality of leadership and management is excellent and contributes to high standards.

### Areas for improvement

- The school does not make appropriate provision for all students to follow the Agreed Syllabus in religious education.

298. This is a very good department. The small but increasing number of candidates at AS/A2 Level makes statistical analysis uncertain. However, over a period of time, although the proportion of students gaining grade A-B passes has been below national norms for the subject, the proportion gaining grade A-E passes has been well above them, representing very good achievement in relation to prior attainment. In work seen during the inspection week, students were attaining standards that were high for their age in their study of the Discourses and eschatology in the Fourth Gospel. Students achieve very well because of excellent teaching and the excellent attitudes they bring to their work. There were no significant differences in achievement between boys or girls and minority ethnic groups of students

299. The quality of teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have an excellent grasp of their subject, know clearly what they wish their students to learn, and plan their lessons very well to achieve their aims. Their skills in extending students' understanding through explanation of the insights of modern scholarship and skilled questioning are particularly highly developed. Excellent questioning, for example, led Year 12 students to make excellent gains in understanding the Christological significance of the Discourses in Johannine theology, with particular reference to the 'I am' sayings. Again, highly skilled expositional and questioning skills led Year 13 students to grasp key aspects of the eschatology of the Fourth Gospel. Excellent teaching is underpinned by the excellent relationships teachers enjoy with their students, based on very high expectations, caring and respect. They create a secure ethos in the classroom, in which students feel able to take risks in their learning and give of their best. It was a delight to listen to a Year 13 discussion where students from different ethnic and faith backgrounds gave freely of themselves in a discussion of concepts of time and the afterlife.

300. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. There is a clear vision of the educational direction the subject should take if standards are to be further raised. Provision is made for teaching the Coventry Agreed Syllabus for religious education to students through the Year 12 Key Skills programme and the Year 13 general studies AS programme. However, not all students pursue these courses, and in that respect the school is not fully meeting statutory requirements. It is aware of the deficiency and has firm plans to address it through the provision of conferences on the Agreed Syllabus for all students.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

One focus of the inspection was on English Language/Literature and English Literature, taught as separate courses. Students benefit from this range, which suits their career aspirations. In 2000, students did better than expected considering their GCSE results. These above average standards were seen again this year. The quality of provision in the sixth form continues to improve. Students' work in English successfully complements their work in other subjects. The department makes very good provision for students who were not successful in achieving a C grade pass at GCSE to take the examination again in the sixth form. Many do so, and most are eventually successful.

Another focus was modern languages. In this instance the focus of the inspection was on German, but work in French was also sampled.

### English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is very good. Students benefit from a range of courses in English Language and English Literature, as well as Drama and Theatre Studies. Standards are above national averages. Students achieve better than expected considering their GCSE results.

#### Strengths

- Results are above national averages.
- The standard of work that students produce is above average. They are achieving well.
- Teaching is very good and, consequently, students are highly motivated and work hard.

#### Areas for improvement

- Planning with a closer focus on specific strategies to raise standards.
- Provision in information and communication technology and for research/independent study.

301. The school does well for its sixth form students. They have gained results consistently higher than the national average, with a gradually rising trend. Notable features have been the pass rate and the proportion of A and B grades. This represents good achievement, given the average standards of students when they start the course. The take-up of English fluctuates, but represents both female and male students.

302. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' folders confirms the above average standards. The high standards at the last inspection have been maintained. Male and female students do equally well. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but are achieving well. They are successfully moving on from their GCSE work into new areas. In a lesson on the contrasts and comparisons between short stories all students showed an above average knowledge and understanding of thematic and stylistic links. Students in Year 13 are benefiting from successes already achieved in their AS work and are responding well to the demands of the more advanced work. They have a good understanding of differing views of marriage as a background to Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice'.

303. Teaching is very good. Students really do enjoy the subject, taking their lead from their teachers. Lessons always have clear objectives. Teachers structure lessons well, keep up a fast pace and provide very high levels of challenge. Consequently, students of all prior attainments work hard, make notes assiduously and discuss and debate well. They are highly motivated and complete their homework tasks diligently. Marking of students' work contains enough detail to help students to see how they can improve.

304. English in the sixth form is well managed. All English teachers make a contribution. The teachers are enthusiastic and work well together. Students are justified in their confidence that they will be taught well.

## Modern languages

The focus of the inspection was on German, but work in French was also sampled. French is being taught for the first time in Year 12. Two A Level French lessons were observed; the teaching was good. Students are achieving well; since doing the GCSE they have improved both their vocabulary, their written accuracy and their knowledge of contemporary events in France. This is because they are given interesting tasks, such as an article on a recent racist attack, and lessons concentrate on improving students' grammatical accuracy.

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is very good.

### Strengths

- Standards are well above average in both Years 12 and 13.
- The quality of sixth form teaching is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning languages.
- Students speak well because they have had plenty of opportunity to practise during trips to Germany.

### Areas for improvement

- Students do not read extensively and have limited access to resources outside the classroom.
- The shortage of an accessible area where materials can be stored is affecting students' ability to work independently of the teacher; with no classroom base, teachers regularly have to carry equipment across the school in order to teach effectively.
- Increased use of ICT.

305. The number of candidates entered for the A level and AS level examination in 2001 was too low to allow statistical comparisons to be made. Students performed in line with what would be expected given their results in GCSE. There were no significant differences in achievement between boys or girls and minority ethnic groups of students.

306. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in students' files during the inspection shows that students in the current cohort are achieving very well. Standards are well above average in both Years 12 and 13 and this is due partly to the very good teaching that they receive and also to students' very good attitudes and willingness to work hard. Students in Year 13 are able to understand complex language and ideas on subjects such as the role of religion in society today and the causes and effects of pollution. In Year 12, when students have only just begun the course, they cover less complex topics such as the role of the education system in Germany and issues to do with youth. They are, nevertheless, able to discuss these matters with increasing sophistication and develop their arguments well. By the end of Year 12, their spoken language is good. Sometimes it lacks accuracy and fluency, but mostly students speak confidently and at length because they have spent substantial periods of time abroad. This is a planned part of the course and almost all students take up the opportunity and benefit enormously, returning with much improved fluency and enthusiasm.

307. Most students produce good written work and the quality and quantity improves steadily during the course through regular practice. The most able use complex language and express their opinions and arguments clearly; the least able have fewer ideas which they express in fairly simple language, although their basic grammar is usually correct.

308. When reading German, students are given some difficult texts in class and persevere until they do understand, but they do not have many opportunities to read extensively outside lesson time. There are no materials available in a centrally accessible space that they can use when convenient for them. To improve listening skills, all are given some materials to use at home, but these are mostly limited to those linked to the text-

books. Because there is much work completed during lessons on listening to tapes pupils make adequate progress in this particular skill, but the diet is restricted because there is no access to foreign television channels and little video material.

309. The quality of sixth form teaching is very good. The key feature is the high quality of the relationships between staff and students. Students feel that the lessons are often fun, interesting, varied and that they are always kept busy, even during the two hour long lessons. As a consequence, they work hard and achieve well. In Year 12, there is much emphasis on reinforcing key grammatical points and new vocabulary at the beginning of the course so that most students can write more accurately as they progress through the course. The marking of written work is detailed and suggests to students how they might improve both content and accuracy. All lessons are well planned with resources that are interesting and up to date, reflecting what is happening currently in Germany. Teachers encourage students to work on materials at home in preparation for the lesson so that basic difficulties have been ironed out before they arrive. Teachers plan a variety of tasks and activities, but often time is wasted when teachers have to move to another classroom in the middle of a session. Much of the teaching takes place in unsuitable rooms with no overhead projector or cassette recorder. In order to teach effectively, teachers are expected to carry all the equipment they need across the school. For example, those lessons that take place in the music rooms have no whiteboard; this means that the range of activities teachers can plan for is restricted by the amount they can carry and the space available. Little information and communication technology is used during lessons, but students are encouraged to use the Internet in their free time to research topics and extend their knowledge. Students use dictionaries and other reference materials well and refer to notes they have made on grammar, for example. Teachers offer their time freely outside lessons to help with problems that individuals may have and this enables them to make better progress.
310. The leadership and management of the sixth form course are very good. Teachers regularly work together to plan the course so that improvements can be made when necessary and so that changes to the syllabus can be accommodated. Students are provided with many opportunities to use their German outside the classroom, such as trips and language events at the local language college, which significantly improve their language skills and motivation. The issue of the shortage of accommodation is currently being addressed by the school. The provision in German has improved since the last inspection and students' enthusiasm has improved markedly.