

INSPECTION REPORT

**ALDERMAN CALLOW SCHOOL AND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Canley, Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103741

Headteacher: Mr Roger Whittall

Reporting inspector: Sue Simper
12970

Dates of inspection: 28 January - 1 February 2002

Inspection number: 199451

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mitchell Avenue
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Coventry

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Phil Roughton

Date of previous inspection: 02 March 1998

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12970	Sue Simper	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' or students achievements.</p> <p>How well are the pupils or students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>Community links</p>
3549	David Oakley	Team inspector	Biology	Inspection of sixth form
16009	Isobel Isles	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3990	Paul Murray	Team Inspector	English English as an additional language	
17274	Howard Flavell	Team Inspector	Science	
4329	Christine Seal	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	
22341	Tristram Shepard	Team Inspector	Art	
2079	Trevor Slack	Team Inspector	Design and technology	
31555	Chris Durbin	Team Inspector	Geography	

27492	John Barker	Team Inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils of students?
2218	Phil Dahl	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages	
31637	Keith Havercroft	Team Inspector	Music	
3543	Peter Whitlam	Team Inspector	Physical education	
2012	John Prangnell	Team Inspector	Religious education	
11913	Martin Howard	Team Inspector	Special educational needs	Special units
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REPORT CONTENTS	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 13
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	14 - 16
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	17 - 27
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	27 - 31
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	31 - 35
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	36 - 39
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	40 - 41
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	41 - 48
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	49 - 50
SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AND FOR PUPILS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	50 - 51
COMMUNITY LINKS	51 - 52
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	53 - 60
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	61 - 92
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	93 - 104
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Alderman Callow is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18. There are 298 boys and 234 girls on roll including 40 students in the sixth form, making it smaller than most secondary schools with sixth forms. The school mainly serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage in an outer city area of Coventry. 29% of pupils have free school meals, which is above the national average. The school is under-subscribed, but draws pupils from across the city especially those with special educational needs. 94% of pupils are of white UK heritage, 2.1% of pupils are of black mainly African-Caribbean heritage, 1.6% are of Asian heritage and 1.5% of white European heritage. At 1.7%, the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly higher than most schools. The school admits pupils of all abilities, but overall attainment is skewed to well below average. At 32%, the proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs, including the 5.3% of pupils with statements, is well above average. The school has designated special provision for pupils with visual impairment and for speech and language difficulties, and there are currently six pupils using this on a full time basis and one on a part-time basis. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is higher than many schools with 32 pupils joining the school last year and 19 leaving.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Alderman Callow is an improving school. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment, and many with social disadvantages. Overall standards of attainment in national tests and examinations at ages 14 and 16 have risen, but are still below national averages. They are also below those of schools with similar free school meals provision, except in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades where standards are in line. Good teaching and improved subject leadership are leading to better progress by pupils now in the school, including those with special educational needs. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning when in school, but attendance is low. Leadership by senior and subject leaders is good and management is sound. The average cost of educating a pupil at the school is above average. The effectiveness of the school is sound and it just gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are good overall and in almost a third of lessons seen were very good or excellent.
- Behaviour was very good in the lessons observed and around the school. Moral education is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Good leadership is provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and coordinator of administration and finance, by most subject leaders and the coordinator for social inclusion.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment up to the age of 16, especially in English and literacy.
- Attendance. It is poor overall, and some parents condone their child's absence. School systems for improving attendance overall and for monitoring attendance in sixth form lessons are inadequate.
- Management systems. Areas for improvement include planning for school improvement on an annual basis, policy review, monitoring of teaching in the sixth form and consistency in management of subject leaders by senior managers
- Planning and assessment. In many subjects, these do not sufficiently consider and build on pupils' knowledge, skills and experience.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have too few opportunities for reflection.
- Use of information and communication technology (ICT) in some subjects in the main school and the sixth form.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the previous report in 1998 have, on balance, been satisfactory. Attainment in national tests at age 14 has risen significantly in mathematics and science, but remained broadly the same in English. In GCSE examinations, attainment has risen. Overall standards in the sixth form are below average but low numbers make direct comparisons with national averages and measures of improvement invalid. Improved provision for pupils with special educational needs now enables them to make good progress. Substantial improvements have been made in the quality of teaching, which is now good overall. Actions taken to address issues raised in the previous report have largely been addressed. Pupils' behaviour is much improved and is now very good. Many more computers are available for pupils to use. Satisfactory progress has been made in the use of data on pupils' performance to set targets, but data and targets are still not consistently used effectively in subject teaching. Despite a number of initiatives, the school has made only limited progress in improving standards of pupils' literacy. Although provision to promote attendance has improved, attendance has fallen and remains well below the national average in the number of pupils whose absence is authorised by their parents. Provision for cultural development is now adequate, but not strong. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual development remain unsatisfactory.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	D
A-levels/AS-levels	D	C	E	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school fluctuates from year to year but is generally well below average. In national tests at age 14 in 2001, attainment overall was well below the national average. When compared to similar schools, attainment in mathematics and science was in line, but attainment in English was well below average. When the performance of pupils who took their GCSE examinations in 2001 is compared to schools with pupils who had similar levels of attainment in tests at age 14, their attainment was well below average. Middle and lower ability boys in particular did not make the expected progress. Many pupils had poor attendance. Despite improved GCSE examination results, the school has been unable to narrow the gap between school's performance and national standards since the previous inspection. In GCSE examinations in 2001, the best subject performance was in science and physical education where pupils attained levels close to the national average. Within the school, pupils attained their weakest results in English and French. Low attainment in English and pupils' weak literacy skills have depressed standards overall throughout the school. The gap between the achievement of boys and that of girls is wider in English than found nationally. The small group of sixth form students make good progress overall. Evidence shows that most attain good results in comparison to their GCSE results. Students have attained the higher grades at A-level, which shows that the most able are challenged and achieve their potential.

Although in some year groups progress has in the past been too slow, inspection evidence shows that pupils are now making better progress. Pupils are benefiting from improvements in teaching, learning and subject management. Overall attainment is below average in all years, but by age 16 pupils achieve average standards in science and music and close to average standards in information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting their targets. Good progress is made by pupils for whom English is an additional language, and many pupils of Asian heritage achieve well in relation to their peers.

Achievable targets for test and examination results have been set for 2002. Targets for GCSE results in 2003 are more challenging and Year 10 pupils are on course to meet them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	The great majority of pupils throughout the school show very positive attitudes to learning. They show interest in their work and other activities provided by the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the great majority of pupils is very good in lessons and around the school. There is little bullying. Incidents are quickly dealt with.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are a strength. Pupils value the support they get from staff who, they believe, care about them and work hard to help them.
Attendance	Attendance is poor. Too many parents allow their children to be absent from school. The school needs more rigorous strategies to monitor and improve attendance, including that in sixth form lessons. Lateness is a problem with some pupils.

The implementation of an effective behaviour policy, coupled with improved teaching and a reorganised pastoral management system, has had a very positive effect on behaviour. The poor behaviour identified as an issue in the previous report has been well addressed. Rates of exclusions are about average. Although unauthorised absence is low, high levels of authorised absence are a major weakness, especially in Year 11. The most influential factor in whether the school can improve on its current standards is in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly in order to benefit from the good quality of provision being made for them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching in English, mathematics and science are good in all years up to age 16. Teaching is consistently good across most other subjects and in no subject is it less than satisfactory overall. Teaching in the sixth form in subjects inspected is good. Out of 155 lessons observed during the inspection, only three lessons were unsatisfactory. Over seven in ten lessons observed were good or better, and almost one third of lessons were very good or excellent. Teachers show good subject knowledge and manage pupils very well. Most lessons are well planned with an interesting and challenging range of activities which interest pupils and help them learn. The use of homework and the quality of marking are more inconsistent. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is inconsistent between subjects and is a weakness overall. Pupils are productive in lessons and show interest in their work, but are not always sure about their own progress. In many subjects, pupils are not given enough information about how to improve. The teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs are good and enable them to make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language have well targeted support and make good progress. Although there is additional provision for pupils who are gifted and talented outside lessons, in lessons their needs are often not well met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound overall. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided which meets statutory requirements and addresses the needs and interests of most pupils at all ages. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is the least well developed area, literacy and numeracy are not well promoted and in some subjects more use of information and communication technology is needed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is made for a wide range of special educational need both through mainstream provision and from the specialist units in the school. Use and effectiveness of support staff in lessons vary depending on the quality of teachers' planning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Additional support is very effectively targeted and managed. Pupils entering the school with limited English make good progress and are able to quickly build social relationships with staff and other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for moral education and good social development. Pupils show a concern for one another and behave well. Cultural development is just sound, not extensive and with limited in-depth reference to cultural diversity. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory with little time spent on thoughtful reflection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision is good overall. It is strong on personal monitoring and guidance and strategies to promote good behaviour, but weak in promotion of good attendance.

The school works very hard to work in partnership with parents. Parents attending the meeting identified this as a strength of the school. High pupil absence figures suggest some parents are not supporting the school in trying to improve pupils' attendance. There is insufficient emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Very effective systems are in place to promote good behaviour, and good support is provided for pupils' personal development. Lessons in personal and social education are often well taught

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership by most senior and middle managers. Management systems are mainly sound, but with weaknesses particularly in annual school improvement planning and the review of policies. Monitoring of sixth form teaching needs improving.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school well in personnel and behaviour issues. They help to determine the strategic direction of the school, but are less clear about how the school's performance compares to others. Statutory requirements are mainly met, other than in providing daily worship, recording sixth form attendance, and in some information for parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear view of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	While additional resources have been used to some effect to raise standards, weaknesses in the processes for planning developments annually create problems in the close matching of funding sources to identified priorities.

Overall the provision of staff and the quality of the accommodation are good. There are adequate learning resources, the school having been helped by substantial additional funding last year. The quality and number of computers have improved greatly, but more are needed in subject areas. School improvement planning needs to improve, with clearer allocations of resources and better management of information. Leadership and management of English are currently unsatisfactory but should soon be resolved. Best value principles are applied in the purchase of goods and services, but cannot be effectively applied overall in the absence of a coherent annual school development plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard. • Their children like the school. • Their children make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework pupils have. • The behaviour of pupils. • The range of activities provided. • More opportunities for pupils to become mature and responsible.

77 parents responded to the questionnaire representing 15% of those distributed. Nearly all of those responding believe their children make good progress at the school. 42 parents attended the parents' meeting and expressed the view that the school sets high expectations and all pupils are expected to do their best. They identified the extra study provision and support from staff as helpful in enabling their children to make progress. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and pupils entering the school speaking little English

was valued and praised. In areas where parents would like to see improvement, observations during the inspection support the views of the majority of respondents who believe that behaviour is good. In relation to other issues, provision for homework is satisfactory, and the school provides a good range of additional activities for pupils. Although sound provision is made, the school could offer more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM ALDERMAN CALLOW SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this smaller than average 11-18 comprehensive school has 38 students. There are 25 students in Year 12 and 13 in Year 13. There are similar numbers of male and female students, though twice as many female students as males are studying AS-level courses. The very small number of students of minority ethnic heritage speak English as their first language. A very good range of subjects and vocational courses are provided through a consortium arrangement with a local comprehensive school with a large sixth form. In September 2001 the school was successful in recruiting most of the students who gained five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C into the sixth form. The majority of students are on two-year programmes leading to A-level with fewer following vocational certificate of education courses [VCE] and general national vocational qualifications [GNVQ].

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is cost effective. It is very successful in promoting both students' academic success and their personal development. Students make good progress when their GCSE results are taken into consideration. Fluctuations from year to year in the ability of the relatively small numbers of students make direct comparison with national results unhelpful. In 2001 students' average total points score was below the national average; results in intermediate VCE and advanced GNVQ were above the national average. Very few students leave during their courses. The majority of students on AS courses proceed to full A-levels. Sixth formers follow an enhanced programme including personal, social and health education, Young Enterprise, religious education and Key Skills. Teaching in the sixth form is good overall and good in the subjects of English, mathematics, biology, psychology and business which were the focus of the inspection. Leadership and management are sound and consortium arrangements work well other than in monitoring of teaching and attendance.

Strengths

- Teaching is good. It was good or better in the majority of lessons observed.
- The quality of care and support for students is very good.
- Relationships are particularly good and help to support students' split-site education.
- The school caters well for post-16 education of students, giving them access to a good curriculum.
- Students have a mature and positive attitude to study and value the support of the staff at Alderman Callow school.
- The Key Skills programme enhances the curriculum effectively.
- In 2001 almost all eligible students continued their education into the sixth form

What could be improved

- Monitoring of sixth formers' attendance at lessons.
- The use of ICT to support learning in subjects.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning in order to share best practice.

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
Mathematics	Good. The course provided is appropriate. Teaching is a strength of the subject. Students' attitude towards learning is good. There are too few opportunities to discuss their work or to use ICT.
Biology	Good. The A-level pass rate is high. Teaching is good. Student numbers have increased considerably in 2001. Too few male students are recruited. Sharing of resources and schemes of work between schools does not happen enough.
Business Studies	Good. Teaching is good, individual needs are met well. Monitoring and guidance of students' performance are good. Resources are currently inadequate.
Psychology	Good. The teaching of research methods is good. Pastoral care and academic support are good. Positive working relationships enhance students' progress. Information and communication technology is underused.
English	Good. Teaching is good and relationships are very positive. As a result students make good progress and respond with interest and commitment. Schemes of work are unsatisfactory and the assessment policy is inconsistently applied.

Work was sampled in four other subjects. Teaching is a strength in the sixth form. It was at least satisfactory in all 22 lessons seen, and was good, very good or excellent in nine out of ten lessons. An excellent lesson was seen in dance and very good lessons were seen in mathematics, biology, information and communication technology and English. In work seen, students were mainly achieving in line with course requirements, but in dance and psychology, above average standards were found.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are well supported. They are inducted well into the sixth form and their progress is monitored well. Performance of students is analysed and translated into meaningful targets. Even those students who are taught off site for the majority of the time choose to remain on the school roll. Provision to monitor attendance in lessons is weak.
Aspect (cont...)	Comment (cont...)

Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Development planning has successfully concentrated on providing access to a breadth of subjects and vocational courses through the consortium arrangement and recruiting larger numbers of students. Plans to improve the monitoring of teaching and the quality of liaison between teachers in both schools have yet to be fully implemented.
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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"> • Their treatment as responsible young adults. • Teachers at the school are accessible to help if they have difficulties. • They are helped and encouraged to study and research topics independently. • The choice of courses allows them to follow a programme suited to their talents and career aspirations. • The school listens and responds to the views of its sixth form students. • They are taught well and helped and encouraged to study and research topics independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of worthwhile activities and enrichment courses. • Advice on what they should do in the sixth form. • Advice on what they should do after they leave school. • The assessment of their work so that they can see how to improve it.

Students say they enjoy being in the sixth form and would advise other students to join the sixth form. Their positive views of the sixth form are supported by inspection evidence. Students play a key role in the school council where their views can be expressed and action is taken by the school in response. Relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school. Areas for improvement identified by students have mainly been found to be sound or better by the inspection. Lunchtime sports activities are available but the need for students to travel between sites inevitably limits the time available. The Young Enterprise scheme provides very good enrichment to the curriculum and the school competes very successfully with other local schools and has gained many awards. Although students felt they wanted more advice, here is good advice available on sixth form education and opportunities after the sixth form from senior staff in school and the careers service. Students' work is normally regularly assessed and compared with their target grades in order to give feedback about progress but there are variations between subjects in the quality of the feedback students receive from teachers about how to improve.

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

Attainment on entry

Year 7

- 1 Standards of attainment of pupils on entry to the school in 2001, based on their results in national tests at age 11, were well below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Data provided by the school shows variations between each year group in relation to their attainment, and the school admits pupils from the full ability range, but overall attainment on entry has been below or well below average for each of the year groups currently in the school.

Sixth form

- 2 Entry into the sixth form is currently dependent on students achieving five or more GCSE subjects at grades A*-C. This requirement is applied flexibly as it is recognised that students' motivation can improve performance. The school also takes into consideration past performance of students in subjects when setting entry requirements. Students with special educational needs are admitted to the sixth form.

Performance in the most recent tests and examinations

Years 7 to 11

- 3 In 2001, in national tests at age 14, attainment in English and mathematics was well below the national average, and below the national average in science. Both girls and boys attained lower levels in English, mathematics and science than found for girls and boys nationally. The widest gap for both genders was in English. The attainment of girls was higher than that of boys in English and mathematics, but slightly lower than for boys in science. Nationally, boys and girls attained similar levels in mathematics and science. Girls nationally attain higher levels than boys in English, but the gap between boys and girls in Alderman Callow was wider than found nationally.
- 4 Attainment in GCSE examinations was well below the national average in the percentages of pupils attaining at least five A*-C grades, five or more A*-G grades and at least one A* - G grade. The average points score attained overall was also well below average when compared to national standards. In subjects in GCSE examinations, attainment was below or well below average in all subjects except in science and physical education where, based on average points scores, attainment was close to the national average.

Sixth form

- 5 Overall attainment in the sixth form is below average, but the very small numbers of students make comparison with national averages invalid. Average points score per entry in A-level examinations in 2001 was close to the national average. In 2001 the ten students entered for AS-level exams had an average points score below the national average. The percentage of Intermediate level GNVQ candidates achieving the qualification was above the national average. Average points score for all sixth

form courses was 10.9 compared with 17.5 nationally.

Attainment compared to similar schools

Years 7 to 11

- 6 In national tests at age 14 in 2001, when compared to schools with similar levels of free school meals, the attainment of pupils based on average points scores was in line in mathematics and science, but was well below average in English.
- 7 In GCSE examinations, in the five or more A*-C category, pupils' attainment was in line with similar schools, but in the proportion of pupils gaining one A*-G grades, five or more A*-C grades and in average points score, attainment was below average. These comparisons are based on the proportion of pupils taking free school meals. When compared to other schools on the basis of comparable Key Stage 3 attainment of the pupils, the school is well below similar schools in all four categories. This indicates that pupils in this year group did not make the progress expected based on their prior attainment. Analysis provided by the school shows that it was middle and lower ability boys in particular who made the least progress despite additional attention given to them by the school. Many of these pupils had poor records of attendance.

Sixth form

- 8 Data for comparisons with similar schools are not available at post-16 level.

Trends in results over time

Years 7 to 11

- 9 Over the past four years, the attainment of pupils in national tests at age 14 has been mainly well below the national average, with the highest attainment in 1999 when attainment improved but remained below average. Although in 2001 attainment remained well below national averages, the gap between average points scores in mathematics and science and the national average in those subjects narrowed. In English, the gap remained the same, showing no trend to improvement other than in 1999. Overall, over this four year period, the school has narrowed the gap with a trend to improvement which is better than the national trend, but which has been hampered by lower performance in English.
- 10 In GCSE examinations over the past four years, the percentage of pupils gaining more than five A*-C grades has been consistently below the national average. The pattern has been similar for pupils gaining more than five A*-G grades, although in 1998, in this category, attainment was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining at least one A*-G grade has fallen against national standards and is well below average. The average points score of pupils has remained well below average. Standards of attainment by the school have risen steadily over the past two years, most markedly last year when the highest ever attainment in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades was recorded. However, the overall trend of improvement has been broadly in line with rising standards nationally, and the gap between attainment in the school and national standards has not narrowed.

Sixth form

- 11 Over the last six years only one group has reached the number regarded as a statistically significant figure of five students. The numbers of students taking particular subjects and courses varies from year to year. In some years some courses do not run. It is therefore not possible to comment meaningfully on trends in attainment.

Attainment in subjects

Years 7 to 11

- 12 In teachers' formal assessments of pupils at age 14 in non-core subjects in 2001, which were not moderated nationally, attainment was below average in most subjects. Overall, these assessments appear accurate based on inspection evidence. In design and technology, above average results were recorded, but the accuracy of this assessment is not supported by evidence of the below average standards now found in Year 10. The school supports this view.
- 13 In GCSE examinations, in all subjects entered, attainment was below the national average in the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades. However on average points scores, in science where all pupils are entered for a double award, and physical education taken by a minority of pupils, attainment was broadly in line with national averages. The school entered lower proportions of pupils for mathematics and English literature than found nationally. Attainment in English language was well below the national average. The small numbers of pupils entered for some subjects make national comparisons difficult.

Sixth form

- 14 The small number of students in each subject in the sixth form makes national comparisons unreliable.

Comparative subject attainment within the school

Years 7 to 11

- 15 In GCSE examinations in 2001, pupils typically gained significantly higher grades in science than their average grades. Grades in English and French were significantly lower. This was the same for both girls and boys.

Sixth form

- 16 Small numbers entered for subjects make comparisons statistically unreliable.

Targets set by the school

Years 7 to 11

- 17 The targets set by the school for 2001 in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, five or more A*-G grades and on average points score were all exceeded.
- 18 The targets set for 2002 are lower than those achieved in 2001. They are achievable based on the current performance of Year 11 pupils identified in school documentation and confirmed by the inspection. They reflect the levels of attainment for this year group in national tests at age 14 and suggest satisfactory progress has been made during Years 10 and 11. However, the lower attainment of this group compared to the previous year group can be attributed not so much to their levels of

attainment on entry, but to the slow rate of progress made by many pupils between the ages of 11 and 14, especially English.

- 19 Targets set by the school for 2003 are more aspirational, predicting an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades to 44%. Inspection observations indicate that higher levels of attainment are now found in Year 10, so this target is challenging but attainable. For the first time as expected nationally, the school has set targets for pupils at age 14 in 2003. Although significantly higher than has been achieved in previous years, based on the attainment of Year 8 who had a higher attainment profile at age 11 than other year groups in the school, they are achievable but could be more challenging.

Sixth form

- 20 Overall targets for examination results in the sixth form are not required nationally. Students have individual targets which they are currently on track to meet.

Attainment and achievement by pupils currently in the school.

- 21 The inspection took place at the end of January, a point almost half way through the academic year so provided a good picture of how pupils had progressed since the beginning of the year. During the inspection, 87 lessons were observed in Years 7-9, 46 in Years 10 and 11 and 22 in the sixth form in which judgements were made on the standards of attainment. Observations covered every year group, and teaching groups across a wide range of abilities found in the school. Visits were made to another school in the sixth form consortium to observe lessons where students from Alderman Callow learn in conjunction with students from other schools. The work of six pupils of differing abilities from each year from Year 7 to Year 11 was selected and provided by the school, together with a good sample of work from pupils with statements of educational need together with their statements. This was carefully scrutinised together with a much wider sample of work found in lessons and provided by departments, including records of past events. Students in the sixth form provided their work in the subjects inspected and discussed it with the subject inspectors.

Years 7 to 11

- 22 Overall attainment by pupils by age 14 is below national expectations overall, and in most subjects. Attainment of pupils in English and mathematics is below that expected for their age. In science and music, pupils are achieving standards in line with those expected for their age, and in information and communication technology pupils are achieving slightly below but close to standards expected. The attainment of pupils in Year 8 is below average, but better for their age than that found in Year 9. In Year 7, attainment in lessons is close to national expectations and shows good progress has been made against their attainment on entry to the school which in September was well below average.
- 23 Attainment by pupils age 16 is below average overall. In English and mathematics it is below average, but in science is in line with standards typically expected at this stage of their GCSE course. In all other subjects, attainment is below average except in history and ICT where it is close to average. Pupils' attainment in Year 10 in the majority of lessons seen was judged average or better.
- 24 Overall, in both key stages, the improved attainment shown by younger pupils

compared with previous years, which cannot be wholly attributed to pupils' attainment on entry to the school, shows a positive picture of improved progress and attainment linked to better quality teaching and learning over time.

Sixth form

25 Students currently in the sixth form in all the subjects inspected are working broadly in line with their course expectations. Students compared to their GCSE performance are making good progress.

Standards in key skills

Literacy

Years 7 to 11

26 Pupils have significantly poor literacy skills, particularly in speaking and listening, sentence structure and extended writing. They are below the average on entry to the school and pupils do not make the progress they should from year to year. This is particularly evident when pupils are asked to produce longer pieces of writing, especially boys. The low standards are affecting pupils' performance across the curriculum and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency if standards overall in the school are to rise.

Numeracy

27 Basic numeracy skills across the school are below average but in mathematics pupils' mental skills, written methods of calculation and the use of calculators are consistently developed. Limited opportunities are provided in subjects other than mathematics to develop pupils' numeracy skills. Poor numeracy skills inhibit pupils' ability to learn in some subjects, notably geography and in lower science sets.

Information and communication technology

28 Pupils' skills in information and communication technology [ICT] are mainly developed through timetabled ICT lessons where standards are average by age 14 and above average by age 16. There is some good use of ICT in other subjects, for example, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. However, this is not consistent across all subjects and in some, notably mathematics, pupils do not develop fully their ability to apply ICT skills.

Sixth form

29 The school has experimented with entering students for national accreditation in key skills. A course in *Application of Number* was trialled last year, but students did not proceed to accreditation. Currently information and communication and technology [ICT] is taught in the context of subjects being studied and there are specific lessons devoted to support for ICT. For example, in an ICT key skills lesson students were helped with computer presentations that they then delivered in an AS-level biology lesson as part of their research into genetically modified foods. The presentations were assessed against Level 2 criteria in ICT and Level 3 in communication in the biology lesson. Several students were able to show that they met the criteria, giving confident team presentations enhanced by very good ICT skills. Support for the preparation of evidence for portfolios is also given in specific timetabled key skills lessons.

30 Access to ICT resources is adequate and students are competent users of computers,

producing word-processed documents and using the Internet for research. ICT is not used enough within a subject context in mathematics, business studies and psychology but key ICT skills are being developed well in the context of some subjects, biology for example. However, even in biology there are currently insufficient opportunities for use of data logging.

- 31 Numeracy skills are sufficiently well developed to enable students to complete assignments in the context of the subjects where application is needed.

Progress made by pupils with special educational needs

Years 7 to 11

- 32 Given their prior attainment on entry, pupils with special educational needs make good progress by the age of 14. The majority continues to make progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and progress for the majority by age 16 is satisfactory. The majority of pupils in both key stages make very good progress in achieving targets set in their individual education plans.

Achievements of different groups of pupils

Years 7 to 11

- 33 There are a small number of **pupils from minority ethnic groups** who arrive in the school with a range of first languages and **English as an additional language**. They have a wide range of levels of ability. These pupils are well monitored, supported and integrated within the school. They make good progress over time, and where necessary, receive appropriate additional support which is managed through the learning support centre. Their individual progress is closely monitored. The small number of **black and Asian heritage pupils** in lessons observed were attaining at least in line with other pupils and making similar progress. Some pupils of Asian heritage were achieving well. **Gifted and talented pupils** are provided with some additional provision outside of normal lessons, but planning within subjects to enable them to excel is very limited. For example, many pupils learn to play an instrument, but rarely use this skill in music lessons. The development of these pupils is an aspect to which the school needs to give greater attention.

Summary of attainment and progress

Years 7 to 11

- 34 School data shows that the attainment of pupils on entry to the school fluctuates from year to year but is generally well below average. This reflects the above average number of pupils entering the school with a wide variety of special educational needs. There is also a higher number of pupils entering and leaving the school than in many schools of this size. National data and school analysis show that progress made by pupils has in the past been inconsistent and for some year groups too slow. Results in tests and examinations show pupils who took their GCSE examinations last year and the current Year 11 have not made the expected levels of progress during their time at the school. However, inspection evidence supports the view that the rate of progress made by pupils is improving. Attainment levels now found in Year 10 compared to their attainment on entry to the school shows they have benefited from recent improvements in teaching, learning and subject management. Pupils' learning in lessons is good. Low standards in English and weak literacy skills have depressed

attainment at both ages 14 and 16, especially for boys, and continue to do so now.

- 35 The most influential factors in whether the school can improve its current standards, assuming the good quality of teaching is maintained and consolidated, is in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly in order to benefit from the good provision being made for them and the improvement of pupils' literacy skills.

Sixth form

- 36 The majority of students do well compared with their prior attainment in the great majority of subjects, and the pass rate is very high. Students of minority ethnic background achieve as well as other students. There is no obvious trend in the relative performance of male and female students which highlights any particular differences.
- 37 The great majority of students complete the courses that they embark upon. Retention rates are very good. This reflects the good initial advice to students on which courses to follow and the excellent pastoral support which sustains students through any difficulties they may encounter. Students have returned to the school from colleges of further education when they have felt the lack of personal support.
- 38 Students make good progress overall. Evidence from students' work and ALIS value-added data shows that most attain good results in comparison to their GCSE results. Students have attained the higher grades at A-level, which shows that the most able are challenged and achieve their potential. Most students carry on into higher education.

Parents' views

- 39 Of the 77 parents who responded to the questionnaire, 96% believe their children make good progress at the school. 42 parents attended the parent' meeting and expressed the view that that the school sets high expectations and all pupils are expected to do their best. They identified the extra study provision and support from staff as helpful in enabling their children to make progress. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and pupils entering the school speaking little English was valued and praised.

Progress since the previous report

Years 7 to 11

- 40 Since the previous report, attainment in national tests at age 14 has risen significantly in mathematics and science, but remained broadly the same in English. In GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A*-C passes has risen by almost 9% and the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades by 3%. The average points score has risen by 4.7. In most subjects, satisfactory progress has been made with standards maintained or improved most notably in science and French.
- 41 The improved provision made for pupils with special educational needs now enables them to make better progress.

Sixth form

- 42 Improvements in attainment cannot be easily quantified as data is unavailable and numbers low, but since the previous inspection as a result of improved GCSE results, more pupils continued their education in the sixth form in 2001 than in previous years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Years 7 to 11

- 43 The majority of pupils have a good attitude to their learning and behave very well in lessons. However, the poor attendance of a large number of pupils shows an unsatisfactory attitude to education and has a negative effect on their progress over time.
- 44 Most pupils have a very positive attitude towards school and appreciate the activities and courses provided for them, particularly the extracurricular activities and the trips. Almost all pupils speak very highly of the support they receive from teachers. Throughout the school, most pupils usually show good levels of interest in their work especially when they find it challenging. They work hard in lessons to complete the tasks they are given, especially when these are well matched to their ability. This makes a positive contribution to their learning and achievement in lessons. However, occasionally one or two pupils in a class do not concentrate fully on the work and attempt to disrupt the lesson. In most lessons, this is well managed by staff.
- 45 Behaviour in lessons is very good overall. In the many lessons where behaviour was observed to be very good, pupils listened carefully to the teacher and to other pupils. They were well motivated to succeed by interesting, timed tasks that are well matched to their needs. Many pupils find it difficult to sustain their concentration for long periods, especially when the tasks involve writing, and so work best when they have a variety of tasks to complete. Unsatisfactory behaviour was observed in only seven lessons. This represents a very positive picture and a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- 46 The attitude and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are generally good. The majority are well motivated, keen to succeed and considerate of the needs of others. They try hard to achieve their best and most have a positive attitude to work. However, a significant number of pupils have special educational needs which are specifically related to their behaviour and, for this group of pupils, attitudes to work are sometimes unsatisfactory. The very good classroom management of the teachers helps the quality of behaviour in many lessons. The high numbers of support assistants allocated to groups ensure that pupils with behavioural difficulties are kept on task and rarely disrupt others.
- 47 Pupils generally cooperate well and work effectively in small groups when they are given the opportunity, as for instance in a Year 7 personal and social education lesson where they were discussing ways to improve the school code of conduct. When using equipment, for example in science and design and technology, pupils usually cooperate sensibly. Pupils often support one another well, for example, when in a Year 7 history lesson pupils with speech and language difficulties were helped by other pupils to understand new vocabulary. Pupils are also good at helping those new to the school to settle in.
- 48 A significant number of pupils find it difficult to take responsibility for their own

work and to work independently without recourse to the teacher. The support staff usually help pupils to work independently but in some cases, ready access to this support leads pupils to ask for help rather than trying things out for themselves. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to evaluate the work they have done and, sometimes, the work of their classmates. In some lessons, for example in a Year 9 design and technology lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to develop their independence. One pupil demonstrated the traditional skills of hand mixing and another used an electric whisk so that the class could compare the efficiency of both methods.

- 49 Standards of behaviour around the school are very good overall, although some incidents of pushing and other boisterous behaviour were observed. The school functions as an orderly community. Pupils are allowed into the building at break times and lunchtime and repay this trust by treating the school's property with respect. Behaviour in the dining hall is very good overall. The narrow doorways cause congestion at busy times but pupils are generally patient and polite. Almost all pupils are polite and courteous to adults and most are confident to engage adults in conversation.
- 50 The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and is a major strength of its work. Almost all pupils respond well to the good role models provided by staff both in lessons and around the school. Pupils greatly appreciate the support that teachers give to them and respond positively to it. They generally treat others with courtesy and consideration and show respect for the feelings and values of others. Pupils usually treat their own and other pupils' property with respect. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils promote an effective working atmosphere in most lessons, especially when the tasks match pupils' ability. Pupils report that there is very little bullying or other forms of oppressive behaviour but that the school takes a strong line when it does occur, ensuring that incidents are dealt with both quickly and effectively. Social relationships between pupils between different races and cultures are good overall. Pupils feel safe in school.
- 51 The school has a clear code of conduct that is well publicised through the homework diary and around the school. The code of conduct is well understood by almost all pupils and they almost always choose to comply with it. Pupils also understand the system of rewards and sanctions. Most younger pupils value the merit stickers that they receive and enjoy collecting them. However, not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 respond well to the reward system and feel that it is inappropriate to their age group.
- 52 The school works very hard through its pastoral care systems to avoid excluding pupils. The rate of exclusions in the school is around the average when compared to similar schools. Last year there were two permanent exclusions and 23 fixed term exclusions. There have been no recent exclusions of any ethnic minority pupils.
- 53 Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting, a significant number have concerns about the standard of behaviour. However, inspection evidence does not bear out their concerns and behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.

Attendance

- 54 Attendance is poor. Attendance at the time of the previous inspection in 1998 at 88.6% was well below the national average. Despite the increased efforts of the school to address this issue, attendance levels now are lower than they were at the previous inspection, and remain well below the national average. However, levels of unauthorised absence are low compared to the national average. In the academic year 2000 to 2001 attendance was 86.6%, with 13% authorised absence and 0.4% unauthorised absence. Whilst in every year group there are pupils who have high rates of attendance, there is a significant number of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. The greatest cause for concern is in Year 11 where 28% of pupils fail to attend for more than 80% of the time. In practice, this means that over a quarter of the year group miss a fifth of their educational entitlement. This has a detrimental effect on their achievement and their GCSE coursework suffers considerably.
- 55 The school has worked very hard over the last four years to monitor attendance closely. Analysis of absence is very thorough but time consuming in the absence of electronic data management. More parents than before now take their child out of school for holidays. A small number of pupils are admitted to the school following permanent exclusion elsewhere and usually have poor attendance records. Pupils who leave the school cannot be taken off roll until they have registered with another school; in some cases this takes several weeks. The school is aware that a significant minority of parents condone the absence of their child but has not succeeded in turning around parental attitudes. The school consistently promotes the importance of regular attendance with pupils and their parents. However, despite its efforts the attitude of a significant minority of both parents and pupils towards the importance of regular attendance remains poor.
- 56 Punctuality at the start of the day is a problem. The significant level of lateness in the morning is appropriately recorded and leads to detention. However, this does not motivate all pupils to ensure that they attend promptly.

Sixth form

- 57 Students have very positive attitudes to the school and their work. Their attendance and morale are high. They value the opportunities that the school provides through the consortium arrangement. Students who would not otherwise have considered staying in education after the age of 16 are given the confidence to tackle sixth form study. The support given by the school helps them to cope with the complications of travel and education between two schools. Alderman Callow students are in a minority in sixth form groups. They tend to sit and work together for mutual support, but staff integrate them well into whole class activities. Some students study all their subject courses off site, but remain on the Alderman Callow school roll and return for tutorials, key skills and personal, social and health education lessons. Students have tremendous team spirit and regard return to Alderman Callow for lessons or tutorials as returning home. Sixth formers also involve themselves in extracurricular activities at the school.
- 58 Students' behaviour is of a very high standard. They are good role models for younger pupils. The excellent relationships that exist between students and between students and staff are a strength of the school. Students are confident, good humoured and mature. They are willing to take responsibility and take an active role in the school council. Students are well motivated and very focussed on tasks in lessons. They are able to work independently and also together in small groups. Although

levels of attendance are high, records are not as accurate as they should be.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

59 Teaching overall is good and enables pupils to learn well in lessons. Only three of the 155 lessons observed during the inspection were unsatisfactory. Over seven out of ten lessons were good or better, and almost a third of lessons were of very good or excellent quality. Teaching is consistently good across Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form.

Years 7 to 11

60 Teaching is good overall across the majority of subjects. Of the small number of unsatisfactory lessons seen, two were in mathematics and one in French. In history and French, at least half of the lessons seen were very good or excellent. In physical education including dance, all lessons seen were good, very good or excellent.

Sixth form

61 The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good overall. Of the 22 lessons seen, all were at least satisfactory. Eight out of ten were good or better and close to a third were very good or excellent.

Excellent, very good and good teaching and learning

62 Some very good and excellent teaching was seen in the majority of subjects and across all key stages and in the sixth form. Good or better teaching was seen in all subjects. Where teaching is of high quality, students make very good progress in their learning and achieve good standards.

63 Where teaching was observed to be good, very good or excellent, some of the characteristics of the lesson included:

- teachers showing good levels of subject expertise *as found in all subjects*;
- clear learning objectives with very good use of time and resources *as in a Year 8 English lesson when pupils wrote stories about their pets*;
- stimulating and challenging work allowing pupils to demonstrate high levels of skill and independence and develop their thinking skills *as in a Year 9 science lesson where pupils considered and arranged statements and engaged in group discussions to develop hypotheses about chemical reactions*;
- very well planned and sequential lesson activities to enable pupils to learn progressively *as in a Year 10 food technology lesson where pupils showed confidence in the practical application of the skills they had learned*;
- teachers selecting carefully the range of resources and lesson activities to generate pupils' interest and understanding *as in a Year 11 geography lesson, where music, models, maps and photographs were very well used in conjunction with discussion and questioning to move pupils towards an extended piece of writing, as well as developed their social skills; and in a Year 9 music lesson where pupils worked on their keyboard performance skills using their own choice of music adapted by the teacher*;
- good use of questioning and management of pupils' responses to consolidate on what they already knew and help to move them forwards *as in a Year 7 French lesson when pupils learned how to describe themselves*;
- very carefully planned lessons to ensure that difficult subjects were presented in

ways that pupils could understand, *when for example, in the study of Hamlet by Year 7 pupils with special educational needs, through teacher input, questions and answers, practical activity and individual and group work and the effective involvement of a learning support assistant, pupils extended their speaking skills;*

- *emphasis on important skills such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology as in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where emphasis on mathematical vocabulary helped pupils in a lower ability set to understand the concept of symmetry and a Year 9 religious education lesson where writing frames helped pupils to structure their answers;*
- *very good use of on-going assessment such as in a Year 7 gymnastics class where the teacher provided a good balance between praise and challenge with individual feedback to pupils so they could build and improve their confidence and control of takeoff and landings;*
- *very carefully planned lesson activities to enable pupils working at different rates to make progress throughout the lesson, such as in a Year 8 history lesson on the English Civil War, where the teaching styles and strategies planned by the teacher coupled with good understanding by learning support assistants of individual needs, enabled pupils of differing abilities to make very good progress;*
- *excellent relationships between teachers and pupils as seen in many lessons including personal, social and health education lessons which were taught by form tutors.*
- *combinations of all of these factors as seen in a sixth form lesson in dance where the teacher's own high levels of subject knowledge were used to help students make excellent progress in their understanding of the most complex part of their A-level course, through a combination of very well prepared resources, practical activity and detailed feedback to each student on how they could improve.*

- 64 Good **sixth form** teaching is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations of students' performance, combined with well-structured lessons employing a range of teaching strategies. Teachers often lead the lesson with clear explanations and skilful questioning techniques, which check students' knowledge and understanding effectively and provides an element of challenge. This approach results in well-paced lessons with other well-integrated activities which enable students to develop the skills of the subject through research, practical assignments, presentations and group work. Teachers are good at relating the work in hand to the requirements of the subject specification. They give systematic attention to consolidating students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm for their subject well.

Satisfactory teaching and learning

- 65 In addition to the excellent, very good and good lessons, about a quarter of lessons seen were satisfactory. These lessons provided an acceptable level of teaching with neither particular strengths nor weaknesses. They were planned and delivered effectively and promoted sound progress.

Unsatisfactory teaching

- 66 Unsatisfactory teaching does not enable pupils to make enough progress. In the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons observed, one or more of the following weaknesses was demonstrated:

- pupils were unclear about what was expected of them;
- low expectations were set by the teacher in relation to pupils' standards of work and behaviour;
- lack of pace and challenge in the work provided;
- inability of the teacher to manage some pupils' poor behaviour;
- lack of provision for the different learning needs of pupils;
- weak lesson planning with emphasis on activities rather than learning objectives;
- inconsistent and poor quality marking of pupils' work.

Special educational needs

67 The specialist teaching of literacy and numeracy in small withdrawal groups is very good. It is characterised by careful planning and well-designed individualised education plans [IEPs]. Detailed IEPs drawn up by the special educational needs coordinator provide excellent strategies for supporting the learning of lower attaining pupils, and are highly valued by mainstream subject specialists. Pupils with special educational needs taught in mainstream classes are often supported by teaching assistants, but their effectiveness in supporting pupils is variable. When it is effective it is characterised by good pre-planning and liaison between subject specialists and the educational assistant, and in most cases support is effective. When this is not done and there has been insufficient liaison between the subject specialist and the teaching assistant, time can be wasted. Teachers are positive in their marking of work but in the majority of cases, pupils are not told why their work is good, very good or excellent. Marking needs to be more consistently developmental so pupils are given clearer guidance on how they can improve.

Gifted and talented pupils

68 Opportunities for gifted and talented pupils have additional activities and provision made for them outside of the normal lessons. Although in some subjects these pupils are challenged and extension work is made available, this is not a strong feature of teaching and opportunities are sometimes missed. It is a group of pupils for whom greater provision is needed.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language

69 Support for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is managed through the learning support department. Pupils are given additional support either in lessons or through withdrawal. This is effective in helping them to develop their skills in English and in accessing them to the curriculum, and most make good progress.

Other factors in teaching

70 30% of the 77 parents who returned the questionnaire did not feel their children had the right amount of homework. At the meeting for parents, the majority of parents felt that homework diaries were used and diaries were helpful, but the levels set were variable and pupils were sometimes overloaded. Pupils themselves identified variations in the quantity and quality of the work set by different subjects and teachers, and this was confirmed by entries in pupils' homework diaries. Although the provision of homework is satisfactory overall, it is one of the less well developed

aspects of teaching and learning.

- 71 The assessment policy provides effective guidance on marking. Senior managers are now regularly scrutinising pupils' work, and are giving individual feedback to teachers on the quality of their marking so as to improve its quality. The use of grades for effort and marks for attainment is well established as a routine and understood by pupils. Comments consistently encourage pupils' effort. Good work is praised and rewarded. Marking for encouragement is seen as a way of motivating pupils and they certainly value positive comments. Comments about pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects are relatively rare and do not provide pupils with the information they need about what they should do next to improve in specific areas relevant to the subject. There are some good examples by individual teachers in English and religious education, but in most other subjects, this is a weakness.

Sixth form

- 72 Students' work is assessed well. In some subjects, feedback about how to improve is better than others, but work is conscientiously marked. Feedback on homework is sometimes better than on class work. Information gained from assessment is used by teachers to inform their lesson planning. Consolidation of students' knowledge and understanding in response to their answers in assignments is regularly planned into lessons. This generates discussion in which students have the opportunity to clarify their understanding. Specification criteria are constantly referred to as part of these discussions and in lessons generally. Performance in tests is compared with students' targets, and they are helped to understand how to improve.

Progress since the previous inspection

- 73 Overall, progress in this area of provision has been good. The previous report identified satisfactory or better teaching in 91% of lessons with good or better in over half and very good or excellent teaching found in about 15% of lessons. An interim report by HMI based on a smaller sample found higher levels of unsatisfactory teaching. Inspection observations now show significant improvements compared to both the OFSTED and HMI inspections. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped to only 2%, and there has been a very substantial increase in the proportion of good, very good and excellent lessons. This improvement demonstrates that the additional and sustained focus on teaching and learning made by the school, and changes in staffing, have begun to impact on the quality of teaching. There is evidence that the quality of pupils' learning is improving as a result, but it is at a slower than the rate of improvement in teaching. Pupils need time to build on their enjoyment of lessons and to develop more independent skills in order to become good learners.

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

Years 7 – 11

- 74 The total teaching time each week is below the recommended number of hours, but the school is currently reviewing this situation. The school is providing all of its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements

other than in the provision of an act of daily collective worship. The curriculum includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, but too little time is devoted to religious education in all years. There is equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils and the school meets the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities well. Overall, the curriculum makes sound provision for the needs and interests of the range of pupils in the school.

- 75 In Years 7 to 9, sufficient time is given for all National Curriculum subjects to teach the required programmes of study, but time for religious education is below that recommended. Pupils are taught in sets according to their ability in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and English in Years 7 and 9, and for science in Years 8 and 9. This arrangement enables teachers to prepare appropriate lessons suitable to the range of abilities found in each set. French is the only modern foreign language taught in the school. A lesson of personal, social and health education takes place weekly, in addition to personal development work carried out during registration sessions which contribute well to pupils' personal, moral and social development. A course in citizenship is currently being developed as part of this programme ready for introduction as a required element later this year.
- 76 In Years 10 and 11, pupils study a core curriculum which includes all required subjects. All pupils study a double science course, and high standards in this course make a good contribution to pupils' overall success at GCSE. All pupils study a short course in religious education but time is again low to meet Locally Agreed Syllabus requirements. Similarly, pupils are only at present able to study a short course in design and technology. Improvements made to leadership and teaching in these subjects, resulting from recent staffing changes, are now in evidence, and the school will be reintroducing full GCSE courses again in the next academic year. All pupils study a short course leading to GCSE in information and communication technology. Pupils are able to select other subjects from an appropriate range provided in two option blocks. The school has moved to provide a more differentiated and relevant curriculum for certain pupils through a vocational course. The development of work-related learning has to date covered a number of activities and courses related to pupils' interests which pupils can attend in local partnership centres. In most cases, pupils have been motivated by these alternatives, and as most courses are accredited it has enabled some pupils to improve their qualifications by age 16. GNVQ opportunities in business education have also been provided within the school. The take up of music, expressive arts and single subject sciences as options are too low to enable timetabled provision in Year 11, but all of these examination courses are taught in lessons after school. There is appropriate provision for personal, social and health education.
- 77 The quality of provision for pupils with **special educational needs** is good throughout the school, and very good in many instances in relation to pupils' specific learning difficulties. Provision is made for a wide range of needs and all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. Specialist special educational needs teachers show very good subject knowledge and demonstrate a highly professional and caring attitude to the planning and delivery of the curriculum for their pupils. There is very thorough and well planned assessment of individual needs. Well constructed individual learning plans underpin pupils' learning and progress, and provide particularly useful strategies for subject specialists in meeting objectives and targets. Pupils are challenged in their thinking and encouraged to become increasingly independent.

- 78 There is a programme of support for **gifted and talented pupils** outside of lesson time, but it does not receive adequate time and attention to be fully effective in providing for these pupils, and this area of provision needs further development within subjects and across the school.
- 79 **Literacy and numeracy** skills across the curriculum have been subject to some development but they continue to require more attention and enhanced provision. National Key Stage 3 strategies have not yet made sufficient impact. Some departments have begun to embed literacy skills more securely into teaching and learning, for example science, but in many subjects more effective concentration on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is required to address pupils' current low levels in both of these key skills.
- 80 **Information and communication technology** [ICT] has over recent years been a priority area within curriculum development. There has been a considerable investment in equipment and resources, improvements in teachers' skills and in developing the contribution of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic in their use of ICT in lessons, and in their access to the library and the computer club. However, there is inconsistency in the use of ICT across subjects with some subjects having made a sound start such as art but together with most others subjects, substantial further development is needed, especially mathematics.
- 81 Provision for **extracurricular activities** is good. The programme is popular with pupils and highly valued by them. During the inspection, a very wide range of well attended activities was seen, including sports, computer club, music, dance, and study club. There is a strong commitment by staff to provide opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests. This extends to residential visits and to activities during weekends and holidays. The school has received both a Sportsmark award and an Education Extra Award with Distinction for the range of its extracurricular provision. The programme of extracurricular activities, including the recently introduced Duke of Edinburgh Award, has a positive impact on the personal development of those pupils who choose to take part. Almost all pupils become involved in some of these activities, although some do not do so on a regular basis. The Christmas concert gives an opportunity for very large numbers to contribute and is a popular event.
- 82 Most pupils appreciate the programme of **personal, social and health education** [PSHE]. They realise that the topics are relevant to their lives and find the lessons helpful. This is well planned and comprehensive. The coordinator for personal and social education is currently reviewing the programme to ensure that it remains relevant to pupils' needs and that the resources are up-to-date. The school also has a coordinator for health and sex education, based in the science department. The careers service and school nurse provide useful input into the PSHE programme.
- 83 Additional arrangements are made to ensure that pupils with disabilities have the same opportunities as their peers where health and safety is not compromised; for example, when trips are organised.
- 84 In Year 10, the provision of two weeks work experience contributes markedly to pupils' experiences outside the school, their **careers education** and to their decisions on future directions. The school has benefited from being a pilot school for the

Connexions initiative, with an office based within the school. Guidance and careers support have continued to be developed through personal advisers, work related advice and, mentoring projects developed through *Connexions* and community and business education links. This increased support has been especially advantageous to those pupils who are probably less likely to continue in training or education after Year 11.

- 85 The school's **links with its local business and education communities** are bringing about further new opportunities. There are initiatives with several universities, including nearby University of Warwick in mentoring and study club support activities. Canley Business Forum's promotion of Business in the Community projects provide further examples of benefits to the school. More comprehensive detail of the school's links with the community can be found in pages 50 to 51 of this report .
- 86 **Curriculum planning** within subjects is inconsistent and an area for improvement. The good quality of teaching and learning in the classroom has not yet been translated into clear schemes of work to cover longer term planning. The quality of schemes of work is very variable, with a need for the revision and updating of schemes in most subjects. Better planning is needed to show how pupils will be helped to maintain their progress in knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. The **homework** timetable is generally adhered to and leads to satisfactory extension of class work.
- 87 The school's overall provision for pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is good overall but with wide variations in provision between the different aspects.
- 88 The programme for personal, social and health education provides a focus for moral and social education, as do expectations and the code for behaviour both in lessons and around the school. Provision for **moral** education is very good. Staff set the pupils a very good example in their relationships with them, and their attitudes and values which support those of the school aims. Moral issues are addressed in teaching and in class discussions, and tutorial periods permit further opportunities as issues arise. Assemblies include multi-faith themes which emphasise the principles and values underlying personal and social responsibilities. Pupils clearly know right from wrong, they respect others, and the best evidence that the school is successful in establishing high moral standards comes from the ethos and relationships between pupils of different ages and backgrounds and between pupils and staff.
- 89 Provision for **social** development is good, and the outcomes are again seen within personal and group relationships. Pupils have many opportunities in their lessons to develop independent and group-work skills which promote social development. While there could be more opportunities to take on specific responsibilities, participation in the varied activities on offer and a willingness to provide assistance as and when needs arise show pupils have good levels of maturity and responsibility. The school council enables pupils to learn about democratic principles and to involve themselves in improving the school. This is done both at an advisory level, for example by the involvement of pupils in interviews for new staff, and at a practical level such as pupils voluntarily helping to design, decorate and improve the school buildings. The school provides a number of other opportunities for pupils to take

responsibility, for example through training to be a peer mentor. Year 7 pupils entering the school are well supported by the peer mentors and the circle of friends. Some positive projects involving the community take place, for example a group of pupils provided artwork for a local primary school.

- 90 Provision for **cultural** development is just satisfactory. It is provided through some areas of the curriculum, for example in religious education, art and history. Pupils are encouraged to share and appreciate differing cultural values and traditions, including in assembly presentations. Racial, religious and cultural harmony is fostered through some relevant curriculum links, through display, assemblies, visits, and through celebrating some of the major religious festivals. However, provision for cultural development is not a strong area of provision, and the teaching about cultural diversity is often at a basic level, does not fully explore context, meaning and purpose, and needs to be better developed.
- 91 Provision for pupils' **spiritual** development is unsatisfactory. There has been some improvement since the last inspection but there remains too little identification and exploitation of opportunities to develop and raise pupils' awareness. Too little time is currently spent on religious education in all year groups and other subjects do not plan for spiritual development. Too little attention is given in providing pupils with time for thoughtful reflection on their experiences, the values of world religions and the wonder of the world around them.
- 92 Since the previous inspection, there has been an overall improvement in the curriculum provision, with some significant areas of development. While provision for religious education, spiritual development and further cultural enrichment continue to require attention, the wide ranging needs of pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 are mainly being appropriately met.

Sixth form

- 93 The school makes good provision for students after the age of 16 through consortium arrangements with another school, as well as providing information about courses in other local partnership colleges. It enables the school, through collaborative approaches with its partner school, to provide a broad range of subjects and courses for students choosing to remain at Alderman Callow. Teaching takes place both on the school site and at the partner school by staff attached to each school teaching groups containing students from both schools. This inevitably involves the students in time spent travelling, but this is well managed.
- 94 Students are given sound advice on what to study in the sixth form and in the colleges of further education. The consortium partner school presents information to Year 11 pupils. Alderman Callow's head of sixth form, assistant headteacher and deputy headteacher give valued advice and, prospective students are able to take advantage of trial or taster sixth form lessons. Appropriate combinations of subjects and courses are selected by students, which open up a range of opportunities for them when they leave school. Overall uptake of post-16 education by Year 11 pupils is good.
- 95 The sixth form curriculum provided by the school meets statutory requirements with the exception of the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship. Until the current academic year, religious education has been neglected in the sixth form. The time allocated for religious education falls below the time recommended. To cover

this shortfall, a two-day conference is planned in order to meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for these students.

- 96 The school has access to the broad range of AS and A-level courses on offer in the partner school in the consortium. Opportunities for vocational education are more limited, but there are opportunities in advanced and intermediate vocational certificate courses. Although intermediate and advanced vocational courses are on offer, take up varies very much from year to year. There remains some inconsistency in the annual provision of courses due to the low numbers of post-16 students within the school. Provision is, however, steadily being expanded and the school is seeking to consolidate the availability of both intermediate and advanced courses. Courses offered in the partner school's sixth form enable students to take sound combinations of subjects, and arrangements between the two schools are good.
- 97 Students also have a programme of tutorials, key skills and personal, social and health education [PSHE] which includes Young Enterprise. These enhance the curriculum and provide good opportunities for students to work together as a sixth form group. During the inspection, students were preparing workshops about refugees to present to Year 7 pupils as part of their PHSE course. This allowed them both to research and consider the issues surrounding refugees, and to plan and to evaluate their presentations with their peers before presenting their work. Young Enterprise gives students valuable insights into the world of industry. In work seen, the advisers' contributions were very good and the students benefited from their expertise and experience. The success of the course can be seen from the many awards that the students win in a very competitive field.
- 98 Extracurricular provision is limited by students having to travel during the lunchtime, but there are opportunities which students take advantage of, for example aerobics, multi-gym, hockey and trampoline, and sixth formers act as sports leaders in trampolining.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Years 7 to 11

- 99 The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils and has maintained the levels of care noted in the previous inspection report. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including arrangements for child protection and first aid, are good. The arrangements for dealing with child protection issues are very clear and comply with legal requirements. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety in practical lessons such as art and design, design and technology and physical education. Pupils are appropriately supervised out of lessons. The school has appropriate procedures in place to audit health and safety but currently these are not fully documented at the time of the audit, although they are recorded.
- 100 Pastoral care is the responsibility of the heads of year and form tutors. Form tutors spend a significant amount of time with their form each week, including teaching the programme of personal social and health education [PSHE]. The heads of year work closely with their team of form tutors to monitor attendance and behaviour. Both form tutors and year heads develop very good relationships with pupils and know them well. This knowledge is used sensitively in the pastoral care they provide. The high quality of relationships helps to ensure that pupils trust tutors to deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils are confident that teachers will deal with any

concerns they may have about their work, bullying or personal matters.

- 101 The school works hard to respond to the personal and social needs of individual pupils, particularly those with greater need. This commitment is evident through its funding of additional salary points for staff with responsibilities for **social inclusion** and through its systems and structures. There is a social inclusion management group and weekly individual needs meetings, involving senior managers and others. The social inclusion coordinator is also the designated teacher for children in public care and she ensures that the appropriate level of support and administration is in place where needed. The school has access for the disabled to the main building and makes good provision for the visually impaired.
- 102 The previous inspection directed the school to maintain efforts to improve attendance, especially with those parents who failed to support the school. The school has improved its monitoring of attendance and expanded the range of strategies in place to promote good attendance. However, despite the school working extremely hard to promote the importance of regular and prompt attendance, the figures remain poor and attendance has fallen. The school's efforts have been impeded since the previous inspection by some disruption in the level of service from the education welfare service but the school now benefits from a full-time officer based at the school. Good attendance is rewarded in a variety of ways, including a merit sticker for each week's full attendance and certificates for each half and full term of 95% or 100% attendance. The school is beginning to look at ways of rewarding individual, improved attendance. Parents are regularly reminded of their responsibility to ensure their child attends school but many do not support the school's stance. Registers are completed accurately at the start of every morning and afternoon session. Attendance is monitored very thoroughly although the production of data and analyses by hand is time consuming. The school has appointed two part-time attendance clerks to follow up absences each morning and is hoping to make this full time as soon as finance allows. All unexplained absences are followed up thoroughly but the school does not routinely make telephone contact with home on the first day of all absences. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to improve attendance but this has not yet had an impact on the figures. A significant number of parents condone their child's absence and, despite being regularly reminded of their responsibility to ensure that their child attends, do not do so. Lateness is monitored by office staff and incurs a detention if it occurs several times in a week.
- 103 The school promotes the importance of good behaviour effectively. The previous inspection report identified that there was inconsistency in the way behaviour was managed but this issue has now been successfully addressed. The behaviour policy and code of conduct provide a clear framework for ensuring good behaviour. The school has a system of rewards and most pupils appreciate these. Pupils in Year 7 already know what is expected of them and appreciate the merits they earn. Most pupils comply with the school's expectations but a range of provision is in place for those who do not. The improved systems now in place put the onus for monitoring behaviour on the subject teacher in the first instance. Should a pupil fail to respond, the head of department becomes involved. Only if these strategies fail are pastoral staff involved. This system ensures that pastoral staff now have time to monitor the personal development and academic progress of all pupils more thoroughly.
- 104 Some pupils have special educational needs specifically related to their behaviour.

These pupils have individual behaviour plans that enable them to gain increasing control over their behaviour. They are well supported in the classroom. Challenging behaviour by pupils is managed well in a firm but caring way, with high standards of behaviour being expected.

- 105 The school is committed to social inclusion and tries very hard and with good success to avoid permanent exclusion. Behaviour support workers come into school on a regular basis to support those pupils whose behaviour is a cause for concern. Parents are informed and involved early in any instances of poor behaviour and the majority supports the school's actions fully. However, a minority does not. Procedures for exclusion are very clear and consistently followed. Pupils are given many chances to improve their behaviour before permanent exclusion.
- 106 The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and bullying is addressed in form time, PSHE lessons and assemblies. The emphasis is on reporting any incidents as soon as possible so that the situation can be dealt with quickly. Pupils are confident that reported bullying is dealt with promptly by staff. The school monitors and logs racial incidents well and notifies the local education authority in line with recommendations and requirements.

Monitoring of academic progress

- 107 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory at school level, but less secure within subjects.
- 108 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are sound. Pupils are given individual end of key stage targets for the levels and grades they should be achieving, based on their results in national test at ages 11 and 14, their results in the middle years information system (MIDYIS) standardised test in Year 7 and 8 and teachers' assessments. Pupils are regularly tested in subjects to provide periodic checks on progress and this is formally recorded each term. The information is used to compare pupils' current work with their targets. Pupils know their targets, which are written in the front of their homework diaries. Pupils' understanding and awareness of these targets varies and the use of targets focused on specific aspects of improvement in subjects is not well developed. Pupils get two annual reports, which are stored electronically as part of pupil records. Form tutors and year heads have oversight of pupils' progress and the senior management team monitors tutor groups' reports. Underachievement against targets results in parents being contacted and pupils being provided with additional opportunities to improve through homework clubs, extra support sessions and by being put in different sets.
- 109 The use of assessment information to guide lesson and curricular planning is satisfactory overall but varies between subjects and teachers. Good examples of where subject planning has been influenced by analysis of data on pupils' progress include a focus on Set 2 in mathematics, the choice of texts in English, and reconsideration of the structure of the Key Stage 4 curriculum in science. The school has also used the optional national progress tests in Year 7, but in common with many other schools nationally, did not find these tests as helpful as they hoped.
- 110 Subject staff are provided with comprehensive information about individual pupils in the form of appropriate data. However, this is still not consistently or adequately used

to set subject-specific targets for pupils, or to monitor pupils' progress and assess whether pupils' show evidence of better than expected progress, or 'value added'. Some good assessment practices are found in mathematics, but in most other subjects, the use of subject specific assessment and target setting for pupils are areas requiring improvement.

- 111 The individual **special educational needs** of the wide range of pupils in the school are very thorough assessed. The well-constructed individual learning plans which underpin pupils' learning and progress provide particularly useful strategies for subject specialists in meeting pupils' specific objectives and targets. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored by the coordinator for social inclusion.
- 112 Pupil records of achievement provide pupils with positive opportunities to consider their own achievements and express views about them. For example, in a Year 9 PHSE lesson, pupils were given a helpful model devised by their form tutor of how they might structure their responses. Pupils were encouraged to consider all their interests and achievements, not just those found in school. Many pupils found this challenging but used the model to good effect in structuring their own responses.

Sixth form

Assessment

- 113 Information provided to prospective sixth formers on what the sixth form has to offer is sound although in the student questionnaire, this was an area students would like improved. Personal and academic advice and guidance from staff are good and contribute to students' sense of security when much of their time is spent out of the school itself. Induction arrangements are good including the programme of 'taster' lessons in Year 11 which help students to know what to expect in the sixth form. Students sometimes take a while to settle to the different approaches of teachers in the other schools. There is no overarching introduction to the study skills required in the sixth form, and subject staff tackle this in their own way.
- 114 The school has high expectations of its students' academic progress and personal development. Pastoral care for sixth form students is excellent, with the exception of monitoring attendance in lessons. Staff know their students well and this helps them to support both their personal development and academic progress effectively. Students can also rely on support from staff who no longer teach them, but are very willing to help with difficulties. This gives students added confidence to cope with subjects that are new to them, taught by staff that they do not know so well in the other school in the consortium.
- 115 Monitoring of students' attendance at school and at specific lessons is unsatisfactory. Alderman Callow students are not on the registers at consortium schools and it is left to the vigilance of teaching staff to report their students' absence from lessons. This tends to happen after more than one absence from a lesson. This enables the school to remind students that educational maintenance awards are threatened, but does not pick up the odd infrequent absence. The school is not able to meet the statutory requirement to keep an accurate sixth form register.

Advice, support and guidance

- 116 Expectations of students' academic progress on joining the sixth form are high. Their target grades are given a high profile, and students get regular feedback about their performance against these targets. There is good academic oversight of students' progress against targets set using GCSE performance through the A-level information system [ALIS]. Students are given a minimum target grade, which is constantly reviewed against their current performance. For example, in an A-level biology lesson individual students were told how performance in their module test related to their target grade and given good advice and encouragement. Staff at Alderman Callow know their students very well, and individual tutoring results in rapid intervention to support students whose performance causes concern. Subject staff who do not teach the courses at the partner school often give individual students subject guidance.
- 117 The *Connexions* careers service based in the school are a good source of advice, as are the staff deployed to support the sixth form and subject staff. Students are encouraged to continue to study in further and higher education. An excellent link with higher education provides mentors for students considering university who need extra personal support to help them make the transition between school and post-18 education. Arranging for students to attend events at Coventry and Warwick universities help to influence students to make choices about destinations beyond the sixth form, and also enhances subject provision, in psychology and science for example.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 118 Those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting are generally supportive of the school but both response to the questionnaire and attendance at the meeting were low. Of those who did respond, almost all parents state that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. They state that their child likes school and is making good progress due to good teaching. Most parents would feel comfortable to approach the school if they had concerns and feel that the school works closely with them. They believe the school to be well led and managed. However, a significant number of parents are unhappy about the amount of homework provided. A smaller number express concern about the standards of behaviour achieved by the school, the range of activities provided outside lessons, the amount of information they receive about their child's progress and are unsure whether the school is helping their child become mature and responsible.
- 119 Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views of the school. However, the evidence does not fully support parent's concerns. Although there are some inconsistencies in the setting and marking of homework, the amount is appropriate and it does make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. The quality of information provided for parents is good, although pupils' progress is not always sufficiently clearly explained. Behaviour has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection. The range of activities outside lessons is good overall, although musical activities are not available throughout the year.
- 120 The school provides a wide variety of good quality information for parents. In

particular, the prospectus is well presented and informative. However, the annual report of governors is less informative and the brief section on special educational needs does not include details of movement through the Stages of the Code of Practice, as required. Newsletters are attractive and provide reminders about attendance and punctuality as well as information and celebration of achievements. The school also makes effective use of the local press to celebrate its successes.

- 121 An appropriate home-school agreement is in place. The homework diary contains a wide range of useful information that parents are able to access, for example the code of conduct, timetable and homework timetable. Parents are expected to sign their child's homework diary regularly; most comply. The school is aware that a number of parents do not fully support the school in its efforts to raise attendance and regularly reminds them of the importance of regular, prompt attendance. However, there are missed opportunities to highlight to pupils and parents the significance of the unsatisfactory and poor attendance of a minority of pupils on their achievement, attainment and personal development.
- 122 Parents are provided with progress checks and full annual reports each year. The progress checks give a clear indication of their child's attitude, effort and attainment in each subject. Annual reports are of a satisfactory standard overall. However, the school fails to report separately on personal, social and health education, in breach of statutory requirements. Reports contain a brief outline of the course content for all subjects except personal, social and health education. Reports in English and mathematics generally give a clear picture of the pupils' attitude, effort and standard of work, sometimes indicating strengths and areas for development. However, there is considerable variation in the usefulness of the teacher's comments, especially in English. Overall, although there are examples of good practice, comments by teachers in all subjects are brief and do not focus sufficiently on the specific progress made by the pupil in each subject. Too often comment concentrates on effort and attitude rather than progress in learning. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have the opportunity to contribute to their reports. Attendance figures are provided but the form tutor's comments are rarely used to provide an exhortation to improve attendance or an indication that poor progress is due to poor attendance.
- 123 The school has made a number of efforts to involve parents in the life of the school community. A small but active parent-teacher association organises a range of fund raising activities as well as working parties to help redecorate the school and tidy the grounds. Some of the money they raise is used to sponsor the merit system. A number of parents visit local primary schools with teachers to promote the school. However, meetings about the curriculum, for example the literacy strategy, have been very poorly attended. By contrast, attendance at school concerts and productions is good. Attendance at parents' consultation evenings is relatively low at around 60%. The school makes good arrangements for prospective parents to visit the school during the day. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and involved at all stages of their child's education.
- 124 Year heads work hard to develop and maintain relationships with parents and keep them informed about their child's behaviour and involvement. Praise postcards are increasingly used by form tutors and other staff to commend good work and effort; parents appreciate these. The majority of parents supports the school well over disciplinary matters and attendance. However, a very significant minority of parents

does not support the school by ensuring that their child attends regularly and on time.

- 125 The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed about their progress. Parents are also invited to statutory reviews, although a number do not attend.
- 126 Links with parents have been strengthened since the previous inspection through the efforts of the school. However, too many parents still do not engage actively in partnership with the school to support their children's learning.

Sixth form

- 127 There is termly contact with parents through progress reports, parents' evenings and school reports to keep them informed and involve them in the education of their children. There is a parents meeting, which is very well attended, and a full report towards the end of the course in each year. These arrangements help to give students and parents a clear picture of students' performance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

- 128 The headteacher has successfully led the school through a difficult period following the previous inspection. Despite some initial setbacks and falling standards, following his appointment as headteacher the school has improved to the current quality of provision. He is respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils. He has a clear grasp of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school and has taken affirmative action to address identified weaknesses, especially in middle management, and to improve the quality of teaching. Through rigorous appointment procedures and the use of additional resources made available to the school, the quality of leadership, teaching and learning has been improved over the past two years.
- 129 Members of the senior management team offer different and complementary strengths. Good leadership is provided by the deputy headteacher who has been instrumental in improving many aspects of provision since her appointment two years ago and who has taken a leadership role in the improvement of teaching and learning. Two assistant headteachers are appropriately deployed to their strengths in the management of data and day-to-day organisation of the school. The coordinator of administration and finance, who joined the senior management team a year ago, has added considerable organisational and management strength to the team. The extended senior management team enables the professional development of middle managers through engagement in the decision making of the school. The effective contribution made by the coordinator for social inclusion as a member of the senior management team shows the importance the school attaches to this aspect of its work.
- 130 Management of the school although mainly sound, has some weaknesses. Systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information about whole school aspects are not well developed. Much data is collected and analysed by the school, including some good quality information provided by the Local Education Authority, but it is not always presented or available in an accessible form to enable effective use. A number of policies including those of prime importance are not sufficiently easy to access and when reviewed and updated, have not been replaced in central systems.

The policy for promoting attendance is under urgent need of review. There is inconsistency between senior managers in their management links with subject leaders in the balance they provide between support and challenge. A new subject leader appointed in September has not been monitored in her teaching and provided with feedback. Reform of pastoral systems since the previous inspection has been successful, with responsible staff now able to devote more time to monitoring all pupils and improvements in pupil behaviour.

- 131 Leadership of most departments is good or better, but both leadership and management are unsatisfactory in English. Moves towards addressing this situation have begun with the successful appointment of a new assistant headteacher to take on responsibility for English and literacy commencing next term. Many subject leaders and some heads of faculties have been appointed to their posts relatively recently. While management of subjects is sound overall, in many departments the improvements made in teaching have not been embedded in updated schemes of work and associated systems of subject specific assessment. Whole school priorities such as literacy and numeracy require greater attention in the planning and delivery of most subjects. The school needs to ensure that the good levels of leadership now mainly established at senior and middle management levels are supported by more consistent whole school and subject management.
- 132 The coordinator for social inclusion provides very good leadership and management in this key area, which covers a wide range of specific learning needs including for pupils with special educational needs, support for pupils with English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils. There are secure procedures in place for the identification, assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs. Arrangements have also been made to adhere to the new Code of Practice which came into force in January 2002. Actions have been taken to improve the quality and consistency in the use of classroom support for pupils with special educational needs, although in some classes this remains a problem.
- 133 The governing body is committed to the school and supports it well. Individual governors bring a range of strengths, including from business and industry, which are valuable to the school. Governors assist in determining the strategic direction of the school by involvement in conferences to discuss future priorities. They have been very supportive and responsive to the needs of the school in attending to personnel issues and the management of exclusions. Committees were reviewed just prior to the inspection with several changes made in composition and leadership. The full governing body rather than the finance committee has in the past often dealt with financial issues. The new chair of the finance committee brings a secure grasp of financial management to his role, and has a clear view of the actions which need to be taken to improve the effectiveness of the committee to meet its terms of reference. The governing body receives regular reports from subject leaders, and most subjects have a link governor. However, the way in which reports are presented varies, and despite some very good analysis by individual departments, there is limited reference to comparisons with other schools. Although the chair has a more secure understanding, governors on the whole do not have a clear picture overall of how the school compares to other schools. Two governors have recently assumed jointly the responsibility of governor for special educational needs, and are in the process of

developing an awareness of their roles and responsibilities.

- 134 Although progress overall in relation to the governors' action plan following the previous inspection has been satisfactory, there have been weaknesses in ensuring progress in the development of literacy skills and in improving provision for spiritual development. The provision and use of data remain inconsistent. While systems to promote attendance have been maintained as directed by the report and even improved, these have not been effective. Very good progress has been made in ensuring adoption and implementation of an effective behaviour policy and in improving substantially the provision for information and communication technology.
- 135 There are four areas in which the school does not fully comply with statutory requirements. The Governing Body's Annual Report to Parents makes reference to the special educational needs policy but it does not include information on the success of the current school policy. This needs to be remedied to fully comply with legal requirements. Annual reports to parents do not always contain the required information on the progress made by their children and do not include separate reports on personal, social and health education. Procedures for recording sixth form attendance are not secure. As was the case in the previous inspection, the school does not meet the requirements for provision of daily collective worship.

Aims and values of the school

- 136 The school meets very well its aims to provide a caring, well ordered and secure environment. There is a shared commitment to improvement promoted by the senior managers and supported by staff. Pupils speak well of the way they feel valued by their teachers, and staff provide good models for pupils to follow. Good quality teaching helps promote the educational opportunities of pupils. Parents express satisfaction in the ways in which the school involves them in supporting their children. Parents and pupils are very clear that the main philosophy of the school is that all pupils will do their best. Only in the provision of spiritual education is the school not meeting its aims and aspirations.

School self-review and evaluation, improvement and financial planning

- 137 Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning through lesson observations and work scrutinies by senior and middle managers are in place. These have provided senior managers with a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development in provision. Although these activities are more rigorous since the HMI inspection, a more critical edge is still required in some areas with a wider range of criteria applied and recorded and this needs to be the next phase in development.
- 138 The self-evaluation completed by the school prior to the inspection provided a largely accurate assessment of relative strengths and weakness of the school and its current position in terms of standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear overview of the position of the school and are encouraging of others to improve their standards. However, this comprehensive overview and the strands of activity which form the full picture of what the school is doing are not brought together into a cohesive annual school cycle for improvement.
- 139 Since the previous inspection the school has been inspected by HMI as a DfES

'School in Challenging Circumstances', and as part of an area-wide inspection of sixth form provision. The school is therefore currently operating a number of action plans in response to the previous OFSTED inspection and these additional HMI scrutinies. While the longer term vision of what the school wants to achieve is well known to staff and governors who join together to identify long term priorities, this has happened only after a three year period rather than on annual basis. The school does not therefore operate an explicit annual plan for school improvement, relying instead on a multiplicity of subject and action plans. This arrangement does not enable the school to provide a clear picture of what the yearly priorities are and how they relate to existing action plans. It does not provide measures by which the school can evaluate the success of its actions in raising standards on an annual basis as a part of self-evaluation. It creates difficulties in the ability of the school to respond to the introduction of national priorities, such as the Key Stage 3 literacy and numeracy strategies.

- 140 The school does not apply the standards outlined in national guidance on annual and longer term budget management. A number of additional resources are provided to the school which are accounted for outside of the mainstream budget. Without a clear match to annual priorities, the school is not well placed to judge how effectively these are deployed in improving standards. Forward financial planning is limited and too narrow in scope. It does not give enough attention to thinking through the consequences of possible future developments, and leaves the school vulnerable when the situation changes, as for example will happen soon when monies for special educational needs are delegated and funding for sixth form provision changes.
- 141 The coordinator of administration and finance has, since her appointment a year ago, made very good progress in identifying areas where practice and systems need to be improved and has starting to implement a clear programme to address these. The school complies with financial management procedures and requirements set down by the Local Education Authority. The latest audit carried out in May 2001 at the request of the school confirmed the effectiveness of changes made to the arrangements by the coordinator of finance and the finance officer. Recommendations from the audit have now been implemented. Control of the budget is secure with regular information provided to governors and budget holders. Best value principles are soundly applied in the securing of goods and services. However, without a clear annual plan these principles cannot be pursued effectively at a whole school level.

Value for money

- 142 Teaching overall is good. Leadership of the school is good and management sound. Provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. The attitudes, values and personal development of pupils is very good other than in the attendance of a significant minority. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below average, and an above average proportion take up free school meals. Although in the past progress has been slower than it should be, especially in English, more recent trends show improvements in progress and a rise in attainment especially in science and mathematics. Satisfactory progress has been made overall against the issues raised by the previous inspection. The sixth form gives good value for money. The cost of educating a pupil at Alderman Callow is higher than average, and the school has received significant additional resources to help it improve. As these have been effectively used to improve the quality of teaching and the learning

environment to raise standards, the school does just give satisfactory value for money.

Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning

- 143 There are sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced **teaching staff** to meet the needs of the curriculum. Staffing arrangements in design and technology where qualified temporary staff are in place are effective and make sound provision. The teacher of dance will gain her graduate status in March, and already contributes well to the success of the physical education department. She has been well supported by the school in gaining qualified status. About one third of teaching staff have changed over the past two years. The school has put into place very effective systems to ensure rigorous procedures for teacher appointments, which include interviews by the pupils and observations of applicants' classroom practice. These, together with the use of additional resources to reward good staff, has resulted in improvements in the quality of leadership, management and teaching in key areas. There are currently no newly qualified teachers employed at the school.
- 144 The school recognises that all teachers have a responsibility pupils having special educational needs. The coordinator for social inclusion has started a programme of training for all staff in response to the new requirements for special educational needs, the most recent being on the effective use of classroom support assistants.
- 145 A well above average number of **classroom support assistants** are provided directly to the school by the Local Education Authority, rather than delegated funding, to support the wide range of special educational needs of pupils attending the school. The use made of these staff was criticised in the HMI report. Although better use is made now than described then, there are still inconsistencies in the way in which some teachers approach deploying them and planning their work, and there remains some under-use in some lessons. Where support staff are used effectively, they provide very good support.
- 146 The school has *Investor in People* status, and takes a positive lead in supporting both teaching and support staff in their **professional development**. Good arrangements are in place for the performance management of teaching staff, which have been quality assured by an external assessor. Objectives provide clear links to raising pupils' achievement but without an explicit annual plan, the school is not in a strong position to evaluate the contribution made by teachers to the delivery of current school priorities. Participation in the Nottingham University programme *Improving the quality of education for all* has been instrumental in helping to raise the standards of teaching in the school. Many heads of department have attended Local Education Authority courses on self-review or will shortly do so. The roles adopted by senior managers in relation to their line management of subjects are inconsistent. Many subject leaders are new to their roles and need further professional development to ensure they are able to securely embed effective curriculum planning, monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress into their departmental management.
- 147 The school employs a very high proportion of **administrative staff** for the size of the school. The coordinator of administration and finance has ensured that the standards of Investor in People have been well embedded for support staff, with good opportunities for professional development. Job descriptions have been reviewed and a good line management structure and effective appraisal and training systems have

been put into place for **technical and other support staff**. A programme of training technical and administrative staff in a wider range of skills has begun so that they can be deployed to wherever there is a need. The school spends more money than most schools of its size on administrative and technical support, and the intention is that this will help to ensure efficient use and improved provision. The effectiveness of this was in evidence during inspection week when, to cover absences, a number of administrative staff adopted the roles of lunchtime supervisors.

- 148 The **accommodation** overall is good, with sufficient space for the number of pupils on roll and an on-going refurbishment programme. Science laboratories and some specialist areas of design and technology have been refurbished since the previous inspection, which identified them as poor. Recent improvements have mainly been financed from successful bids by the school into additional funding sources. Parents and pupils have helped to improve the internal decoration of the school, which now presents a colourful and stimulating environment of which pupils express appreciation. Pupils' work is celebrated through displays of work and photographs of activities. The art and design area provides a particularly stimulating environment celebrating pupils' achievement. Further enhancement is planned through an Internet café, which will be run by the student council.
- 149 The Learning Support Centre is a heavily used resource. It is used flexibly to meet a wide range of special educational needs. The present accommodation is not satisfactory because it does not provide sufficiently quiet areas for different needs to be addressed at the same time, but refurbishments commenced immediately following the inspection.
- 150 The library makes a good contribution to both the education of pupils and the ethos of the school. It has good accommodation in a central position; it is open, accessible and well used, although the number of borrowers is low compared to the numbers of regular users. The computers are very well used. The library gives good support to developing pupils' literacy skills; in particular, the paired reading scheme which partners less able Year 7 readers with retired adults has produced some striking results, especially with boys. The senior library requires further development if it is to effectively support the drive to extend the more able pupils and raise overall standards at Key Stage 4.
- 151 **Resources for learning** are satisfactory. Very substantial improvements have been made in the provision for information and communication technology, the school now having a ratio of five pupils to one computer. Although this makes very good provision for timetabled lessons for information and communication technology, there remains a need to extend the use of computers into other subjects through provision of departmentally based resources. In most areas of the curriculum, resources are at least adequate to deliver the curriculum, but in English there is a need for an improvement in quality and range of books, and in French resourcing is at a basic level.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

- 152 Leadership and management of the sixth form are sound overall with some good features. The leadership of the sixth form effectively creates a climate of support and

care for students which helps them to take advantage of the opportunities open to them. The head of sixth form is well supported by the assistant headteacher and the sixth form tutor.

- 153 The sixth form leadership team are committed to giving access to as wide a range of study within school provision as possible to students after the age of 16, some of whom might not otherwise carry on with their education. This is done through well-managed liaison with a local school which has a sixth form of 300 students. Alderman Callow concentrates on teaching a few courses on its own site, and staff with sixth form experience teach at partner schools as part of the consortium arrangements. This strategy works well in meeting the aspirations of the school. It has the advantage that, despite having to travel to another school for some lessons, many students are taught by teachers from Alderman Callow for at least part of their timetable.
- 154 The governing body is very supportive of the consortium arrangements for the sixth form, but there is no nominated link governor.
- 155 The aims and values of the sixth form are an extension of the aims of the school and implicit in all aspects of its work. The priorities for the sixth form are currently influenced by the recent HMI 16-19 area-wide inspection. The school has built on common timetable arrangements in the consortium to ensure that students' travel arrangements work efficiently. Students are happy with the arrangements, and are able to have a break before travelling to afternoon sessions.
- 156 There is currently no systematic monitoring of provision for lesson observation by senior or middle managers. The quality of liaison between subject departments in the different schools varies from subject to subject. The school has plans to improve both aspects. Arrangements for recording and monitoring attendance in lessons are unsatisfactory.
- 157 The financial arrangements for the sixth form are determined by city-wide agreements on costs of courses. Schools in the consortium effectively transfer the costs of the courses they teach or exchange teacher costs. The remaining amount of the allocation the school receives for each sixth former is spent on resources according to best value principles. For example, the coordinator of administration and finance has recently undertaken an analysis of the cost of transport between sites by taxi and minibus and improved the cost effectiveness of this. Examination fees continue to make demands on funds but the school has been able to stock the library with reference books needed by the students for sixth form study as planned in the 16-19 inspection action plan. The school is starting to consider the impact of the new funding arrangements for the sixth form with some anxiety.
- 158 The sixth form is cost effective. What the school spends on sixth formers is covered by the income that they generate. In view of the access that students are given to post-16 education, the progress they make and their levels of academic success, together with the good personal development of individuals, the sixth form gives good value for money.

Resources

- 159 Sixth form students are taught by well qualified staff who have high levels of expertise in their specialist subjects. They are knowledgeable about examination specifications and requirements and share these with students to ensure that they are familiar with the criteria against which they will be assessed.
- 160 Specialist accommodation for the sixth form is well equipped and students have facilities for independent study which they use well. In the sixth form suite they have access to computers, teaching rooms and a comfortable social area. However, provision and use of computers in some subjects is insufficient.
- 161 Good joint resources are provided by the schools in the consortium and they have a positive impact on learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 162 To further improve the progress and attainment of pupils in the school, the senior managers, governing body, staff and parents supported by the local education authority should:
- (1) **Raise attainment especially in English and in pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum through:**
 - improving the quality of leadership and management of English, to ensure that the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy is implemented and that an appropriate and progressive scheme of work and assessment system for English are developed and applied; (*paragraphs*)
 - the delivery of an effective plan for the improvement of literacy skills and attainment in English, including the provision of an effective whole-school literacy policy;
 - ensuring that the needs of both boys and girls are considered in improved provision; (*see paragraphs: 26,79,178-192*)
 - (2) **Improve the attendance of pupils, particularly by reducing the level of authorised absence, through:**
 - continuing to develop strategies for monitoring and improving attendance in conjunction with the Local Education Authority;
 - applying improved procedures rigorously, regularly and frequently including arrangements for monitoring attendance in lessons in the sixth form.
 - raising with pupils and parents the profile of poor attendance as an inhibitor to achievement. (*see paragraphs: 54-56, 58, 102, 117*)
 - (3) **Improving the quality of school improvement planning and management systems by:**
 - producing annual improvement plans with clear priorities matched to rigorous and challenging success criteria linked to pupils' performance;
 - linking priorities to identified funding and resources, working towards meeting the standards described in OFSTED publications HMI 227 and HMI 229;

- ensuring that effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of actions and expenditure against success criteria;
- analysing, presenting and storing data so as to ensure clarity and accessibility for use by managers and teachers and to inform governors about how well the school is doing;
- ensuring that teaching is monitored in the sixth form. (*see paragraphs: 130-141, 146, 156*)

(4) **Strengthening provision for curriculum and assessment by:**

- ensuring consistency in the support, challenge and development of subject leaders by senior managers;
- embedding improved teaching and learning practices into departmental provision by ensuring that all departments have clear schemes of work which enable teachers to:
 - develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding systematically and progressively;
 - match work to the abilities of all pupils including those who are gifted and talented;
- making explicit provision in all subjects for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and their spiritual development
- improving the use of ICT to enhance learning in all subjects and in the sixth form;
- improving the consistency of assessment systems within subjects, to ensure that pupils are given subject-specific advice on how to improve as they work towards their targets. (*see paragraphs: 71, 78, 80, 86, 91, 109, 110, 119, 215, 236, 247, 249, 269, 273, 284, 292, 296, 300*)

Other areas for development, including those for subjects in the main school and the sixth form are identified in paragraphs: 66, 74, 95, 135, 145, 169 and in subject summary boxes.

SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AND FOR PUPILS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

- 163 Overall the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is **very good**.
- 164 A large number of pupils enter the school with below average attainments. This is reflected in the above average number of pupils on the special educational needs register. The school makes broad provision for pupils with a wide range of additional physical and learning needs. The Local Education Authority supports mainstream provision for special educational needs through the allocation of additional staffing, the cost of which does not go through the school budget. This extra resource takes the form of an additional teacher post and the funding of 17 classroom support assistants. Although the classroom assistants are employed by the Local Education Authority, their day to day supervision is managed on site by the social inclusion co-ordinator.
- 165 The Local Education Authority also directly funds additional provision for specific special educational needs at the school. This consists of two units; one for visually impaired pupils and the other for pupils with speech and language difficulties. The units support pupils at Alderman Callow School as well as pupils in neighbouring

schools. At present the unit for visually impaired pupils supports two pupils, and the unit for speech and language pupils five pupils who are on the roll at Alderman Callow School.

- 166 Unit pupils are fully integrated into the main body of the school. They are members of form tutor groups and receive a high level of support so that they can access the full National Curriculum. While they spend the majority of their time in the main school, they are also withdrawn for small amounts of time into their designated units. This time is used flexibly to prepare the pupils for lessons the following week, to provide opportunities for reinforcement of past lesson content and for evaluation of their progress.
- 167 The head of each unit takes responsibility for the assessment of the needs of pupils in the unit, the production and monitoring of their individual education plans and for arranging and managing statutory reviews. Record keeping is systematic and thorough. Unit staff keep in regular contact with the parents of the pupils attached to the units.
- 168 In general, the provision made for pupils attached to each unit is very good. The units are effectively led and managed and the pupils attached make very good progress. While marking is positive, it does not always explain to pupils why the work was good or how it could be improved to achieve higher marks.
- 169 To improve further, the school and unit managers need to:
- continue to monitor the effectiveness of use of educational assistants;
 - improve the marking of the work of pupils so that it becomes more developmental.

COMMUNITY LINKS

- 170 The school has a good range of links with other agencies and the wider community that are used effectively to support its work in a variety of ways. The education welfare officer and *Connexions* careers service are based at the school, as is the local community education group. Agencies such as the Local Education Authority's behaviour support service and a school nurse visit the school on a regular basis. Other visitors into school include theatre groups, local clergy and coaches from local sports clubs. Pupils have the opportunity to visit local places of interest and classes have the opportunity to sample the Multi-media Centre at the University of Warwick. A group of Year 9 pupils recently visited Coventry City Football Club. Some pupils are able to experience residential trips to an activity centre and to France that are organised every year.
- 171 For several years the school has hosted a summer literacy school for pupils from local primary schools about to transfer to Alderman Callow. Those children who attend make significant progress and enter the school with increased confidence in their abilities. Last summer a two-week summer school for gifted and talented pupils was also held, attracting pupils from all over the city.
- 172 The art and design department runs a weekly evening class for pupils in Years 7 to 11 which is well supported by parents who come in to help their children. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have also provided a number of large paintings to be hung in the

canteen of a local firm. During the inspection, pupils in Year 8 were seen preparing a presentation for primary schools. They undertook the activities with enthusiasm and were keen to promote their school to pupils thinking of joining it. The modern foreign languages faculty has recently been involved in developing materials to be used in other city schools to teach those in Years 7 to 9. It has also developed a strong relationship with Peugeot. The physical education department has been successful in gaining the Sportsmark and Education Extra awards, both of which require community links to be successfully established. Older pupils take part in the annual Young Enterprise scheme and have won awards as well as raising funds for charity. The school has developed and maintained a good working relationship with the Canley and Tile Hill Business Forum. This has led to some useful sponsorship to support a range of school activities. Older pupils also have the opportunity to visit careers and education fairs to help them decide on their future plans.

- 173 Pupils have the opportunity to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves in the local community and beyond. Pupils also collected a large amount of tinned food at harvest festival to support a local appeal. Some Year 9 pupils have been involved in a project to produce a large painting for the corridor of a nearby primary school and have enjoyed playing an active part in a project to brighten the lives of others.
- 174 The relatively new parent teacher association is successful in raising funds to support the school's work but has also attracted some sponsorship. For example, staff from a local bank joined with parents and school staff to spend a weekend redecorating the humanities block. Parents are involved in the success of the extracurricular sports programme both by coaching rugby and football and by providing transport to matches. Parents help pupils read and a group of residents from the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme spends time every week supporting reading. Both initiatives have a good rate of success and help pupils gain skills and confidence.
- 175 The school's facilities are used by the community for a wide range of sporting activities and for a range of classes meeting specific interests including in decorative stained glass. The local community education service is based at the school and runs daily classes for adults in information and communication technology.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	133
	Sixth form	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		155

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7-11

Number	8	34	50	38	3	0	0
Percentage	6	26	38	28	2	0	0

Sixth form

Number	1	6	11	4	0	0	0
Percentage	5	27	50	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 four percentage point[s].

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	497	40
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	142	-

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	25	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	191	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.0
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	53	47	100

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	14	27	31
	Girls	24	28	24
	Total	38	55	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	38 (41)	56 (41)	55 (45)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	12 (11)	31 (16)	20 (13)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	20	29	31
	Girls	24	26	29
	Total	44	55	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	46 (36)	58 (50)	61 (56)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	16 (12)	34 (16)	16 (13)
	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	50	44	94

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	11	40	46
	Girls	17	37	42
	Total	28	77	88
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	30 (18)	82 (84)	94 (98)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	29.2
	National	39.0

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	0
	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	4	6	10

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	3.5	13.3	9.4 [6.8]	0	4	4 [2.0]
National	16.9	17.9	17.4 [8.2]	N/A	N/A	[2.7]

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	4	100
	National		76

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	N/A
	National		N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	1
White	508
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	13	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	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)	34
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	310

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.8%
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	24.5
Key Stage 4	24.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	1616417
Total expenditure	1637995
Expenditure per pupil	3079
Balance brought forward from previous year	101080
Balance carried forward to next year	79502

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12.3
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

532

Number of questionnaires returned

77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	34	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	34	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	40	10	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	33	20	3	4
The teaching is good.	38	35	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	30	4	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	11	3	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	30	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	38	3	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	22	1	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	29	4	5	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	20	9	2	3

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

176 14.5% of questionnaires distributed were returned. 96% of those responding believe their children make good progress at the school. 42 parents attended the parents' meeting, representing 8% of parents and expressed the view that the school sets high expectations and all pupils are expected to do their best. They identified the extra study provision and support from staff as helpful in enabling their children to make progress. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and pupils entering the school speaking little English was valued and praised. In areas where parents would like to see improvement, observations during the inspection support the views of 61% of parents who believe that behaviour is good. In relation to other issues, provision for homework is satisfactory, and the school provides a good range

of additional activities for pupils. Although sound provision is made, the school could offer more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities.

Other issues raised by parents

177 Few other issues were raised by parents either at the meeting or through letters to the registered inspector which were not covered by the questionnaire or meeting. Individual parents expressed both support and concern on issues related particularly to their own experiences which were investigated by the lay inspector. In none of these cases was the school found to be justifying any significant concern but was acting in accordance with policies at school and national levels. In relation to the provision of food in the canteen, pupils are able to choose from range of foods which do include healthy alternatives although less healthy foods are more in evidence. Individual cases cannot be the basis of judgements or reported on during inspections.

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 **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall.
- Pupils are making better progress now in response to good teaching in lessons.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' attainment in English is below that of other core subjects and boys achieve much lower standards than girls. Pupils' progress over time has been too slow.
- Pupils' literacy skills are weak and affect learning in other subjects.
- Leadership and management of English are unsatisfactory.
- Schemes of work are incomplete and do not take enough account of the different needs of pupils.
- Assessment is weak.

178 Pupils' standards of attainment are low on entry to the school. Pupils do not make the progress they should between the ages of 11 and 16 to raise their levels of achievement in English in national tests and GCSE examinations, or in their basic literacy skills. Pupils' performance in English is also a cause for concern because it has been so variable from year to year for both boys and girls and for pupils of different abilities. There is wide ranging under-performance over recent years and as yet no pattern of consistent improvement for either boys or girls by age 14 or age 16.

179 The attainment of pupils at the age of 14 in national tests in 2001 was well below the national average. There has been no sustained trend to improvement since the previous inspection and the percentage of pupils achieving Levels 5 or 6 is well below standards for similar schools. In 2001, 50% of pupils failed to achieve the national benchmark of Level 5. Over the last five years, the attainment of girls has been significantly better than that of boys with the exception of 2000 when results for both were broadly similar. When compared by points score, the standards achieved in English are significantly lower than the standards the same group of pupils achieve in mathematics and science. In the Key Stage 3 test papers, pupils' performance was weaker in writing than in reading tasks. Their skills were particularly poor in extended writing and in the tests on Shakespeare.

180 The attainment of pupils at 16 is well below the national average. Results in GCSE examinations in 2001 were well below average in A*-C grades and in average points scores. They were also below average in A*-G grades. Over the past five years, there have been fluctuations in the relative performance of boys and girls, but both boys and girls perform significantly less well in English and English literature relative to their other subjects at GCSE. In 2001, the gap in performance between boys and girls was wider than that found nationally with significant underachievement by boys.

181 The English department has been through a lengthy period of sustained difficulty in

the past four years due to considerable staff turnover and, the serious illness of senior staff. This has impeded the department's ability to establish and maintain consistent improvement in all areas since the last inspection. The department is now more stable. Staff are working hard to recover lost ground and restore confidence while awaiting the arrival of the new assistant headteacher who will have responsibility for both English and literacy.

- 182 Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the current work of pupils is of a higher standard than indicated by recent results. Combined with the evidence from pupils' past work, this confirms that standards of attainment and achievement are rising, particularly in Key Stage 3, but this has yet to translate into improved results in national examinations.
- 183 Standards of attainment have remained well below average on entry and the majority of pupils between Years 7 to 9 have not previously made the progress expected of them. Pupils have significantly poor literacy skills, particularly in speaking and listening, sentence structure and extended writing. New grouping arrangements are having a positive impact and there is good support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 and of all abilities are now responding well to the study of Shakespeare and show good levels of engagement, enthusiasm and understanding. Middle and higher attaining pupils do not demonstrate appropriate improvement. Skills in vocabulary and non-fictional forms of writing are weak.
- 184 Standards of attainment by pupils age 16 based on work seen during the inspection are below average. Written work by pupils of all abilities is regularly marred by weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and handwriting but there is evidence of a developing understanding of key issues and a good level of imaginative involvement. Basic literacy skills need, and are receiving, consistent attention. There is little evidence that skills in word processing using information and communication technology are sufficiently developed or that drama makes an appropriate contribution to raising the overall level of achievement. Middle and higher attainers do not fully realise their potential as insufficient use is made of extension tasks.
- 185 Pupils' literacy skills are weak. They are below the average on entry to the school and pupils do not make the progress they should from year to year. The low standards are affecting pupils' performance across the curriculum and must be addressed as a matter of urgency if standards overall in the school are to rise. There is evidence of good practice in implementing the National Literacy Strategy in other areas, notably in science, geography and French lessons, but there is a clear need for a more consistent and committed whole-school approach.
- 186 Pupils' attitudes in class are good and often very good. The relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and productive. Behaviour is of a high standard in lessons. The overall level of pupils' motivation is good but their expectations of what they can achieve are generally too low.
- 187 The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. All the 13 lessons observed in Years 7 to 11 were at least satisfactorily, seven out of ten were good or better with three in ten being very good. Lessons were well planned and well paced. They were better in Years 7 to 9, where they showed the benefits of utilising the framework for the literacy hour and the developing Key Stage 3 literacy strategy.

Lessons on Shakespeare were consistently well taught, particularly with lower ability pupils. Two Year 8 lessons, one on note-taking and one in which pupils drafted stories about pets, were particularly effective in the ways in which they engaged pupils through a careful and motivating sequence of activities in learning how to develop their skills. Teachers do not always have the highest expectations of what pupils might reasonably achieve. Pupils sometimes have only limited support in structuring their writing for a variety of forms and purposes, and the range of texts used in English is somewhat limited.

- 188 The marking of work is generally sound and is always positive and encouraging but assessment overall is a weakness in the department. The analysis of performance data and its contribution to setting appropriate targets for groups and individual pupils are not sufficiently developed or used on a consistent basis within and between years. Teachers' target setting at all levels and pupils' abilities to set and achieve their own targets need to be improved. There is good practice by some teachers within the department in helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve, and in raising pupils' awareness of the levels they are currently attaining and what they must do to progress. However, this is inconsistent and needs to be employed by all teachers.
- 189 The curriculum is broadly sound. Schemes of work are in the process of much needed whole-scale revision. The revised units of work for Years 7 to 11 demonstrate improved breadth and depth, a better structure and more effective preparation for national tests. The department has in place a plan for raising achievement in English and its objectives are appropriately reflected in the new schemes of work. The schemes for Years 10 and 11 have not yet been reviewed but will require similar revision to enable teachers to build on pupils' learning and sustain progress. Homework, is not thoroughly incorporated in every unit of work at present. Insufficient attention is paid to the structuring of differentiated and extended learning for pupils of all abilities in order to ensure that all make satisfactory progress.
- 190 The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. This is recognised by the school and weaknesses are being addressed by the appointment of a new senior manager and reorganised staffing. Currently the department lacks clear direction in its planning. There are weaknesses in departmental curriculum planning, schemes of work and assessment processes, and in implementing the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy.
- 191 The English department has made limited progress since the previous inspection. There is an overall improvement in teaching and pupils' behaviour in lessons is also improved. There has been some progress in the development and analysis of data. Shakespeare is now a secure and well-taught element at Key Stage 3 and there has been progress in raising skills in speaking and listening and improving the range and quality of books available.
- 192 However, pupils' performance in national tests has not improved. Attainment in English and in the development of pupils' literacy skills remain unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching.
- The expectations of behaviour in the classroom are high.
- The leadership of the subject is determined and committed to improvement.
- The standard of display in the classrooms is high.

Areas for improvement

- The provision for the use of information and communication technology is inadequate.
- Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 in particular, are incomplete and require further development.
- Teaching in a small number of lessons is unsatisfactory.

193 In national tests in 2001, the attainment of pupils age 14 was well below the national average in gaining the expected Level 5+, but in comparison with similar schools it was broadly in line. Attainment was also below the national average at the higher Level 6+ but in comparison with similar schools was above the average. Although results by pupils age 14 have fluctuated according to the ability profile of the pupils when they entered the school age 11, the numbers achieving Level 5 or higher have shown a rising trend. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 or higher in 2001 were the best ever achieved in the school and above those achieved in similar schools. At both Level 5+ and the higher Level 6+, girls achieved significantly better than boys and by more than the national difference. Since the previous inspection, the percentages of pupils achieving both the Level 5+ and Level 6+ have increased, and the rate of increase has been higher than the national rate of increase. As in the last inspection, pupils' results in mathematics compare favourably with those in the other subjects tested.

194 By age 16, the 35% of pupils who achieved Grades A*-C in the 2001 GCSE examinations was below the national average. It was in line with standards in similar schools. The proportion achieving these grades increased by 11% last year and there has been an upward trend over the past four years. The percentage of girls who achieved grades A*-C was higher than the percentage of boys, with the girls close to the figure for girls nationally and the boys well below boys nationally. Pupils' results in mathematics were largely in line with their performance in other subjects, better than in English but lower than in science. Twenty-seven pupils received a certificate of achievement in numeracy with ten gaining distinction

195 In all years up to age 16, pupils are taught in sets according to their ability in mathematics. Overall the standards of work seen are below the national average. Standards of attainment on entry to the school fluctuate between year groups but are generally below or well below both national and city averages. For pupils currently in the school aged 14, the standards achieved in the higher ability sets are broadly in line with the national average. In the lower ability sets, the standards are below or well below national expectations. Year 8 optional tests results show a good rate of progress in pupils' levels of achievement. Pupils' response to teachers' high expectations were shown in a very carefully planned lesson on indices in Year 9; the second set worked hard and successfully to understand the use of the EXP key on their calculators

- 196 By age 16, the standards achieved by pupils in the higher ability sets are broadly in line with the national average, and in lower ability sets, standards are below to well below the national average. A Year 11 higher level group, through carefully led discussion, quickly became confident in work on rational and irrational numbers.
- 197 Progress made by pupils from age 14 to age 16 has in the past been limited, but increased emphasis on teaching and learning and on target setting is now leading to improvements. The inspectors' work scrutiny in both key stages showed a steady improvement over time. Sound progress within the key stage is made by groups of all abilities although some higher ability pupils achieve below their capability through lack of self-motivation. Results in tests taken by Year 10 pupils indicate that their progress in mathematics this year has been better than expected. Sound progress has been made by Year 11 pupils since Year 9.
- 198 The majority of pupils are helped to make sound progress according to their ability level although in some cases progress is limited by behavioural difficulties, or by a lack of motivation in the higher ability pupils. In many classes there are significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers pay particular attention to the recommendations in pupils' individual education plans and they work closely with the allocated learning support assistants.
- 199 Pupils' ability to apply basic numeracy skills in other subjects is below average. However, the mathematics department provides a clear understanding and consistent practice in developing pupils' mental skills, written methods of calculation and the use of calculators. Staff have built on the improvements in standards of numeracy of their Year 7 pupils, brought about by implementation of national strategies in primary schools. They have introduced the numeracy strategy into teaching in Years 7 to 9 and use similar techniques to advantage in Year 10 and 11 lessons. There is no whole-school numeracy policy but a training day for the staff is planned for this academic year to build on the present good practice found in some subjects and to develop a whole-school approach. At present, there is little evidence in most subjects of the teaching of numeracy; and weak numeracy skills often limit pupils' progress. Graphs are used well in history in Year 9 and statistical analysis in relation to proportional representation was understood by Year 10 pupils. The GCSE course in physical education has a statistical content. ICT lessons are beginning to make a contribution with work on spreadsheets and sequencing in Year 7. Confident pupils making good progress in a mathematical ICT programme in Year 8. However, in geography, poor numeracy skills limited progress in a topic involving data handling. Higher ability pupils understood work on exponential decay in science but lower ability pupils find simple calculations difficult when balancing equations.
- 200 In the majority of lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 and in some classes in Years 10 and 11, there was evidence that pupils were well focussed on their work. They were attentive, interested, involved and able to follow instructions well and think through problems. They could enter into constructive discussions when this was required but could also concentrate and work independently, wishing to achieve their targets. Other groups of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, found concentration very difficult, partly through a lack of confidence or of motivation. Where motivation was low, poor behaviour resulted and this affected not only their own learning but that of others and the learning of the more able pupils was disrupted. This was generally the result of weaker teaching.

- 201 Teaching overall is good but ranges in quality from excellent to unsatisfactory. Two lessons out of 22 observed were unsatisfactory. Almost three-quarters of lessons were good or better and over one in five lessons were very good or excellent. Most of the teaching is characterised by well-structured lessons, the use of challenging questions and the development of thinking skills in the pupils. Teachers make a careful progression from very good introductions when learning objectives are clearly expressed and key words emphasised. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory although some staff give more emphasis to this than others. In the majority of lessons, teachers' planning and their management of pupils are very effective. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to encourage them and give them confidence. The reward system of merits is used to good effect because individual pupils are given their own specific targets; one pupil may be attempting to achieve full marks for the second time while another may be asked to achieve two more marks than in the previous test. Teachers' diagnosis of and provision for individual learning needs is satisfactory. In some lessons the more able pupils would have benefited from more extension work when they had finished the work set. The largely effective teaching leads to the pupils' acquisition of skills; knowledge and understanding being satisfactory overall for their level of ability; and in most lessons pupils make at least a satisfactory intellectual effort. Overall their productivity and pace of working are satisfactory and in some lessons good. In the better lessons, pupils' interest, concentration and independence are often good. Pupils are aware of their capabilities and respond to the good use which is made of targets. In a very good lesson in Year 8 with lower ability pupils, the very good relationships and very clear directions consolidated their good understanding of line symmetry in a very enjoyable way.
- 202 In a minority of lessons where there is less variation and direct teaching, the pupils' learning is not satisfactory. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the instructions given to the pupils and the lesson objectives were not clear. The lessons were not planned to retain the pupils' interest, and the resulting poor behaviour was not successfully managed.
- 203 The department is organised and managed very well. The leadership is determined, enthusiastic, committed and highly skilled. It is innovative and energetic, giving very clear educational direction and prioritising well the development of subject. The majority of the department have a depth of knowledge and understanding which enables good support to be given to less experienced members. The head of department is a leading mathematics teacher and promotes very good practice. Members of the department work well together to provide a pleasant and stimulating classroom environment, giving up their own time to paint and decorate the classrooms. Display is of a high standard and the pupils' work is valued. School policies on managing pupils' behaviour are successfully adapted and implemented in the department. The majority of pupils respond well to the enthusiasm of their teachers and to the patient care and consideration they are given in and out of lessons. There is increasing contact with parents and continued requests for their support and encouragement. Every effort is being made to adjust the curriculum and schemes of work to the demands of the numeracy strategy in Key Stage 3 and to the needs of the pupils in Key Stage 4 where a modular GCSE examination course is provided.
- 204 The provision of computers to support mathematics work has been very poor but has recently improved. Current provision within mathematics teaching is still

unsatisfactory. Plans are now underway to fully integrate information and communication technology into the schemes of work for mathematics; software has been ordered and a training day arranged for the staff.

- 205 The school's aims and values are well reflected in the department; monitoring, evaluation and professional development are good and are important factors in the effectiveness of the teaching and the improvement of subject.
- 206 Assessment and record keeping are thorough and effective; they are firmly organised and directed. The information gained is used to make improvements, such as the new style of reports which are giving parents more information about their child's present attainment in addition to future prediction for grades and targets.
- 207 Since the last inspection, more classroom support has been provided and the implementation of a departmental behaviour management policy has led to a calmer learning environment in many lessons. There has been a significant improvement in resources which has contributed to the high standard of the displays in the classrooms. In the drive to raise standards, there has been an emphasis on teaching methods and monitoring lessons together with the use of performance data to set targets. The introduction of the primary school National Numeracy Strategy has improved the ability of the pupils as they enter the school and its continuation into Key Stage 3 has resulted in improvements in teaching and learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Attainment in national tests at age 14 has shown a steady improvement.
- The attainment by pupils age 16 has shown a substantial improvement.
- All teaching seen was at least satisfactory and was good or better in over half of lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The laboratories have been refurbished and provide a pleasant working environment.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient challenge in some of the work provided in lessons to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work and research independently.
- Teaching does not take enough account of the information gained from monitoring pupils' progress.

- 208 Pupils make clear progress from the ages of 11 to 16. National test results at age 14 have shown a year on year improvement since 1998, when 32% of pupils age 14 gained Level 5 or above, to 2001 when 55% of pupils achieved Level 5 or above. These results are still below the national average, but are broadly in line with those of similar schools. Girls achieved less well than boys, whereas nationally there was no difference between boys' and girls' performance. Overall, pupils' results in science were higher than their averages across all three subjects tested.

- 209 There has been a significant improvement in the number of pupils age 16 gaining A*-C GCSE grades in science double award. The results have improved each year from 1999 when 15% of pupils gained A*-C grades 2001 when 43% did so. This is still below the national average but compares well with results for similar schools. All pupils that are entered for science take double award science and at over 90% entry, this is higher than the national entry figures of about 81%. There is no evidence of significant differences in the attainment of pupils from ethnic minorities. The performance of girls showed a significant improvement from 2000 to 2001 when girls out-performing boys. There is no evidence of any difference in the standards achieved in the three science areas of physics, chemistry or biology.
- 210 Pupils age 14 and age 16 currently in the school are achieving levels overall that are broadly in line with those typically expected for their age.
- 211 In Years 7 to 9 pupils enjoy practical work, succeed in the tasks set and generally work carefully. However, the pupils' skills in data handling and the interpretation of graphs are insufficiently well developed. In Years 10 and 11, in the practical lessons observed, the pupils worked methodically and in one lesson with a low ability group, particular attention was devoted to developing the pupils' understanding of linear relationships prior to the pupils using a computer simulation on "Vehicles and stopping distance". However in other lessons the lower ability groups were less good at recording their experimental results and writing up experimental work. By age 16, pupils' exercise books show some good examples of data handling and graphing skills in the radioactivity topic with a top set.
- 212 Pupils' behaviour in all lessons observed was generally good; there were very few examples of inappropriate or disruptive behaviour observed. Most lessons had a purposeful working atmosphere with enthusiastic and attentive pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take a responsible approach in their science lessons such as when dealing with live animals. Throughout all years and across the ability range, many pupils show pride in the presentation of their written work. They show responsible attitudes in their science lessons. They will readily answer questions in class and make positive contributions to the lesson. There is some evidence of girls showing less perseverance than boys. A group of girls opting out of doing the practical activity and choosing just to write up the experiment is an example of this.
- 213 The quality of teaching overall is good. In all lessons observed it was at least satisfactory, and it was good or better in half of lessons seen. All teachers show a good grasp of their subject specialism. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and most lessons are well prepared. Teachers generally give clear instructions and appropriate safety precautions. In a few lessons poor time planning caused the ends of lessons to be rushed with the consequence that there was insufficient time for consolidation or review at the end to enable the teacher to identify the pupils' progress. There were good examples of effective question and answer techniques with teachers using the whiteboard to record pupils' existing ideas and further develop the pupils' understanding. This included one lesson where pupils were encouraged to reflect on their responses and justify their answers to a problem involving calculations on efficiency and power. Other lessons sought to teach pupils basic skills associated with effective gathering of information and the use of data from textbooks, to show pupils how the early ideas of scientists change over time. One

lesson with Year 9 pupils used an inductive teaching approach, which involved pupils organising data and reorganizing it in the search for ideas when revising the *Using Chemistry* module. There was an effective lesson showing the impact of science ideas and evidence, linked to a research activity on the contributions of different scientists. Some staff also stress the development of learning skills with the pupils. Examples included giving help to ensure that pupils could effectively interpret multiple choice exam questions using mnemonics and mind-mapping techniques.

- 214 Many lessons had a good range of activities to maintain pace, variety and interest. An example of an effective demonstration, which held the pupils' attention and interest, was the inflation of sheep's lungs. In other lessons, teachers showed the relevance of the topic by linking it to home and industrial situations. A range of worksheets is used effectively, but in some cases they are inappropriate for the whole ability spectrum of pupils present in the group. In lessons where the work is not sufficiently challenging, it also lacks pace and variety. Teachers do not have opportunities to observe each other teach. The good practice and range of methods used by some staff are not systematically shared and consequently some pupils do not have the opportunity to experience such a wide range of learning approaches. Many pupils do not receive enough encouragement to become autonomous learners and to work collaboratively.
- 215 Teachers mark books regularly and most teachers write encouraging comments. However, in some cases the comments gave little diagnostic advice on what measures the pupils should take to improve their standards. In some Year 7 lessons, teachers found themselves repeating work done in primary schools because they had not used information on pupils' prior knowledge in planning their lessons.
- 216 The department is beginning to develop a range of strategies to improve pupils' levels of literacy in science. In most lessons observed, teachers made a point of identifying key words, writing them on the board, and checking their understanding regularly. There were some examples of extended, expressive writing on display such as "I am an alien on Mars". Word-processing had been used to good effect in this work. Pupils have also produced a range of poems on science topics.
- 217 A strong feature of the department is the very caring and helpful approach of teachers which pupils find reassuring and which makes them feel secure. Teachers work hard to maintain the morale and confidence of the pupils. However this needs to be balanced against 'spoon feeding' them where they can develop a culture of dependency. Staff take full account of the detailed information and needs of special educational needs pupils within the classes. Whilst the learning support assistants are effective in the classroom, in some instances there is insufficient guidance of their work from the teacher in terms of the scientific requirements of the lesson.
- 218 The science department is well led and managed by the head of department who has been in post less than a year. He has a clear vision for its future development. The action plan for science highlights the need to improve the quality of assessment and to monitor and accelerate pupils' progress. Assessment policies have been put in place. The department has developed partnership links for Initial Teacher Training, and links with primary schools. Other activities are planned to enrich the science curriculum including a visit by an actor portraying the scientist Faraday. Some opportunities for practical work are missed. Whilst a considerable amount of equipment has been

purchased, the department is still not well resourced and the capitation per pupil is low. There were some examples seen of effective use of ICT in research activities; but this and also the use of data loggers needs to be further developed by all staff

- 219 Improvement since the last inspection is shown in the pupils' attainment at age 14 and age 16. Attitudes to learning are now good; pupils now show respect to each other in lessons. Teaching has become less didactic. The laboratories have been refurbished, ICT facilities have improved and there are more textbooks available. However, pupils' absence from science lessons during the inspection period was high and has a negative impact on pupils' progress.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory with some good features**.

Strengths

- A very good classroom atmosphere that promotes independent learning, co-operation and enjoyment of the subject. This is reflected in the visually stimulating open-plan accommodation.
- A comprehensive and flexible scheme of work that provides a broad variety of experiences in two and three-dimensional media and in visual problem-solving processes.
- The provision of a weekly evening art class.

Areas for improvement

- In Years 7 to 9, pupils need to become more aware of their learning objectives and short-term progress targets.
- Regular use of formal assessment procedures throughout Years 7 to 9.
- Attention to literacy issues to ensure pupils become more proficient and confident in their use of an expressive and critical vocabulary.

- 220 In teachers' assessments of pupils at age 14 in 2001, 46% of pupils age 14 achieved Level 5 or above which is well below average. Girls performed significantly better than boys as they did nationally. Work seen in Year 7 indicates that standards on entry are well below national averages.
- 221 In GCSE examinations in 2001, the A*-C pass rate for pupils age 16 was below the national average but showed an improvement from 2000. All pupils entered achieved an A*-G grade, compared to 98% nationally. Girls performed better than boys, as they did nationally.
- 222 For pupils currently in the school, attainment is closer to the national average at age 16 than at age 14 where it is below that typically expected. Throughout the school, pupils' development of visual problem-solving skills is good, and progress in this is consistent. Pupils respond well to the advice given by the teacher and to the opportunity to think and act for themselves. In Years 10 and 11 they can control tools and media with a good degree of accuracy and confidence. Pupils concentrate well and apply themselves throughout lessons. Pupils' use of expressive and critical vocabulary is weak.
- 223 Overall, the standard of teaching is good. In lessons seen, teaching in Years 7-9 was always at least satisfactory and it was always good or very good in Years 10 and 11.

The positive, caring, working environment promotes pupils' independent learning, co-operation and enjoyment of the subject. However, the use of technical, expressive and critical vocabulary is not monitored and developed in a structured and systematic way across a year group. For example, Year 8 pupils found it difficult to discuss a painting they were studying as they lacked appropriate vocabulary. Some pupils in Years 7 to 9 lack a good understanding of what they are doing and why. They are not generally made aware of the learning objectives of the lesson, the short-term actions they need to take to improve, and their basic rate of progress and achievement. While staff always give pupils positive and helpful advice and encouragement on a day-to-day basis, formal assessment in Years 7 to 9 is currently limited to summative yearly comments, rather than at the end of each unit or task.

- 224 Across all year groups, pupils have good opportunities to work in a wide range of two and three-dimensional media, to work in a variety of scales and to explore a variety of themes. In Years 7 to 9 pupils undertake projects based, for example, on Celtic decoration, African masks and optical art. In Year 10 the work of the Cubists is studied and there is a project on the design of postage stamps. Projects in Year 11 are developed individually with pupils. The use of ICT has increased but is restricted to basic desktop publishing and image manipulation. The number of computers available in the department limits opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to integrate work in information and communication technology into on-going projects. There is potential for older pupils to explore the creative possibilities of a range of more sophisticated electronic imaging software packages.
- 225 Many projects involve investigation into art and design and artists from a variety of other times and cultures. There is scope for further discussion about the cultural differences and the historical context in which these works were produced. For example, in a Year 9 project in which pupils worked together to make totem poles, pupils had very little idea of their origins and purpose or made connections with their spiritual values.
- 226 The head of department leads and manages the department well, providing appropriate and effective direction and support to the assistant teacher. The scheme of work provides a flexible framework that helps to ensure broad coverage across a range of media and enables pupils of all abilities to make systematic progress over time. The department handbook is comprehensive and suitably detailed, adequately documenting the working practices of the department. The head of department runs a weekly evening art class. About 20 pupils attend regularly, and parents are welcome to assist. Good links have been established with a local business. Last summer the department provided 15 large paintings produced by pupils in Years 7 and 8 for display in the canteen.
- 227 The previous inspection report was very positive, and the department has maintained standards since then. Attainment at GCSE has been consistently higher since the last inspection, and good progress has been made with three-dimensional work and in improving the use of information and communication technology, both of which are now developing into strengths of the department.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The high proportion of good teaching.
- The increasing influence of the newly appointed subject leader in giving good leadership to the development of the subject.
- The recently introduced scheme of work in Years 7 to 9.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment of all pupils in Years 7 to 11.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11, including the re-introduction of full GCSE courses with appropriate time allocation.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 to give greater emphasis to the systematic and progressive development of design and graphical skills.
- The accommodation for the teaching of food, graphics and textiles to be refurbished to the same level as that for resistant materials.

228 Teachers' assessments show that for pupils age 14 at the end of Year 9, standards of attainment in 2001 were in line with the national average. Assessments in 2000 were also in line with the national average. These assessments are not moderated and when they are compared with the attainment of these same pupils in the present Years 10 and 11, they are clearly inaccurate and inflated. They were made by a member of staff who has since left the school. In the work seen during the inspection, the majority of pupils were achieving at levels well below the national average. However, the recently appointed staff, the revised scheme of work and good teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils.

229 In 2001, the proportion of pupils age 16 obtaining GCSE short course grades A*-C was well below the national average. Results at these higher grades were well below average in the resistant materials course and below in the food course. In both the courses, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-G was in line with the national average. The attainment of the boys was below that of the girls at the higher grades. Overall, pupils achieve GCSE results in design and technology that are below the levels achieved in their other subjects.

230 At this time there are no design and technology courses offered in the sixth form.

231 On the evidence of the work seen during the inspection, attainment by the age of 14 is well below average. However, inspection evidence shows that standards are beginning to rise in Years 7, 8 and 9 as a result of good teaching and an appropriate curriculum. The majority of pupils have stronger making skills in a range of materials that by the end of Year 9 are near to nationally expected levels. Graphical communication skills are also improving from a very low baseline. For example in a Year 7 resistant materials lesson the pupils were using both pencil and paper and computer aided design (CAD) software to confidently explore possible shapes for an acrylic bookmark. Their final design will be drawn out on the computer and manufactured using a computer-controlled engraver. The highest attaining students have a more secure grasp of subject knowledge and specialist vocabulary, and their design skills are more highly developed than those of other pupils. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have greater difficulty with design skills but their making skills are better developed. Overall, the achievements of boys

are lower when compared with those of the girls.

- 232 Standards of work in the current Years 10 and 11 are well below average but are improving, especially on the resistant materials course, and pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their earlier levels of attainment. The pattern of attainment in the various elements of the food and resistant materials courses is very similar to that at the end of Year 9 and the girls continue to achieve higher levels than the boys. Practical making continues to be the best developed area for the majority of pupils. For example, in a Year 10 resistant materials lesson the pupils were making storage units to their own individual designs, manipulating tools and materials with care and increasing precision, producing good quality products. Similar high quality work was seen in a Year 11 food lesson as the pupils worked very confidently in their practical making activity where they were developing either a new vegetable or fruit product. Design and graphical skills are well below nationally expected levels for all except the highest attaining pupils. Subject knowledge, and the specialist vocabulary that underpins it, are weak for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs but their practical making continues to be better developed than all other areas of the subject.
- 233 Through the Years 7 to 11, progress and achievement are satisfactory but are gradually improving as the impact of good teaching and the revised schemes of work begin to take effect. In all years, pupils handle tools, equipment, machines and materials with increasing accuracy, confidence and skill, and work with due regard for safety and hygiene. Graphical communication skills are improved over time as the pupils use a range of media, drawing and projection methods to model and communicate their design ideas. Design skills develop less well for the middle and lower attaining pupils, but the higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress as they research, analyse and evaluate with increasing depth and rigour.
- 234 The overall quality of the teaching is good. The quality of learning is, as yet satisfactory, since the improvements in teaching quality are so recent they have yet to have a measurable impact on pupils' learning other than in Year 7. From a low baseline on entry to the school these pupils are making good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and plan and prepare resources for their lessons effectively. They set tasks and use projects that challenge the pupils, and have high expectations of the work they produce. In the lessons observed, the teachers used a range of methods and learning activities appropriate to the pupils' levels of attainment. For example, in a Year 9 resistant materials group the pupils were building simple delay-timer electronic circuits, using soldering irons to attach wires and components to a board. The teacher was giving good individual support, questioning, explaining, advising, checking the quality of the work and giving feedback to aid the pupils' progress. Good quality resources had been provided and the teacher used his deep subject knowledge to ensure that the pupils' own knowledge and understanding of electronics and related practical skills were being extended. The pupils responded positively to the support given to them and sustained high levels of concentration and interest in the task. Such teaching approaches ensure that the pupils learn and make good progress, work hard and achieve good productivity in lessons. In the majority of lessons observed it was rare for the teachers to share the aims of the lessons with the pupils so they were unaware of what they should achieve by the end of the lesson. In addition teachers did not review the progress made at the end of the lesson with the pupils, or set time targets for the completion of intermediate tasks, and this

contributed to a loss of pace in some lessons.

- 235 Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good overall and were very good in some lessons. They are keen and interested to learn in design and technology lessons in Years 7 to 11. Pupils respect the resources and materials provided for their use. Behaviour is rarely less than good and is often very good, as the pupils concentrate well on their work and their teacher's explanations. Relationships are good between pupils and good with their teachers in all the lessons observed.
- 236 The recently appointed subject leader for design and technology is providing good leadership to the department and having a positive impact on the standards of work and achievement of the pupils. The department's development plan has a manageable number of very appropriate priorities that are sharply focussed on improving attainment in all years. The department is using the good data available to it for setting targets for all pupils but teachers are not making use of these targets in their interaction with pupils within lessons, to improve progress and learning. For a small department the curriculum has good breadth and challenge and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the new scheme of work does not give sufficient attention to the progressive and systematic development of design and graphical communication skills over the Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 the short course GCSE, taken in one year, does not allow the pupils to work to their full potential and the school intends to reintroduce full courses next year. The accommodation for resistant materials has recently been re-modelled but the environments for other areas of the subject are also in need of refurbishment and increased areas for display.
- 237 Overall the progress made since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Behaviour is now good and often very good. Workshop skills are much improved and practical making is for many pupils their strength in the subject. The assessment scheme has been totally revised and improved and is now used to inform planning. However, although there are recent and strong indications of improvement attainment remains well below the national average.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory but with very encouraging signs of improvement which address the learning needs of pupils.**

Strengths

- The teaching methods deployed are varied, interesting and are challenging pupils to improve their literacy.
- The use of time, support staff and resources enable pupils to access and enjoy their learning.
- Behaviour in lessons is good because relationships between teachers and pupils are good and sometimes very good.
- Provision for special educational needs pupils is good and therefore the progress made by these pupils is good.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment at GCSE is below national averages, largely due to low standards of literacy and irregular attendance.
- Standards of work seen are below expectations especially in geographical enquiry and GCSE coursework.
- Curriculum planning is under-developed especially for developing geographical enquiry, skills and place knowledge.
- Pupils' self-knowledge of their learning limits their independence in learning.

- 238 In 2001 standards in teacher assessments for pupils age 14 were well below national averages as the majority of pupils achieved Levels 4 and 5 and only 9% achieved Level 6 and above. There was a big difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Whereas 48% of girls reached Level 5, only 24% of boys did so. This was largely a result of the weak standards of literacy among the boys and their lack of willingness to engage in writing and independent learning.
- 239 The numbers taking geography as an examination subject in Years 10 and 11 have declined between inspections due a period of instability of geography staff. This is now showing signs of recovery with more pupils opting for geography. At the end of Key Stage 4 in GCSE examinations in 2001, pupils age 16 attained below national averages with only one third of pupils reaching grade C or above. However, whilst the girls were closer to national averages, boys were well below. Coursework, in particular is lowering standards and incomplete coursework especially impacts on the performance of the boys. This is largely due to the inconsistency of attendance in the school, poor literacy standards and a lack of ability to work independently.
- 240 Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm that standards are still below average for pupils in Years 7 to 9, but measures taken by the head of department mean that they are improving. Whereas pupils' understanding of geographical patterns is in line with national standards, work in knowledge and understanding of places, geographical enquiry and skills are well below expectations. Measures have been put in place to address this through a good new strategy for homework, which the majority of pupils are responding to well. Further integration of skills used in geography are necessary to improve standards. Most pupils can describe geographical patterns and suggest reasons for the patterns. For example, in one Year 8 lesson on climate, the majority of pupils could explain why one part of the world was colder than another. Their knowledge and understanding of places is weak. Their knowledge of the local Coventry area is good but it is insufficiently well extended systematically and regularly to include the wider world. In a Year 8 lesson some struggled to suggest specific places that are very cold or very hot and many were unable to suggest the location of the place they were studying.
- 241 Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are also achieving levels below those expected for their age. Pupils' ability to use Ordnance Survey maps is well below expectations. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, many could interpret symbols and identify patterns but were unable to use six figure grid references to suggest locations for photographs.
- 242 Pupils with special educational needs progress well because the teachers and support staff work hard to prepare materials appropriate to their needs. More able pupils could achieve more in geography because they have insufficiently well targeted work

to challenge them further.

- 243 Teaching is good overall. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory, mostly good and occasionally very good, a similar picture to the last inspection. Teachers plan and deliver a range of interesting lessons with a variety of learning activities using a range of stimulating resources including maps, photographs, video clips, models and graphs. As a result behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes very good. Teachers' expectations of pupils are also high, encouraging pupils to work individually, in pairs and in groups to improve their literacy skills as well as their geographical understanding. In a good Year 9 lesson on mapping crime, pupils were interpreting maps, developing appropriate geographical vocabulary, and were supported to write about the pattern of crimes in Coventry.
- 244 Teachers also use support teachers and assistants well, enabling pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity and ability to be included and have access to learning. The result is that relationships are good too. In a Year 8 lesson on Brazil, a visually impaired pupil made use of an enlarger to see photographs and a laptop computer to support writing. In this same lesson other pupils showed care for special educational needs pupils too, by modifying slightly their own work to cater for the needs of others in the group.
- 245 What distinguishes the very good lessons from the satisfactory ones are clearer geographical objectives in the subject, and encouraging pupils to articulate their own learning orally and in writing. In a very good Year 11 lesson on urban patterns, pupils were clearly introduced to the topic with appropriate music, followed by an explanation of what was needed to be learned, prior to a stimulating photograph and map exercise. This developed into an extended writing exercise with some pupils reading their work to the rest of the class. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were searching the Internet and had been well instructed and gained knowledge and understanding of marine pollution. However, they were insufficiently well briefed about the purpose and objectives of learning about marine pollution which meant that progress was slower than it might have been.
- 246 This good teaching has yet to fully impact on learning as a whole which is only satisfactory. Whilst pupils show interest and enthusiasm during oral tasks, their productivity and pace of working during independent tasks is only satisfactory, despite enthusiasm and encouragement from the teachers and support teachers. In a Year 9 lesson on renewable and non-renewable resources, the teaching was enthusiastic, well prepared and challenging using card sorting activities and games to support extended writing. However pupils' productivity notably dropped during the extended writing activity. Low levels of literacy are one inhibitor of progress, but pupils' knowledge of their own learning is particularly weak, and insufficiently explicit and regular in the teaching. In a Year 10 lesson on redevelopment of brownfield sites, pupils were enjoying and engaged in the activity, mapping and modelling, but they were insufficiently clear about what they were learning through the task.
- 247 Teachers show a great deal of care for pupils, and mark their work with encouragement. But, it is not consistent throughout and some marking is not helping pupils to understand how to improve and what they do well. There are some examples of very good marking especially in Year 9 where the teacher clearly identifies specific improvements in the subject. There is good subject specific marking of assessments for Key Stage 3. Much of the onus falls on the teachers, but

in order that pupils can understand how to improve, they need to be involved more in judging the quality of their own work and having clear targets for improvement.

- 248 Teaching is contributing effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils have many opportunities to develop work with their peers and develop social skills as a result. Pupils debate moral issues in geography such as population growth. Pupils' discuss attitudes to race and gender. The use of music and poetry gives pupils time to reflect on their learning. There is on balance insufficient opportunity to study cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and the rest of the world.
- 249 The leadership and management of the subject are sound, but after only one year of current practice, they have yet to impact fully. Priority has been given to revitalising the subject after a period of decline. There is a good vision and commitment to improve amongst teachers in the department. There is good deployment of staff, resources and accommodation, with displays creating a rich learning environment to show examples of good work. These are in turn used to motivate other learners. The head of geography does some monitoring of learning; for example data analysis of examination results, the moderation of assessments and book scans. However, it is insufficiently well used to diagnose specific strengths and weaknesses in learning geography which will inform more rigorous curriculum planning. There are schemes of work which identify knowledge and understanding of geographical themes, but they are insufficiently explicit in setting out the purpose of the units of work, the learning objectives in skills and knowledge and understanding of places.
- 250 Overall, standards in geography have fluctuated since the last inspection as a result of instability in staffing. New leadership of the subject has put in place many strategies to raise standards. Weak literacy skills especially by boys, and lack of independent learning skills have been identified as priorities by the new head of department. Increased attention is given to literacy activities through geography as well as strategies to increase pupils' motivation and ability to carry out and complete tasks outside of school. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in methods used to cater for the needs of all pupils. Listening skills are more effectively taught, however, the learning pupils need to acquire still needs to be made more explicit. Homework is much improved.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management, especially planning within each key stage and the development of the subject.
- Teaching, especially subject knowledge and commitment to the subject.
- Development in pupils of skills of enquiry, evaluation and empathy.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of pupils by ages 14 and 16.

- 251 The attainment of pupils age 14 in 2001 in teachers' formal assessments was below

the national average.

- 252 Standards reached by pupils age 16 were also below the national average, though levels have varied over recent years. In 2000, 52% of pupils following the GCSE course obtained A*-C grades, compared to 57.5% nationally. In 2001, the school results were 48.5% compared to the national figure of 61%. In terms of A*-G grades, only 95.1% of pupils attained these grades in 2001, below the national results of 97%.
- 253 In the sixth form, only very small numbers of students have until recently studied history at AS and A-level making national comparisons unreliable. In 2001, students were successful in line with their earlier GCSE performance. The number of students now studying history after the age of 16 has significantly increased.
- 254 The quality of work seen in lessons in Years 7 to 9 indicates attainment levels in line with past teachers' assessments. Pupils presently in Years 7 to 9 are achieving levels below those expected for their age, but are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Work seen during the inspection showed satisfactory progress and development. There are weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills.
- 255 Pupils' achievement leads to good historical knowledge and understanding, and their work shows that they have a good sense of chronological order. They are able to analyse and interpret events and to develop substantiated explanations. For instance, in a Year 8 lesson on the English Civil War, pupils used their good understanding of the monarchy and of parliament to make judgements on the actions of Charles I and on the linking of events. Pupils with higher levels of attainment demonstrate very good historical skills of investigation and use of source materials.
- 256 Pupils by age 16 are achieving standards below those typically expected for their age. By the time pupils reach Years 10 and 11, they have developed a secure knowledge of their own learning, and they develop an increasingly mature grasp of central historical issues with an ability to evaluate available evidence. As in Years 7 to 9, they are frequently confident and enthusiastic in contributing to class discussions and in making presentations. Contributions in lessons show empathy with people from various periods of time and historical contexts, as in a discussion by Year 9 pupils on the conditions in towns during the Industrial Revolution and also in a Year 11 examination of the development of medicine.
- 257 In the limited observation of sixth form lessons during the inspection, the majority of Year 12 students showed sound knowledge and understanding during a consideration of the conditions and threats experienced by the Weimar Republic. Note taking and writing develop for the majority of pupils and become more structured. Pupils appreciate the importance of finding and using secure evidence and coming to reasoned conclusions.
- 258 By age 16 and in the sixth form, achievement is good when compared with the standards attained by the pupils at the beginning of their courses. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Their learning needs are well established and met by appropriate materials and teaching. They are also helped to develop by the good learning ethos in lessons, and by the consistent support of classroom assistants.

- 259 Pupils' high levels of interest and enthusiasm, together with very good relationships and behaviour in lessons, are major factors in promoting involvement and development.
- 260 Achievement is also effectively promoted by the good quality of the teaching. During the inspection, teaching in the nine lessons seen was judged overall to be good; it was good or better in all but two lessons where it was satisfactory. In almost half the lessons seen, teaching was very good or excellent. Pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding of the topics being studied as a result of the teachers' own good, and in some cases very good, subject knowledge and interest. Detailed planning and structures, together with clear learning objectives and target setting, ensure an established focus in lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 10 lesson were helped to develop a perceptive understanding of democratic and coalition governments and the complex political events which took place in Germany during the 1920s. Learning is well consolidated, and in most lessons there is a good pace of working through varied activities. Pupils' confidence as independent learners is increasingly developed in Years 10 and 11. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to initiate and participate in lively debates and arguments which are moved forward skilfully by the class teacher. A recently increased commitment to fieldwork and visits is a further element in the success of the subject in the school.
- 261 The progress of pupils is monitored satisfactorily through the regular marking of their work. Target setting and pupils' knowledge of their progress from assessment grades support the development of skills.
- 262 The quality of teaching in the history department and the achievement of pupils owes much to the very good leadership and management provided by the subject leader. There is a very clear vision and direction that focuses on the quality of teaching and the promotion of the subject. Teachers are well supported, while planning and teaching strategies have been subject to thorough review and development. Understanding of citizenship is one current example of the breadth of the aspects being given attention. There is a firm commitment to raising standards, and to further promoting the popularity of the subject.
- 263 Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in the challenge and the expectations made of pupils. Teaching and learning strategies have received considerable attention, to the direct benefit of the experiences of pupils within the classroom. The increasing use of information and communication technology, for both small group research and for whole class work, is one example of these strategies. The adoption of textbooks at foundation and higher ability levels also shows the support given to the rates of progress by individual pupils. An overall commitment to raising attainment is the clear focus within the resources policies and lesson activities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY [ICT]

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good** when taught in specific ICT lessons, but is very **variable in subjects and in many a weakness**.

Strengths

- The rising trend in attainment at Key Stage 4.

- The very much improved ratio of computers to pupils.
- The pace and challenge in lessons.
- The confidence shown by pupils of different abilities in using a range of software.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work need to be brought up to date to fully meet current requirements.
- Assessment needs to be improved, particularly at Key Stage 3, so that it better informs planning of lessons.
- Pupils should be given more guidance on course criteria, improved feedback on their progress, and more advice on how to achieve their individual targets.
- Use of ICT in subjects.

- 264 Over half the pupils reached the national benchmark of Level 5 or better in the statutory teachers' assessment at the age of 14, reported in 2001. This was below the national average.
- 265 Results in the GCSE short course in 2001 for pupils aged 16 was in line with the national average overall and well above the average for subjects in the school. There have been improvements every year since the previous inspection, with the trend being above the school's A*-C results in other subjects. There have been differences between the results of boys and girls but there is no particular trend. Overall the improvements in attainment since more computers have been available has been good.
- 266 The recently introduced Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education for sixth form students is part of joint provision with another school. This is working well and all the pupils are making at least sound progress.
- 267 Standards of attainment of pupils currently in the school as seen in specific lessons in ICT are in line with those typically expected by age 14 overall. Observations show that by age 14 many pupils successfully complete a range of challenging work. They confidently use spreadsheets, word processing and desktop publishing, databases, control applications and the Internet. Most pupils are confident and independent learners. More able pupils complete work more quickly but nearly all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress with the challenging tasks set. For a few pupils, weaknesses in literacy hamper progress. In Years 7 to 9, the progress being made by pupils is sound overall and an improving picture.
- 268 The work seen for the specialist GCSE examination course in ICT by pupils aged 16 is mostly of an above average standard, although this could be better organised in some cases, with clearer references to the course criteria. Pupils show confidence in developing coursework and are increasingly confident in choosing and using a range of relevant software. Higher attaining and more motivated pupils are making good progress. Most of those with special educational needs are also making at least sound progress in developing their ICT skills and completing coursework.
- 269 There is some good cross-curricular use of ICT, but this does vary between subjects. During inspection, there was evidence of some sound and better use in design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education but use in

mathematics is unsatisfactory. Although making a good contribution to pupils' ICT capability where taught, there is too little consistent use of ICT across subjects.

- 270 Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in ICT lessons are very good. They are keen, confident and enthusiastic users of ICT. They concentrate and co-operate well in lessons and they value the support given by staff. Two boys with visual impairment were observed in lessons and both coped well with the discussion and practical elements. There is a computer club every lunchtime that is well attended, more so by boys than girls. Most pupils use this time for leisure purposes and the provision is contributing well to the overall motivation of pupils. There are also six networked machines in the library and these are also used well by pupils. The computer club and the library provision are making a good contribution to pupils' social development.
- 271 The quality of teaching is good overall. All lessons observed were at least sound and over half were good or better. The good subject knowledge and high level of staff commitment contribute directly to the attainment and progress of pupils of all abilities. The worksheets provided are clear and concise and this is backed by individual support once pupils move to the computers. Lessons progress at a good pace with clarity of presentation and appropriate questioning that helps to maintain concentration and challenge. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and, where needed, receive direct help from learning assistants. The few pupils that do not behave well are well managed so that the progress of others is not affected.
- 272 The leadership and management of the department are sound and improving. The need to focus on improving resources and training has been a challenge that has been met well by the head of department and other staff. The quality of resources and accommodation are now good with the ratio of pupils to computers being approximately 5:1. There is still a need to improve the quantity and range of resources further particularly within subject areas for which the school needs to plan as a whole. A lack of resources in the past has not enabled the department to fully develop in a number of aspects and in the following areas, there are still some shortcomings.
- 273 Schemes of work do not provide an accurate picture of current provision and requirements and need updating. Strategies for supporting literacy, numeracy and how the needs of all abilities are being met, including gifted and talented pupils are not currently specified. Assessment needs to be improved, particularly in Years 7 to 9, so that teachers can use this information in their lesson planning. Pupils would benefit from more guidance on course criteria, improved feedback on their progress and more advice on how to achieve their individual targets than they currently receive. The proposals to move towards more integrated delivery of ICT will need very careful planning and organisation to ensure ICT capability is developed across the curriculum.
- 274 Overall, there has been very good progress in provision and improving standards in ICT since the previous inspection. The level of improved resources and the quality of teaching and learning are enabling improved achievement and higher standards across the ability range.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **much improved and is now satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' positive attitudes and motivation in French.
- Teachers' commitment to achieving high standards for all pupils.
- Significant improvements since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Curriculum planning and schemes of work to ensure all pupils make progress in skills and understanding over time.
- Assessment. Strong and supportive partnerships focused on pupils' progress and attainment.

- 275 Standards of attainment in French have improved markedly for pupils aged 14 and in the proportions of pupils age 16 now gaining grades at GCSE. Overall they both remain below national averages.
- 276 In teacher assessments for pupils age 14 in 2001, attainment was well below national standards. Both boys and girls attained levels below those found nationally according to gender, but the gap was much wider for boys than for girls.
- 277 From under 7% gaining grades A*-C in French in GCSE examinations at the time of the previous inspection, there has been a significant improvement now to almost 22% of pupils entered attaining these grades, compared to 47% nationally. The proportion achieving grades A*-G are now broadly in line with those achieved nationally. Alderman Callow also enters a higher proportion of pupils in the year group than are entered nationally. Boys and girls achieve rather differently from year to year. In 2001, both boys and girls in A*-C grades performed below the national average for their gender, but boys in the school achieved well below that of the girls and attained very low standards compared to boys nationally. In the previous year, 2000, very few pupils achieved higher grades and the attainment levels of boys and girls was very similar.
- 278 Pupils by age 14 attain standards in the National Curriculum that, although below, are now closer to the national average. Listening skills are improving, due largely to positive attitudes and behaviour, but many pupils still find this skill very demanding. Their achievement in lessons in reading French is also improving. In both these skills, pupils' achievement is focused well on the increasing demands of language content, such as tenses, but less on the higher order skills, such as main points, personal responses and inferences. Pupils' achievement in speaking is characterised by their confidence and sense of security with their teachers. They attempt quite extended use, tackling role-plays in well-supported activities in lessons and more able pupils work from memory. Extended writing is a growing strength, with both hand-written and word-processed examples on display and in their books. These show great care and pride in presentation, as well as a good grasp of key language rules and a good range of words and phrases. Pupils of all abilities are successfully encouraged to take advantage of these equally demanding opportunities in lessons and homework. Progress for all pupils is at least satisfactory and is often better where teaching and learning build in the steps and stages different abilities need. Higher attaining pupils

produce very good work in response to high expectations. Middle and lower attaining pupils achieve well where those steps and stages are clearly put in place. In general, boys and girls do equally well, due in large part to the very good relationships and mutual confidence. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported and make good progress, because staff are provided with and use good quality information about their differing needs, including those who are identified as being of higher ability. Language teachers effectively link learning support assistants into lesson activities and help them to fulfil their support role well.

- 279 By age 16, pupils have recently begun to achieve GCSE standards of attainment much closer to national averages than at the time of the last inspection. In their work in lessons or for the exam course, pupils show at least satisfactory rates of progress and achievement. This is particularly evident in the quality and range of their writing, where they readily use higher level aspects of the language, such as a range of tenses, time phrases and varying sentence patterns. In speaking, pupils of all abilities are ready to attempt quite demanding dialogues and role-plays, and higher attaining pupils are ready to speak extensively and from memory. Young people of this age are often reluctant to speak a foreign language, but pupils in this school achieve well. Progress in this demanding skill is good for pupils of differing abilities. A similar picture emerges in their written work. Examples of careful and methodical writing are evident across the ability range. In all lessons, pupils make and keep methodical and mainly reliable notes.
- 280 Teaching is now good overall and engages pupils in effective learning. The quality of teaching seen ranged from one excellent to one unsatisfactory lesson. All other lessons were either good or very good. There are clear strengths in teacher-pupil relationships. Teachers are committed to individuals whom they know well, especially those with particular learning needs. In a Year 11 GCSE lesson, pupils explored their own ideas, experimenting well with the language they had been taught. Teachers have developed very positive learning activities, which build those positive relationships into effective learning partnerships with pupils of all abilities. This is clear in several lessons, such as in a Year 8 lesson, where the teacher used different games such as the 'raffle' in the warm-up. Pupils rose to the challenge of correctly answering three questions in a row to gain a merit. High quality displays help create an excellent learning environment and pupils use these both for reference and to explore their ideas. In one instance, a Year 8 pupil thought hard about the word "*cheveux*" (hair) he was learning for personal description, comparing it with the word "*cheval*" (horse), that he saw on a poster. Teachers make effective use of existing resources, often supplemented by excellent materials to exploit aspects of more demanding skills, such as listening, by providing pointers before hearing a tape in Year 10 lessons, or using highlighted slides to work with key aspects of a new tense as seen in a Year 11 lesson.. Teachers meet regularly to share successful ideas for teaching and learning activities as a good response to professional development.
- 281 Where teaching is less effective, preparation overlooks key steps and stages to enable pupils of differing abilities to absorb securely the language content into their developing skills and understanding. One instance of this was where a Year 9 class were reading about regional foods and lower ability pupils made very limited progress because they had not had enough experience before the activity in learning some of the things they needed to know in order to understanding the text.

- 282 Teachers' personal commitment and care for their pupils are very good although monitoring of pupils' academic progress is currently only satisfactory. In developing assessment further, the faculty is moving towards a consistent and strategic approach to exercising more focussed care for pupils' academic progress. The current absence of clear curriculum planning inhibits the ability of the department and pupils to fully utilise assessment opportunities and show what pupils can really do.
- 283 There is a clear commitment to raising standards further. Very good levels of pupils' motivation have been successfully established. Teachers maintain a determined focus on the requirements of the National Curriculum and GCSE. An energetic and committed teacher leads the faculty well. The team is now well focussed on change, ready and capable to resolve problems. The headteacher and senior managers strongly back and support their work and recognise the strengths of the faculty. In terms of subject leadership, the educational direction provided for French has contributed significantly to a fundamental shift in ethos, relationships and in standards achieved.
- 284 The modern foreign languages curriculum meets requirements in providing one language, French, for all pupils across both key stages. The school is clearly committed to providing a foreign language for all pupils. In management of the subject, lesson planning currently ensures a good and consistent range of learning opportunities, but schemes of work and other subject documentation are at a basic level of development. The main gaps are in the provision of written policies and practical guidelines to help teachers secure pupils' progress related to the National Curriculum. These are needed to ensure that pupils of all abilities, especially lower and middle attaining pupils make appropriate rates of progress. Pupils' specific language skills, especially listening and reading need particular attention. Curricular planning also leaves aspects of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development too much to chance. Assessments and target setting are not used sufficiently to plan the curriculum or individual lessons, or provided subject specific advice for pupils. Extra-curricular activities are most successful in the regular visits made to France, about which pupils are enthusiastic. Other activities include a Key Stage 3 extension club, but this was not seen during the week of inspection.
- 285 Continuous professional development opportunities for staff have been well used to secure improvements to date. Accommodation is of high quality with very good displays, which pupils actively use. Resources are improving slowly but are still at a very basic level and the team uses what they have to good effect. Key partnerships established with the Local Education Authority, local universities and local companies provide valuable support for the subject and should be developed further to consolidate pupils' progress and attainment.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- The high level of musical skill and commitment of the head of music.
- The quality of teaching.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- The commitment to provide musical opportunities for all.
- The high quality provision of instrumental teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work which:
 - reflect the National Curriculum programmes of study more effectively;
 - clearly identify the musical skills and knowledge to be taught at each stage as pupils progress.
- Assessment processes to inform curriculum and lesson planning.
- Greater challenge for higher ability pupils at Key Stage 3.

286 Attainment in teacher assessments by pupils age 14 in 2001 was below the national average.

287 In GCSE examinations in 2001, the results of a group of seven pupils age 16 were broadly in line with the national average for results in the range A*-C.

288 In work seen during the inspection, by age 14 pupils are achieving standards slightly lower than those typically expected for their age. Most pupils in Year 9 have a reduced teaching time compared with pupils in Years 7 and 8 and other subjects in Year 9. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys including those of an ethnic minority background. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 and 8 although pupils of higher ability could be challenged much more. Pupils in Year 7 improvise simple rhythmic patterns using pitch notes appropriate to a repeating chordal accompaniment. Some pupils can perform the chord pattern as well, using the automatic chord system on the electric keyboards. Pupils perform their work to each other, some showing a good feel for the beat. In Year 8, pupils perform the melody of the *Themes from Star Wars* working with some success with the difficult rhythm. Some perform with little difficulty after minimal time to rehearse. These pupils would benefit from a more rigorous musical challenge. Progress at Year 9 is less pronounced although examples of good work were seen during the inspection particularly in the single group who enjoy greater teaching time. In this group pupils worked effectively in small teams, sharing ideas and creating arrangements of current pop songs using keyboards and untuned percussion.

289 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when support staff have been well briefed. Special preparations are made to enable pupils with specific physical difficulties to take a full part in the lesson. For example, good use is made of labels with large fonts on keyboards and specially enlarged notation for the visually impaired.

290 On the evidence of work seen during the inspection, at the age of 16 pupils are achieving standards which are broadly in line with those typically expected for their age. The current Year 11 group consists of 11 boys who work as an after-school club. They listen to music and make judgements about the genre, style and era of composition and analyse the sounds with reference to the elements of music. They can identify textures such as homophonic and polyphonic and can indicate changes of pitch and duration using appropriate notations.

291 Attitudes and behaviour observed during the inspection were good and often very good. In Years 10 and 11 they are excellent. This is because there is a strong commitment to music for all across all years. This is reflected in the way that all pupils are involved in music making, led and encouraged by the teacher who provides

careful explanations and illustrations. Pupils are encouraged by well-directed praise through the school merit system and by the effective use of activities designed to build musical and personal confidence.

- 292 The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good overall. Teaching is often good and very good and occasionally excellent. This is because individual lessons are well planned and delivered with good pace and humour. The teacher has excellent musical and performing skills and can use them to good effect. However, there is a need to develop planning so that the individual lessons form part of a much more cohesive scheme that allows for the effective and progressive building of pupils' musical skills from Year 7 to Year 9. In lessons observed during the inspection and through observations of other work a limited range of musical activities was evident. Examples of vocal work, performing using non-electric instruments, computer-based sequencing, composition, graphic notations and listening and appraising need further development. These activities need to be planned as part of well-integrated long-term and medium-term plans. The range and type of assessments will then need to be developed to inform future planning.
- 293 Learning was generally good or better in lessons observed. The passion and enthusiasm of the music teacher is effectively transmitted to pupils who show a genuine desire to make good progress. This is particularly apparent in their work on the keyboards. There is a warm relationship between teaching staff and pupils in the department. Pupils appreciate the high level of commitment given in lessons, in lunchtime clubs and after school to support musical development and create greater musical opportunities. Pupils support each other and listen with respect and appreciation when sharing examples of individuals' practical achievements. Although work is often designed to match the needs of the various ability groups within the class, higher ability pupils at Key Stage 3 would make better progress if the activities were more challenging.
- 294 The school is very well supported by the instrumental teaching staff from the Coventry Performing Arts Centre. In lessons observed during the inspection the quality of teaching and learning was extremely high. More than 13% of the pupil population learn to play an instrument. In the string and brass lessons observed during the inspection pupils make very good progress.
- 295 The music department plays an important part in the arts team who work together to produce an annual presentation at the end of the autumn term. In the video of the 2001 show, a large choir supports soloists, instrumentalists and well choreographed dancing linked together with dramatic interludes. This performing opportunity is available for all and a very large proportion of the pupils body takes up the challenge. This is good. However, provision cannot currently be maintained every term to allow standards of ensemble work to develop as the school has only one music teacher. Over the year the range of extracurricular opportunities provided is good.
- 296 The department is well led and managed by the experienced music teacher. Further developments are being planned for the department which will add to the range of opportunities available. For example, the newly acquired Caribbean Steel Pans will soon be part of the curriculum, adding to the cultural diversity of work done in the department. The use of ICT is at present unsatisfactory. The use of music to develop the spiritual awareness of pupils is not well exploited. For example, pupils would

benefit from more class discussion and more extended writing which draws upon pupil's reflection, imagination, aural observation and creative flair than is currently found.

- 297 The department has adequate resources for its current work. As the variety of teaching activities increases there will be a need to review future needs including ICT. The accommodation is generally good and with some layout changes could provide an even more effective working space.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Consistently applied high standards and expectations which enable pupils to achieve well.
- The quality of teaching overall is good.
- Assessment is integrated successfully into teaching with good records which are used for future planning.
- Pupils are valued and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- The quality of display including positive images and role models promote high standards.

Areas for improvement

- Subject development planning and costing of priorities.
- Assessment objectives in schemes of work to cover all strands of physical education.
- Strategic management of classroom assistants.

- 298 In teachers' formal assessments of pupils age 14 in 2001 almost half of the cohort attaining at least the national benchmark of Level 5 with girls attaining slightly higher standards than boys. Overall, these standards were below the national average, but the achievement of girls differs from the national picture where boys achieved slightly higher standards than girls.

- 299 At GCSE level, attainment of pupils age 16 based on average points scores was in line with national averages for 2001. This demonstrates a significant improvement over three years. The proportion of eligible pupils entered by the school was higher than entered nationally. These pupils performed at average levels compared to their other subjects in school.

- 300 Year 7 baseline entry assessment records indicate that almost all pupils began their secondary education working below the national expectations for pupils of age 11. In work now seen, attainment overall by age 14 for pupils is just in line with national expectations. Attainment in gymnastics is in line with national expectations with pupils showing extension and sound control in take off and landings. Good understanding of technical language is also evident. Attainment in games is less secure with extremes of ability evident in classes. Skill level for most pupils is limited by basic faults in footwork and dribbling though receiving the ball and movement into space are sound with tactical awareness developing. Standards in extracurricular clubs are good. The subject makes a positive contribution to the development of literacy through the planned use of technical vocabulary which is clearly understood and used by the pupils.

- 301 By age 16, pupils taking the optional GCSE course are achieving better than average standards overall. All assignments include well presented and accurate word processed work with good use of graphics. Understanding of theoretical principles relating to safety and participation in physical activity are secure; and are more secure in girls than boys in Year 10. Attainment in football and trampolining is above national expectations with high levels of skill and good technique evident. Under-achievement by some boys at GCSE level is recognised by the staff and further closer monitoring of their progress is needed in some lessons.
- 302 Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve in line with their ability due to the attention given by the staff in lessons. Tasks set and support within the tasks are appropriate to the demands of individual needs. Some of the most able pupils in physical education could be further challenged in some lessons.
- 303 Moral and social development is good. In games, pupils play within the rules without close teacher supervision. Mixed gender groups work well together with both groups contributing to the development of work. Behaviour is good. Pupils willingly accept responsibility, such as in the leading of warm-up tasks, and organise themselves well. There is a good working atmosphere in lessons with pupils on task. They show respect for each other, not interrupting and making supportive comments during practical work. This was particularly evident in a challenging Year 9 group in a hockey lesson.
- 304 The quality of teaching overall across the department is good with a broad range of learning strategies evident in many lessons. The quality of teaching seen was never less than good and was excellent in one lesson in three. High standards of teaching are characterised by the use of a broad range of learning strategies appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Co-operative group work is used effectively to promote learning with the less able and to develop social skills with the more able. Alternative vocabulary is used to help pupils develop their literacy skills. Individual and group assessment and feedback are frequent and appropriate to the situation. Expectations are high and well met by motivated pupils. Pupils of all abilities are well integrated into the lesson through a range of strategies although, on occasions, the more able are insufficiently challenged. Questioning for understanding is common and used well though questioning which challenges pupils on how they can improve their standards is not extensive. Class management is good with appropriate pace maintained and timed tasks a feature of lessons. Effective use of learning support staff is variable and not always well focussed. Assessment is integrated successfully into teaching with good records which are used for future planning. Through the high quality of teaching, pupils are enabled to make good progress, displaying a positive attitude to learning.
- 305 The subject is well led and managed with clear, consistently applied procedures providing a secure learning environment for the pupils. A focus on learning has been very effective and the department has made a valuable contribution to the national development of the exemplification of standards of work in physical education. School links with clubs and the community are extensive. Successful national bids for funding to develop provision have been successful and standards of attainment, particularly in GCSE, have improved significantly through well planned and managed

strategies. A good team ethos is evident. Staff are supported and enabled to develop effectively through the observation and evaluation of lessons and through individual support. Documentation is extensive, of sufficient detail to promote high standards and is consistently applied across the department. However, subject development planning needs to be reviewed to identify priorities more clearly with greater detailed planning to show how the new priorities will be achieved and how much they will cost. Assessment objectives set out in the schemes of work focus on how well pupils acquire and develop skills but a more appropriate balance of objectives is needed to reflect the other three strands in the national programme of study for physical education. The annual reports to parents, are detailed and well structured but do not fully reflect the detailed knowledge the staff have of the pupils as the statement bank used is too restricted. Strategic management of the learning support assistants is not sufficiently well managed to ensure that they are always effectively deployed and used for the benefit of the pupils.

- 306 There have been several significant developments within the subject since the previous inspection which have contributed to raising standards. Schemes of work have been updated to meet National Curriculum requirements. They are detailed and include strategies to help pupils with different abilities, opportunities for use of ICT and for developing pupils language skills. GCSE schemes are extensive and form an excellent resource for staff and pupils. Additional study support opportunities are extensive and well attended and these coincide with the significant improvement in results. Baseline assessments at Year 7 are built in to the Key Stage 3 schemes of work and the effective assessment system shows good pupil progress in the early part of their secondary career. The range of out of hours provision for pupils has broadened.
- 307 The quality of the curriculum offered, the time allocated to the subject, the resources available and the wholly specialist staffing contribute significantly to the improving standards in pupils' attainment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The enthusiasm and commitment of the new head of department to improve the quality of pupils' learning in the subject.
- The strong level of individual support provided for pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- The positive attitude of pupils to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The low time allocation for the subject is affecting adversely pupils' learning.
- The department lacks a rigorous process of monitoring, evaluation, action and review that will ensure the continued development of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils are sometimes given insufficient help in structuring their writing appropriately.

- 308 The school had no full course GCSE entries in 2001. In the short course GCSE, the

number of pupils entered was very low and results were below the national average for pupils age 16 gaining A*-C grades. The performance of boys was not as good as girls.

- 309 In the work seen during the inspection, by age 14 pupils are achieving standards that are below those typically expected for their age. Boys and girls, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, perform at about the same level. Most pupils are able to recall key facts in important religious stories and more able students appreciate the motivation that led religious leaders to follow a certain course of action. Pupils adopt a positive attitude to religions that are not their own and are able to see the value of aspects of belief from a range of faiths. For example, in a Year 8 class that has been studying Buddhism, a small group of pupils were able to appreciate the reasons for the Buddha's decision to relinquish his wealth and radically change his whole pattern of life, and how in our own times, some people might similarly choose to adopt a non-materialistic existence as a result of their beliefs. Pupils are able to understand the thoughts and experiences of others in their terms rather than their own. For example, in a Year 9 class studying the life of Martin Luther King, after listening to a recording of the famous 'I have a dream' speech, pupils were able to offer thoughtful suggestions on what they might wish to change in society in order to improve it. Although pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work and some write at length, pupils' writing lacks structure and organisation: this is a weakness that will cause difficulties as they attempt to convey complex ideas in a logical form. Pupils are building their knowledge of important aspects of religious belief, but their grasp of those areas associated with the search for meaning and purpose in life is underdeveloped. Pupils are making sound progress and achieving as well as can be expected.
- 310 By age 16, pupils are achieving standards that are below typical national expectations. In lessons, boys and girls, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, perform at a similar standard. Pupils are developing a sound grasp of the basic factual content of the themes studied and they are able to converse in a straightforward manner about important moral issues. Pupils are interested in the beliefs and lifestyles of different religious faiths and are able to accept that cultural traditions that are different from their own might be equally valid. For example, in a lesson examining the notion of arranged marriage, several pupils were able to appreciate that there are valid arguments both for and against the practice. Whilst pupils are prepared to engage in discussion about religious and moral questions, they find it difficult to justify and sustain an argument as their language skills fall short of typical expectations. There are significant weaknesses in pupils' writing skills. Although pupils' work is well presented, much of their writing does not reflect a depth of thinking and answers to questions tend to be shallow. The structure of pupils' writing is also below average and pupils experience difficulty sustaining and supporting a point in an essay-style answer.
- 311 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons seen, it was never less than sound and on occasions, it is good or very good. In all lessons, teachers adopt a confident, authoritative manner that helps to settle classes quickly and encourages pupils to concentrate on the task in hand. Lessons move along at a lively pace and time is used productively. The head of department, who teaches the great majority of lessons, has a very secure grasp of the subject, which she uses to stimulate pupils' thinking. Pupils are provided with a good deal of guidance on how to improve their

work, especially in Years 10 and 11. As a result of a lack of time, teachers are unable to draw together adequately the threads of the work that they have been covering in lessons and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. The lack of clear and shared objectives that identify what is to be learned in lessons inhibits the teacher and pupil from gauging progress during a lesson. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to challenge and develop pupils' thinking.

- 312 Learning is satisfactory. Teachers communicate an enthusiasm for the subject and this results in pupils engaging well with the range of activities set for them. Teachers work hard to produce a positive learning atmosphere in lessons and pupils respond enthusiastically when question and answer sessions take place. Pupils generally work at a good pace and concentrate on the task in hand. Pupils generally find it difficult to reflect on other people's ideas together with their own perceptions and this weakness retards progress. Understanding of moral and religious issues is sometimes superficial and there is a reluctance to explore such matters in depth.
- 313 Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory and carried out mainly in the past five months by the new head of department. A start has been made to altering the emphasis in pupils' writing from mostly factual recall to the development of a wider range of subject skills, but further attention needs to be given to the ways in which knowledge, understanding and skills might be inter-related. There is now greater sophistication and depth in pupils' work, but more thought needs to be given to the development of extended writing. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and it is now satisfactory or better. Assessment of pupils' work is much improved and is a growing strength of the department. The time available for the subject remains well below that recommended in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The lack of time to teach the subject remains a major problem and is a significant inhibitor to making improvements in the quality of learning.
- 314 The head of department has made a significant impact. She has developed an ethos whereby pupils treat the subject seriously, there is a sense of purpose about the way lessons are planned and taught and she possesses a clear view of what she wants to achieve. Some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has taken place, but it has not been carried out with sufficient rigour. There is a need for senior managers to devise a coherent approach to monitoring and evaluating performance in religious education that clearly identifies strengths and areas for development and for these matters to be dealt with promptly. The subject is in the process of becoming well established and has the potential to achieve a high degree of success, if the weaknesses raised above are dealt with as a matter of urgency.

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

In the inspection, five subjects 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. National comparative data was not available at the time of the inspection.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	2	50		0		2.0	
Business Education	2	100		0		2.0	
Computing	4	100		0		4.0	
English Literature	5	100		20		4.8	
History	2	100		50		7.0	
Law	1	100		100		10.0	
Mathematics	3	33		0		2.0	
Physics	1	100		0		6.0	
Psychology	4	100		25		5.5	
Sports/PE studies	1	100		0		4.0	

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
Business	3	100		33		8.7	
English Literature	5	100		40		5.6	
Geography	3	100		0		3.3	
History	2	100		50		7.0	
Mathematics	3	67		33		4.7	
Media/Film/TV studies	1	100		0		4.0	
Psychology	1	100		100		10.0	
Sports studies/PE	1	100		100		6.0	
Dance	1	0		0		2.0	

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	4	100	76	25%		0	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics and biology were inspected as focus subjects and chemistry was sampled. The AS-level chemistry lesson observed was sound. The teacher built on students' knowledge and understanding effectively by skilful questioning which was well paced and maintained students' interest for some time. Relationships were good and students were sufficiently confident to ask questions of clarification when they did not understand the concept being explained. As a result, learning was good. The few students entered for chemistry at A-level over the last four years have all passed as have those entered for physics.

Mathematics

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- The modular course offered at A-level to the students is appropriate.
- Teaching and in particular teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Students' attitudes towards learning.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities needed for students to discuss their work.
- The integration of the use of ICT and teaching methods in subject guidance.

- 315 The inspection covered A-level and AS-level mathematics in the three areas of pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. As well as discussions with the head of mathematics and sixth form students three lessons were observed and students' work was scrutinised.
- 316 The numbers of students taking A-level mathematics is very small. In 2001 only three students were entered and they gained grades B,C and N. This is typical of performance over the last three years. In 2001 AS results in Year 12 were disappointing and this resulted in a high proportion of students not continuing their study into Year 13. Module tests are now taken later in the year and so far no students have left the course. Girls and boys perform equally well on both the AS and A-level course. These results indicate satisfactory progress against students' GCSE standards.
- 317 The standard of work in lessons and in students' files is satisfactory given students' earlier achievements. All students are confident in applying learnt techniques to a

range of problems. Students feel that they were well prepared for their sixth form studies and, in particular, their algebraic manipulation skills are good. For example, one boy in Year 13 made an error in a remainder theorem question but his checking procedures enabled him to find and correct it quickly. In Year 12, students are more confident with pure mathematics and statistics than with mechanics. The relevance of the problems offered in statistics lessons gives more purpose to their learning. One Year 12 girl, as part of a question, independently explored whether the sum of the product of two mean values was the same as the product of the sum of each. However, this independent approach is not typical and students do not have enough opportunities to explore different approaches or discuss problems in depth.

- 318 Students take three modules in Year 12 covering pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. Their work in mechanics is satisfactory but they are not confident in this module and so continue with pure mathematics and statistics in Year 13 which builds on their strengths and interests. In lessons the teachers work hard and, as a consequence, the teaching is good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and sometimes present ideas that capture students' interest. They plan their lessons carefully, share objectives with the students and continually check for understanding of previous ideas. There are good explanations of techniques which are then applied to a range of routine or interesting examples. Effective use is made of textbooks and prepared notes but there is no opportunity to use computer software or graphic calculators.
- 319 Leadership and management of sixth form mathematics are good. The shared teaching between the staff of Alderman Callow School and its partner school is effective. There is good communication between the two departments so that students feel supported. Regular assessments give good feedback which the students appreciate. They have a clear sense of their own progress in the subject. Two students from Alderman Callow are only taught by partner school teachers however and, although they appreciate support at their own school, they miss informal contact with their teachers.
- 320 The scheme of work is an area of weakness. It merely defines an order of topics. Although a textbook scheme helps to provide continuity of approach, this does not enable the sharing of effective teaching approaches within the subject.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching overall is good, with brisk pace, excellent relationships and good questioning techniques.
- Teachers' good knowledge enables them to give clear and interesting explanations that motivate students so that they concentrate and are keen to learn.
- The number of students taking AS-level biology has increased considerably this year.

Areas for improvement

- Recruitment of more male students.
- Students taking more responsibility for their learning.

- Sharing of resources and schemes of work between the partner schools.

- 321 The numbers of students taking A-level biology have been very small, ones and twos, making direct comparison with national data invalid, but all students entered have obtained at least a pass grade and some have obtained the highest grade. Students do well compared with their attainment at GCSE. The two AS-level biology students did as well as expected in 2001. One of them is now studying A-level biology. There are currently 11 students studying AS-level biology, reflecting the popularity of the course amongst the higher attaining Year 11 population last year. This places some pressure on current resources. No male students were attracted, diminishing the range of views that mixed groups bring to the subject.
- 322 The standard of attainment of current students for this early stage in their courses is at least average. In a Year 13 lessons, two students were able to calculate the energy flow through an ecosystem and they understood the categories of feeding relationships binding ecosystems together. Year 12 students could use their knowledge of the fluid mosaic model to explain transport across the cell membrane and they knew about the structure and function of the Golgi apparatus. In another Year 12 group, students were able to successfully interpret projected slides of blood vessels as transverse sections of arteries or veins.
- 323 Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. Teachers' good knowledge enables them to give clear and interesting explanations that motivate students so that they concentrate and are keen to learn. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm for the subject and this also helps students' motivation and interest. Lessons are usually well planned and well structured. In a genetics lesson dealing with a conceptually difficult topic the teacher enhanced his explanation by using videotape, the whiteboard with coloured pens and the overhead projector to show representations of DNA replication to help students' understanding. Though the lesson content and concepts are usually related to the subject specification, these are not always translated into learning objectives that are shared with students, so that they are not always clear on what they need to understand. Lessons are usually well paced and this motivates students who maintain concentration and interest as a result. Students often lack confidence, but teachers are able with skilful questioning to build on their knowledge, involve them all and check their understanding of concepts and knowledge before moving on. Questioning is used to check if students of different ability have understood particular points and difficult questions are sometimes asked to challenge students. Lessons tend to be very teacher led. Whilst this promotes pace effectively it reduces the opportunities that students have to plan and organise their own work.
- 324 Of the four lessons seen, one was sound and achieved its objectives, two were good and one was very good. The very good lesson was characterised by greater student involvement in their learning. They had researched information on genetically modified foods and presented it in the form of a *PowerPoint* presentation. This enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the subject and their study skills. Presentations were assessed for the key skills of communication and use of ICT. Students were showing high level skills in both. The lesson also contributed to students' spiritual and social development as they were required to reflect on the impact of scientific pursuit on society.

- 325 Students' written work is in the form of notes, assignments and practical work which is conscientiously marked by the teachers, usually with constructive comments about the knowledge skills and understanding of the subject. Homework is used better by some teachers than others to extend and reinforce students' understanding and give them feedback on their progress. Files are usually well organised; some were outstanding, with colour-coded, highlighted, well structured layout and excellent organisation. Students are confident in their use of books and ICT.
- 326 Students are conscientious, well motivated and concentrate in class. They co-operate well during group work and can work independently too, though they are sometimes reluctant to volunteer contributions to lessons. They respond very well to the interest shown in them and the support provided by staff at Alderman Callow School. Relationships are excellent and sustain students well through the pressures involved in travelling between sites and having different teachers. Links with Coventry and Warwick universities enhance the provision for the subject.
- 327 Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The schemes of work for some of the modules studied by the current Year 12 are insufficiently detailed or supported by resources to ensure a consistency of approach by teachers. Regular meetings take place between the heads of subject at the two schools but there is not enough sharing of good practice and resources. Good use is currently made of student performance data to set targets with students. Students are regularly kept informed of how they are performing against their A-level information systems [ALIS] targets that take into account their overall performance at GCSE. Students are aware of how performance at GCSE influences potential performance at A/AS-level. Staff have high expectations of their students and know them very well. This enables early intervention to support students whose performance does not come up to expectations. Accommodation and resources are good though use of ICT for data logging and manipulation of data is very limited.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

There are no students studying subjects in this category.

BUSINESS

Business studies

The school at present provides an AVCE Business course in Year 13, in addition to GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11 and GNVQ part 1 in Year 11. A few students also attend a neighbouring school to follow AS or AVCE courses in Year 12 and A-level in Year 13.

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching, especially in ensuring the appropriateness of opportunities to meet the needs of individual students.
- Procedures for monitoring and guiding the performance of students.
- Positive attitudes of students and working relationships.

- Experiences gained from Young Enterprise activities within the Key Skills time of students.

Areas for improvement

- The provision of additional resources, especially textbooks and access to information and communication technology in the subject room.
- More consistency in the provision of courses and in student numbers.

- 328 The number of students following business studies courses has remained low and varied over recent years. The provision and choice of courses have as a consequence also varied. This has created some uncertainty for the subject which has had to plan and to adapt courses depending upon the nature of the groups each year. The school at present provides AVCE Business in Year 13. A few students also attend a neighbouring school to follow AS or AVCE courses in Year 12 and A-level in Year 13.
- 329 The variation in results in recent years has been associated with the low numbers following each course. A further factor has been grouping arrangements adopted, including the joint teaching of Intermediate and Advanced GNVQ students and the holding of additional lessons after school to accommodate the double award Advanced GNVQ. The limited breadth of options and of student numbers therefore make direct comparison with national averages of limited value. The key judgements from the inspection are that students have had the opportunity to follow courses based in the school appropriate to their needs and interests, with levels of attainment at least in line with their abilities.
- 330 Work in lessons, subject files and coursework show that standards achieved by students are as expected at the present stages of their courses, given their prior experience and achievements. There is an appropriate balance of descriptive and analytical work, and students use word processing skills effectively for written work. Students consistently share and use their own experiences from part-time employment to enrich debates in class, and they pursue a keen interest in the activities of the business world. Increasing maturity of thought by individual students is clearly supported by group work, the confidence shown in discussions, and the good relationships amongst students and with teachers. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their study and to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This was seen, for example, with AVCE students when overcoming difficulties encountered during the finance unit of their course.
- 331 During lessons observed on investment appraisal and on recruitment procedures, students showed good awareness of business terminology, and also of the need to challenge some everyday assumptions and to make conclusions only on secure data and evidence. Students' attitudes are very positive and behaviour is excellent. The majority of students observed were making clear progress in lessons and their attainment was in line with that expected for successful completion of their courses.
- 332 Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and in some cases very good. All teachers show enthusiasm for their subject and commitment to meeting the needs and progress of their students. Lessons are well planned and structured, with clear learning objectives that are shared with students. Both group work and one-to-one tuition

support learning and encourage students to extend their knowledge and understanding. Consistent references to local and national business examples develop students' interests and bring alive individual topics. This was seen in lessons looking at marketing strategy and at human relations. Students very much value the contributions made by occasional outside speakers. Homework effectively extends the work within lessons, and marking according to clear assessment criteria makes good judgements on progress and guides further improvement. Challenging targets are set, with students being conscious of always being encouraged to aim for even higher results. Young Enterprise activities, and the contributions made by company advisers, add a further significant dimension.

- 333 Management within business studies is good and schemes of work continue to be reviewed and developed following the recent introduction of some courses. The range of teaching activities and of resources available receive appropriate attention, and there is a clear awareness of the need for more textbooks and for improved access to information and communication technology equipment within the main teaching area. The department has shown that it has the ability to succeed, and more consistency in courses and uptake of the subject would allow even more to be achieved with students of different ambitions and levels of ability.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Sixth-form courses in information and communication technology were not a focus of this inspection. Students can study a range of courses in information and communication technology [ICT]. In 2000 the one student entering A-level computer studies obtained a grade B. The four students entered for AS-level computing in 2001 obtained grades C-E. One lesson in combined IT Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) lesson was sampled. The teaching was very good. The lesson was very well structured, students were well briefed with the criteria against which they would be assessed and they received very good individual support and feedback on their progress. This enabled them to improve their performance.

An IT key skills lesson was observed in which students were helped to develop and use *PowerPoint* for presentation in subject lessons and introduced to the compilation of a portfolio of evidence. Their independent learning was good, with sound support from the teacher when necessary. The assessment of key skills in the context of an AS-level biology lesson was also observed. This was a very good lesson. The teacher reminded the students of the criteria against which they were to be assessed in their ICT skills for statements in their portfolios. They presented their research into genetically modified foods in groups, successfully attaining levels 2/3 in the key skills criteria for IT and communication.

In a number of other areas inspected, insufficient use was made of ICT. This was particularly the case in mathematics and psychology.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

A few students study courses in sport/physical education studies. The five students taking these courses over the last three years all obtained at least a pass grade and results at A-E in A-level were above the national average. This inspection gathered no first-hand evidence in this area.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

There are no students studying subjects in this category.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Courses in this area were not a focus for this inspection. Students study music, dance and media/film/TV studies in this category and in recent years have obtained at least a pass grade A-level. Attainment in dance is very good. AS results were well above national standards for 2001. Knowledge of Laban notation and its interpretation into dance is very good. Students' personal notes are accurate, detailed and commensurate with the high standards shown in lessons and work seen. One lesson of dance was sampled. The quality of teaching was excellent. Specialist subject knowledge was of the highest order and preparation of resources for the teacher and the students was exceptional. The balance between demanding theoretical and practical activities was good. The students were highly motivated by the teacher. They willingly travel to attend the only post-16 course offered in the city. They remained fully on task, addressed a difficult topic with enthusiasm, humour and determination. They were able to perform with confidence and high quality.

HUMANITIES

Psychology was a subject of focus for this inspection. Small numbers of students also follow courses in history, geography, law and sociology. Results in the last few years have been good, with students gaining at least A-E grades at A and AS-level and sometimes the highest grade. One Year 12 history lesson on the Weimar Republic was sampled. The teaching was well planned, with variety of activities and an emphasis on clarifying and evaluating evidence. As a result students' interest was captured and their learning was good. Psychology is now attracting larger numbers of students for this category and was the focus subject.

Psychology

Overall, the provision of psychology is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching of research methods.
- Pastoral and academic support.
- There are positive working relationships.

Areas for improvement

- Managing difficult or obscure language .
- Use of computers to explore, develop and present information.

334 Examination results at AS-level in 2001 were above average at the end of Year 12. Female students perform slightly better than males over all grades but not significantly so. Students make good progress from Year 12 to Year 13. The results over time at the end of Year 13 are above average for grades A and B showing the school is adding value from students attainment levels on entry to the sixth form. Students have achieved well at both Years 12 and 13 in relation to their GCSE standards achieved on entry to the course. Predicted grades for 2002 are mainly in the A, B grades. This would take results above average for the subject.

- 335 Standards of work seen in psychology were above average. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students' secure knowledge of psychology causes the quality of their learning to be good. Students are offered numerous appropriate research reports and reviewed articles drawn from all major areas of psychology. As a result students' achievements overall, in relation to their standards when they began in the sixth form, are good. The value added by the courses that students take is clearly positive, although this judgement is based on the work of a small number of students.
- 336 Standards in Year 12 are above average. For example, students gain a critical understanding of the terms 'obedience' and 'conformity'. They understand why Milgram's and Zimbardo's studies provoked public outcry, particularly the ethical issues raised. The teacher uses appropriate social influence research studies well to illustrate lessons. The higher attaining students can write well and produce elaborate descriptions of a study or a theory. A good lesson raised students' awareness on the stigma of schizophrenia; and teacher and students discussed up-to-date research in psychiatric hospitals. The few average attainers occasionally run out of ideas but are well supported to think of correct explanations of the key approaches to psychology. Male and female students can collect data effectively in two ways: empirically and rationally. Both genders perform equally well in class. Students in Year 12 fully understand that human development is a dynamic process that is motivated or driven by certain forces. All students are aware of the work of Maslow.
- 337 Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students use a scientific process to learning. They make observations and produce facts about psychology. They can construct a theory to account for a set of related facts and progress to generating hypotheses from the theory. Male and female students are equally competent in collecting data to test expectations. Females are better in both years at spelling, punctuation and grammar. All students can write about cognitive psychology and analyse and evaluate a range of psychology theories and studies. The high attainers communicate their knowledge and understanding of psychology in a clear and effective manner.
- 338 The quality of teaching is good. The teacher of psychology shows an appropriate interest in the core areas of cognitive, social, and physiological psychology and of developmental individual differences. Lessons are planned effectively to develop an understanding of psychology as a scientific study of behaviour and experience. Students learnt to argue about the developmental, gender and sociocultural factors in health. Students are well advised that psychology differs from common sense in so far as it seeks to collect objective and verifiable facts about behaviour and it constructs empirically based theories. For example, the differences between a child and an adult are qualitative. The teacher is good at helping students to understand the logic and important concepts of psychology. There is some limited use of ICT during lessons. Students increase their understanding of psychology by discussing their writing or research with their teacher or fellow students. For example, they attempted to explain psychological research into acute and chronic schizophrenia in a scientific manner. The main strength of teaching is the teacher's informed commentary and thorough analysis of relevant psychological studies and methods. Students are fully aware through careful teaching that neurological issues are caused by allergies, chemical imbalances and genetic disorders.

- 339 Students are provided with a sound basis of factual knowledge of psychology. All students are well supported to thoroughly learn their material. Their memory is improved by the teacher's effective organisation of material. The quality of written communication is assessed accurately. However, a few students have difficulty with the specialist vocabulary. The teacher can organise relevant information clearly and coherently using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.
- 340 Leadership and management are good. The support and environment that are provided enable students to feel confident, valued and well placed to make the most of their opportunities in the sixth form. Clear aims and purposes are well expressed. Contacts with further and higher education institutions benefit the students. There has been innovation in the provision made for aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. Students are actively encouraged to study outside class time and to research widely using materials supplied by the British Psychological Society. Students have Internet access. The cross-curricular themes of health, careers, equal opportunities and citizenship are well supported through the natural links to the teaching of psychology.
- 341 Psychology was not inspected as a subject in the previous inspection.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

Few students opt to study modern foreign languages. In 2000 a student from Alderman Callow studying French and German obtained grades B and A. English was inspected as the focus subject in this category

English

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good. Teachers know their subject well and use a range of effective teaching strategies.
- Students are making good progress in their AS and A-level courses.
- Relationships are very positive. Students work well with their teachers and with other students.
- Students show enthusiasm for the subject, concentrate well and respond to a variety of literature with interest and commitment.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work are unsatisfactory and the policy for assessment is inconsistently applied.
- Plans for monitoring of teaching and learning have yet to be implemented.

- 342 English Literature AS and A-level were inspected. Alderman Callow school students taking English in Year 12 are taught at a consortium school and those taking English in Year 13 are taught at Alderman Callow.
- 343 A double Year 12 AS and two Year 13 A-level lessons were observed. There were also structured discussions with the head of English and with Year 12 and Year 13 students. Less formal discussions with English teachers and with sixth form students studying English took place, in addition to the scrutiny of AS and A-level work in lessons. Departmental documentation and attainment data were also considered.
- 344 Overall the standards in post-16 English are high. Between 1998 and 2001, apart from 1999 when the rate dipped to 66%, A-level results showed 100% pass rate in English, which is above the national average. Caution has been taken in this analysis, because the size of the groups is very small and therefore results of one or two students can make a significant difference.
- 345 Results for the 2001 groups show all five of the students taking AS-levels gaining E grades or above, two of which were a B and a C. Although this is a 40% A-C result against a national standard of 58%, it actually shows very good 'added value' for students who entered the class with grade C at GCSE. A-level students gained a range of grades including an A and a B enabling all to progress into higher education.
- 346 Progress in post-16 English was judged to be good in the previous inspection and is still good. In lessons observed attainment was average in Year 13 and high in Year 12. This shows encouraging early progress from GCSE to AS-level. Students enjoy their English lessons and readily engage with the texts studied, for example showing real enthusiasm and commitment to the study of Emily Dickinson's poetry. They concentrate well, show high levels of understanding and are developing skills of independent reading, critical response and careful use of literary terminology. Most of the students currently studying AS and A-level English are female, but there was no difference seen in the attainment and progress of different groups. Numbers of students studying English post-16 remain at similar levels and retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 are good. In 2001 all those who studied AS English in Year 12 continued to take it at A-level in Year 13.
- 347 The quality of teaching, judged very good in the previous report, is consistently good and at times very good. Teachers demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge. Their questioning is careful and can help to encourage students' independent learning. Student/teacher relationships are very good and contribute to the developing confidence of students. Some marking is helpful and enables students to learn how they can move forward. However, assessment is not used consistently and can cause students to be confused. The use of attainment information to help to identify specific targets for individual students in Year 12 is beginning to make a positive impact on their progress. In English AS and A-level specifications, key skills such as 'communication' and 'working with others' are highlighted. Evidence from lessons and discussions with students shows that key skills, particularly communication, are

being developed well in Year 12. In a Year 13 lesson students showed their particular skills in discussion and oral presentation.

- 348 Sixth form English teachers are well qualified; teaching rooms are adequate and the timetable for collaborative teaching between the two schools enables the students to have access to a wide range of resources. Enrichment is provided by theatre visits and occasional conferences. Students sometimes find it difficult to access support from teachers on both sites and feel that access to the Internet is too restricted.
- 349 Leadership and management are carried out very informally and are not satisfactory. Staff development has taken place to enable effective introduction of new post-16 courses. Although some planning is clearly taking place, schemes of work still need to be written and put into operation. Monitoring of teaching and learning is insufficiently systematic to ensure sharing of good practice.