

## ADDENDUM

### President Kennedy School and Community College

#### Inspection 249674, 25/11/02

There is an inaccuracy in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form section on Business Education, paragraph 224. In the report a sentence in this paragraph reads "In the new AVCE course in 2002, a small mixed double-award and single-award group of 5 students achieved grades *between B, C and D.*" and this should read "In the new AVCE course in 2002, a small mixed double-award and single-award group of 5 students achieved grades *between BC and D.*" Therefore, paragraph 224 should read as follows:-

In GNVQ there have been one or two distinction grades awarded each year, and overall pass rates and student retention rates have mostly been good. Group numbers have tended to be in single figures, and standards above average. In the final GNVQ advanced in 2001 standards were above average as all students gained merit or distinction. Comparisons on the basis of average points score were well above the national average. In the new AVCE course in 2002, a small mixed double-award and single-award group of 5 students achieved grades between BC and D.

# INSPECTION REPORT

**PRESIDENT KENNEDY SCHOOL AND  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103736

Headteacher: Mr P D F Tribe

Reporting inspector: Ms J McKenna  
2485

Dates of inspection: 25 – 29 November 2002

Inspection number: 249674

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 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rookery Lane  
Coventry

Postcode: CV6 4GL

Telephone number: 024 7666 1416

Fax number: 024 7670 3789

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Lacey

Date of previous inspection: 18 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2485	J McKenna	Registered inspector	Citizenship	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
31713	S Roberts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30996	A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19056	G Leech	Team inspector	English	How well is the school led and managed?
20729	J Berry	Team inspector	Science Biology (post 16)	
31096	J Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31129	J Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design	
31779	V Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
31008	P Rourke	Team inspector	Geography	
30794	G Murray	Team inspector	History	
28178	J Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Special educational needs	

23499	H Seymour	Team inspector	Music	
30198	R Chick	Team inspector	Physical education Educational inclusion	
7602	E Milroy	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
4335	S Masson	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
20380	N Pinkney	Team inspector	Chemistry (post 16) Physics (post 16)	
1769	M Holohan	Team inspector	Psychology (post 16)	
27082	G Henshall	Team inspector	Business education (post 16)	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

President Kennedy is a mixed, comprehensive school in Coventry. It is much larger than average, with 1553 pupils on roll, 194 of whom are in the sixth form. Some 40 percent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is a higher proportion than in the city as a whole. The largest group is Indian. A very high proportion of pupils relative to most schools speak English as an additional language, of whom one quarter are at early stages of fluency. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average, although the proportion with statements of special need is average. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties form the largest groups, and the school makes provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties and for those who are profoundly deaf. The school serves a population that has significant social and economic deprivation. Although the proportion of pupils registered as entitled to free school meals is in line with national average, this is not regarded as an accurate reflection of the level of social need of pupils, which in reality is higher. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been well below the national average until recently, and although it is beginning to rise, current levels of attainment on entry are still below average. The attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is below the average for students of that age. The school is over-subscribed in Years 7, and the sixth form is popular and thriving.

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

In the face of considerable challenges caused by difficulties ensuring appropriate staffing, the school is providing a satisfactory quality of education for pupils in Years 7 to 11, and a very good quality of education for students in the sixth form. Although standards attained by pupils by the age of 16 are below the national average and are not high enough, given pupils' attainment on entry to the school, their achievement is satisfactory. By the end of the sixth form, standards are in line with the national average and achievement is good. Leadership and management is good, although the time taken managing the staffing situation has meant some aspects of management are not strong enough, resulting in some inconsistencies in provision. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils in Year 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. The school provides sound value for money.

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

- The headteacher is committed to raising standards and improving the range and quality of education for all pupils, and has successfully fostered an ethos of inclusivity.
- Sixth form provision is very effective.
- There are very harmonious relationships between pupils of all ethnic groups.
- The school provides a caring, supportive community for pupils; pastoral staff know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance.
- There is some high quality teaching across the school.

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

- There are not sufficient permanent, appropriately qualified, high quality members of staff in several areas of the curriculum, especially in science and music.
- The quality of teaching is not of a consistently high standard across the school.
- The provision for information and communication technology is not satisfactory.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is not strong enough.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then the standards attained by pupils and the quality of teaching have improved slightly. Action has been taken in relation to key issues identified, with improvements in accommodation, assessment and monitoring. There has not been sufficient improvement in provision for information and communication technology (ICT), and other areas, such as the incidence of exclusions are less positive. Improvement since the last inspection therefore is mixed but is satisfactory overall.



## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	B
A-levels/AS-levels	D	B	n/a	

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

In 2002, results in National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average overall and in mathematics, and were below the national average in English and science. Results were average in comparison with similar schools, but below average in mathematics. Standards in all three subjects seen during the inspection are below average. The trend of improvement in results at the age of 14 was in line with the national trend up until 2001, with a very slight improvement in the average points score in 2002. Teacher assessment judgements at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated standards in ICT, history and physical education to be average, and in all other subjects to be below average, except art where results were very low. Inspection evidence confirms average standards in history and physical education, and in religious education and drama. Standards in ICT and all other subjects are below average.

In GCSE examinations in 2002, overall results were below the national average, although the proportion gaining five or more A\*-G grades was average. Overall results were above those of similar schools. The trend of improvement up until 2001 was in line with the national trend. In 2002, although the proportion gaining A\*-G grades improved, overall results were lower. In most subjects, examination results were below the national average. The only subjects with results better than this were textiles and the full GCSE course in religious education where the results were above average, and in graphics, business studies and the GNVQ course in manufacturing where the results were average. Results in science, art, French, geography and resistant materials were well below average. Currently, standards in most subjects for pupils at the end of Year 11 are below average although standards in graphics, history, religious education and the core programme of physical education are average, and in ICT are well below average.

Standards attained by the end of Year 9 represent satisfactory achievement overall, and it is good in English, drama, history, physical education and religious education. Achievement by the age of 16 is also satisfactory, but more securely so, and it is good in English, graphics, history, physical education and religious education. Achievement in science is satisfactory for many pupils but is unsatisfactory in the subject overall and is also unsatisfactory in ICT. Achievement is better where there is more stable, higher quality staffing, and is lower where there have been difficulties in ensuring a good complement of staff. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress throughout Years 7 to 9, but once they are fully fluent, they achieve well.

In 2001, the results of pupils taking A and AS levels and advanced vocational qualifications at the end of Year 13 were above the national average. In 2002, the overall results were similar to those in 2001. Pupils in the sixth form achieve well.

The school is very keen to raise standards and sets appropriately challenging targets for doing so.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils generally enjoy school, respond well in lessons and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A small but a significant number disrupt the learning of others. Exclusions are high.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships between all groups of pupils make a major contribution to the friendly atmosphere. When given opportunities, pupils can exercise responsibility well.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall, but declines as pupils progress through the school and is too low in Years 10 and 11.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory overall and is good or better in almost two thirds of lessons. It is unsatisfactory or poor in a minority of lessons, but nevertheless in too high a proportion. Some good teaching is seen in all subjects and excellent lessons were seen in art, geography, mathematics and religious education. Teaching is good overall in English, history, art, and physical education and very good in religious education. It is satisfactory in other subjects, except for science and ICT. Unsatisfactory or poor lessons were also seen in mathematics, music and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The quality of teaching has been negatively affected by the difficulties in staffing.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge, plan lessons well and employ a good range of strategies, methods and activities that meet the needs of all pupils equally. Most teachers have good relationships with pupils. Pupils appreciate and respond positively to the efforts teachers make on their behalf, work hard and are keen to do well. In the best lessons, teaching is more inspirational and makes greater intellectual demands of pupils. As a result pupils work even harder and strive to meet teachers' high expectations of them, enjoying their learning in the process. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, basic teaching skills are not as strong and behaviour management strategies are less effective. Some teachers' relationships with pupils are not sufficiently supportive. The provision for homework is unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory.

Teaching is good overall in the sixth form. Although a reasonably high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was seen, this was limited to two areas, ICT and PSHE, and in all other subjects teaching is satisfactory or better. Of the other subjects inspected in full, teaching was satisfactory in biology and chemistry, good in English, mathematics, history and psychology, and very good in physics and business education. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge, cover course requirements thoroughly and give good information about the criteria to be met to be successful. Students are very committed to their learning and approach their studies with maturity and enthusiasm. Occasionally, teachers present information and direct discussions without spark and fail to engage students. Superficial questioning and tasks do not make the best use of students' time or intellect.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced curriculum with a good range of courses to meet pupils' needs in Years 10 to 13, including vocational and work related options. Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 10 to 13.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There is some effective specialist support, but subject teachers' understanding of pupils' requirements is not consistent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Support is effective but spread thinly over a large number of pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. For social development it is good. For pupils in Years 12 and 13, provision for all areas is good. The statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not met.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Guidance and support is good. Thorough procedures exist for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance. Procedures for assessment are good, albeit with areas for development in most subjects. There is some good analysis of performance data although its dissemination and use is not comprehensive.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school is making considerable efforts to inform parents about their children's education and progress, but is meeting with limited success in its attempts to actively involve all parents in supporting their children's learning and in the life of the school.

Statutory requirements for ICT are not met, and the procedures for disapplying pupils from the study of a language and design technology in Years 10 and 11 are not followed, although regulations are set to change at the end of this academic year.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has used his considerable experience to guide the school through some difficulties in recent years. He is well supported by senior staff and there is a good, shared commitment to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are generally knowledgeable and supportive, and are now requesting and receiving more detailed information to assist with monitoring.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Well-established procedures by senior managers. Inconsistencies in practice indicate that arrangements are not yet comprehensive enough. Procedures at middle management level are not sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	Very good financial management and monitoring. Specific grant is used effectively. Principles of best value are applied to financial decisions.

Staffing is unsatisfactory. A shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers has a negative impact on standards in range of areas. A high turnover of middle managers has hampered developments. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but there are some deficiencies, especially in art, music drama, geography, design technology and for social space in the sixth form. The buildings

and site are adequate, but neither practical nor efficient. Learning resources are satisfactory in most areas, but there are deficiencies especially in art, geography, mathematics, ICT and the library.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The progress their children are making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> <li>• How well informed they are about the children's progress.</li> <li>• The provision for homework.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>

Parents are positive about the school overall. The school welcomes approaches from them, and it would value more active involvement. Children do like school and are expected to work hard. They make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 11, and good progress in the sixth form. Although parents have satisfactory opportunities to learn about their children's progress, written reports on pupils could be more informative. Leadership and management are good overall, but despite best efforts, there continue to be staffing difficulties, which have a negative impact on provision for pupils.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form in this large school is, with 194 students, larger than most school sixth forms. For the last two years male students have outnumbered female students although the balance has been reversed in the present year 12 where female students outnumber male students, in line with the national average. The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a significant minority of these students have English as an additional language. Students' entitlement to free school meals is nearly three times the national average. The school offers a wide range of subjects at AS and A2 levels, and vocational qualifications in business education, information and communication technology and health and social care at a number of levels. All students take a well-conceived general studies programme in Year 12 leading to qualification at AS level. Students have additional flexibility in their choice of subjects through a consortium arrangement within the city. Although the overall standard of attainment on entry to the sixth form is below the national average the school is firm in its entry requirements for AS and A2 courses. It provides for students with less good GCSE qualifications through its vocational courses which allow students to spend three years in the sixth form, successfully gaining qualifications for entry to higher education. Very few students leave the sixth form before completing their courses.

### **HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

This is a very good sixth form. Students enter with levels of attainment below the national average and gain qualifications in line with the national average. Teaching is good overall and much is very good, but some is unsatisfactory. Good counselling and guidance programmes help students make appropriate choices and students are subsequently well monitored and supported through the sixth form. There are very harmonious relationships between all ethnic groups. The school makes provision only for those courses and subjects which it can staff fully without reducing provision in Years 7 to 11. The leadership and management of the sixth form are highly effective. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The sixth form is cost effective.

#### **Strengths**

- Achievement by almost all students is good with nearly one third of A level entries in 2002 gaining grades A and B and very few entries at AS or A2 failing to achieve a grade.
- The school offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses.
- There is good quality pastoral and academic support for students assisted by an effective and innovative guidance programme.
- Teaching is good with an above average proportion of lessons where it is very good or better so students learn well.
- Overall, students' views of the sixth form are positive and perceptive.
- Leadership and management are of very high quality. The head of sixth form has a clear vision of how the sixth form should be organised to ensure that students maximise their opportunities. This vision is translated into very good practice.

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

- Not all teaching is of a high quality, especially in information and communication technology.
- There is not enough provision for the use of information and communication technology within subjects and for individual use by students.
- The quality of social accommodation is unsatisfactory, and has a negative impact on the ethos that the school is trying to establish in the sixth form.

*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	<b>Good.</b> Achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good and students work well. There is not enough use of information and communication technology and students' learning is sometimes insufficiently independent.
Biology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Achievement is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and in some lessons students are actively involved and challenged. Some teaching is only just satisfactory however, and there is no programme of visits or links with universities.
Chemistry	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve well by the end of their course. Teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Students enjoy the subject and respond well to the level of challenge in the course and the work set. Computers are under-used and there are no links with higher education.
Physics	<b>Very good.</b> Students achieve well. Teaching is very good, standards are improving and students speak very fluently about the subject. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are very good. There are limited contacts with higher education and industry.
Business Education	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve well. There is a wide range of courses to which recruitment is good. Teaching is very good, and assessment and feedback to students are good. There is insufficient access to computers and a shortage of specialised accommodation.
Information and communication technology	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Students are enthusiastic and independent learners but they do not achieve their potential. Teaching is unsatisfactory, the deployment of staff and rooms are unsatisfactory and the courses offered are not effectively delivered.
History	<b>Good.</b> Pupils are achieving well. Teaching, by a strong, well-led team, is good. Teachers and students share good relationships and enthusiasm for history. There is insufficient access to information and communication technology and too few reference books.
Psychology	<b>Good.</b> Achievement is good. Teaching is good, students' response to the subject is mature and relationships between staff and students are good. There is insufficient access to and use of information and communication technology and a shortage of reference materials.
English	<b>Good.</b> Pupils achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge, teach well, mark students' work well and make good use of group discussions. The curriculum needs enrichment.

In other subjects lessons were sampled. Very good teaching was seen in AS level religious studies and good teaching was seen in AS level design technology, A level geography and Spanish. Students were attentive and actively engaged in the lessons and were learning well. Their attainment is above national expectations in religious education and in line with national expectations in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Students are well prepared for the sixth form and receive good advice and guidance throughout their course. Their progress is constantly monitored through reviews by their tutors and through self-review and support given where necessary. Their tutors, who know them well, play an important role in preparing them for university. The well-developed PSHE and guidance programmes underpin the support offered to students.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is very well led by the post 16 manager who enjoys the considerable respect and support of students and of her colleagues. There is a clear commitment to the attainment of high standards based on good teaching and students' adherence to guidelines on behaviour, attendance and use of study time. Students' performance is monitored thoroughly. All are expected to do well and most of them do so.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers are accessible if students are having difficulties.</li> <li>Students are helped and encouraged to study.</li> <li>The choice of courses suit their talents.</li> <li>Printed course information is clear.</li> <li>Students are taught well.</li> <li>Students enjoy being in the sixth form.</li> <li>The school helps students settle well into the sixth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are not well informed about their progress.</li> <li>Careers advice could be better.</li> <li>There is not a good range of worthwhile activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

There was a very high return rate of the student questionnaires of 86%. All students wrote responses on the back of the forms, generally lengthy and well written. Students' response to the school in the inspection bore out the very positive responses on the questionnaires, with the quality of teaching and individual assistance offered by most staff singled out for particular praise. Their written and oral criticisms were specific and were borne out by the inspection, in particular the quality of teaching in some areas, especially in ICT, the lack of provision for the use of ICT across the curriculum and for private study and unsatisfactory accommodation.

## 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**

1. Pupils entering the school until recently, including all of those for whom there is national test and examination data at the ages of 14 and 16, have done so with standards of attainment well below the national average. By the age of 16 they reach standards that are below average overall, and this represents satisfactory achievement.
2. In 2002, results in National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average overall, as was the case in 2001. They were below the national average in English and science, but well below in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, results were average in English and science, but below average in mathematics. Standards in all three subjects were adversely affected by difficulties with staffing, and this was particularly acute in mathematics. Recent improvements have had a positive impact, as seen by the fact that standards in all three subjects seen during the inspection are below average. The trend of improvement in results at the age of 14 was in line with the national trend up until 2001, and there was a very slight improvement in the overall average points score in 2002.
3. In other National Curriculum subjects, teacher assessment judgements at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated standards in ICT, history and physical education to be average, and all others to be below average, with the exception of art where results were very low. While the average standards in history and physical education were confirmed by inspection evidence, in ICT standards seen during the inspection were below average, and the difference was due to the teacher assessments being too generous. Standards seen during the inspection in religious education and drama were also average. In all other subjects standards were below average. The teacher assessments in art were not standardised and were unduly harsh - the current levels of attainment more accurately reflect standards within the subject.
4. In GCSE examinations in 2002, overall results were below the national average. The average points score per pupil, the proportion gaining five or more A\*-C grades and the proportion gaining one or more A\*-G grades were all below average, although the proportion gaining five or more A\*-G grades was average. When compared with similar schools, results were above average overall. They were well above average for those gaining five or more A\*-G grades, and average on other measures. The trend of improvement up until 2001 was in line with the national trend. Although in 2002 the proportion gaining A\*-G grades improved from 2001, the proportion gaining five or more A\*-C grades dropped. This in part reflects the impact of staffing difficulties in a range of subjects.
5. In most subjects, examination results in GCSE and other courses were below the national average. The only subjects with results better than this were textiles and religious education where the results of those doing the full GCSE course were above average, and in graphics, business studies and the GNVQ course in manufacturing where the results were average. Results in science, art, French, geography and resistant materials were well below average. These results were affected by staffing difficulties in the subjects. The results in science were lower than anticipated because of problems with coursework due to lack of continuity of teachers. The results in French were low due to poor results in the oral part of the examination caused by the



lack of a specialist teacher reducing pupils' opportunity to practise speaking the language, a problem now resolved. In geography the lack of continuity of management of the subject impeded development and improvements. Conversely, in most cases where results were better, it was due, at least in part, to better teaching because of a more stable complement of good quality teachers.

6. During the inspection, standards seen in most subjects for pupils at the end of Year 11 were below average. Again, there were some exceptions. Standards attained in graphics, history, religious education and the core programme of physical education are average, in the main because of stable, good or improved teaching. In ICT, the standards attained by both those taking the subject to examination level and those who have not chosen to study it as an examination option but through the core 'entitlement' course are well below average, reflecting problems with provision for the subject. In art, the fact that standards have improved from those indicated by the well below average 2002 examination results to being below average is due to an end of the staffing problems within that department.
7. Pupils have entered the school with standards well below the national average. The fact that standards now being attained by the age of 14 are below average, rather than well below, represents satisfactory achievement for pupils overall. Achievement is good in English, drama, history, physical education and religious education. Achievement for pupils by the age of 16 is stronger – still satisfactory, but more securely so. It is satisfactory in most subjects, and good in English, graphics, history, physical education and religious education. Although achievement in science is satisfactory for many, it is unsatisfactory in the subject overall due to not all pupils having a high quality, specialist teacher. It is also unsatisfactory in ICT due to the unsatisfactory provision overall for the subject.
8. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. More of these pupils gain qualifications and accreditation in GCSE and vocational and work related courses than at the time of the last inspection, and more continue with their education after the age of 16. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress throughout Years 7 to 9, but once they are fully fluent, they achieve well. Analysis of examination success shows that girls and boys from minority ethnic groups perform better than their white peers. There are differences between girls' and boys' performance generally, as there are nationally. Analyses indicate that white boys, especially those of average and below average prior attainment, generally under-perform relative to other pupils.
9. Standards of literacy and numeracy are below average, although are improving due to the better skills pupils are starting to come into the school with and the increased emphasis placed on developing these skills throughout the school, especially in English and mathematics lessons.
10. The school is very keen to raise the attainment of its pupils and sets appropriately challenging targets for doing so.

### **Sixth form**

11. The criteria employed to determine admission into the sixth form mean that the attainment of students entering Year 12 is higher, relatively, than for the school as a whole but nevertheless is below the national average for students of that age. In 2001, the results of pupils taking A and AS levels at the end of Year 13 were above the national average, as were the results of those taking advanced vocational qualifications. In 2002, the overall results were similar to those in 2001.

12. Results in most subjects at A level were at least in line with the national average in 2001. They were average in mathematics, chemistry and physics, above average in English, psychology and the business studies and ICT vocational courses, and were well above average in media studies and geography. In French and Gujerati only one student entered each examination – both passed, and the grade in Gujerati was higher. Results were below average in biology, business and ICT A level, history and sociology, and well below average in art. In 2002, results in most subjects increased but there was a decline in ICT, art, and sociology, and business studies A level. Of the subjects inspected, current standards are above average in most subjects, average in biology, history and the business advanced course but are below average in ICT.
13. Results in AS courses at the end of Year 12 in 2001 were generally at least in line with national expectations. These standards were maintained in 2002. Results were highest in English and lowest in Spanish, sociology, art, physical education and the ICT advanced course. Inspection evidence for the subjects inspected indicates current standards to be above average in most subjects, average in biology, history and the business advanced course, and below average in ICT.
14. All analyses undertaken indicate that the school is adding good value to students' achievements in the sixth form, and inspection evidence confirms that achievement is good overall in both Years 12 and 13 across almost all subjects. Achievement is satisfactory in biology where, although teaching is satisfactory, it is less strong than in most other subjects, and is unsatisfactory in ICT where there are problems with the provision and the teaching of the course. Students from minority ethnic groups perform better than their white peers, in part due to high expectations and a strong desire to succeed on their part. The effectiveness of the sixth form in enabling a diverse group of students to achieve well and to gain entrance to higher education, often the first generation in their families to do so, is a significant strength of the school.

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

15. Most pupils have good attitudes to school and their work. Over 85 percent of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school. Pupils are keen to come to school, enjoy school life and are eager to play a full part, including in the extra-curriculum activities the school provides. Most pupils respond well in lessons and are generally attentive, confident and motivated learners. Pupils appreciate the fact that most teachers have a good understanding of them and are working hard to meet their needs. As a result pupils maintain concentration well in lessons and are enthusiastic and willing participants. Where teaching is good and captures their interest, pupils apply themselves well to tasks and respond to the challenges encountered. On some occasions, usually where teaching is less strong or there is a lack of continuity in aspects of the pupils' experience due to staff vacancies, the attitudes of pupils are less positive and they express some disenchantment with the school.
16. The very harmonious relationships between the diverse range of pupils, particularly those of different ethnic groups, is a striking feature of the school and makes a major contribution to the friendly atmosphere that exists. Four Year 7 girls of different ethnic groups linking arms as they returned to the classroom after assembly, talked animatedly about how they, and indeed, the whole class, were friends both in and out of school. This type of comment is not uncommon. Pupils show great respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of different individuals and groups within the school. There is less mixing of boys and girls, especially in lessons, where self-selected single sex groupings are the norm. Pupils with special educational needs are also well integrated into the life of the school and have good relationships with their teachers and support

workers. They show determination to succeed and value the help received from learning support staff and members of outside agencies they are involved with. Pupils interact maturely with all groups of adults and these relationships are generally good, although pupils feel less positive towards the minority of staff who they feel show less interest in them or their learning. When asked, however, pupils of all ages can talk at length about their interests, ambitions and their community, expressing forthright opinions in a sensitive and friendly manner.

17. The standard of behaviour throughout the school is satisfactory overall. The school has a clear policy for promoting good standards of behaviour and this is being implemented to good effect. Pupils are aware of the rules and expectations and most respond well to these. There is a small but significant number of pupils in each year group, however, whose disruptive behaviour in lessons is sufficient to interrupt the learning of others. The layout of the building is such that pupils have to walk some distance between lessons on occasions. The majority of pupils move throughout the site in a disciplined and orderly way despite being unsupervised, but a few, mainly boys, use the opportunity to be boisterous and aggressive and disrupt the good order of the school. Exclusions for inappropriate behaviour are high.
18. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. They are able to distinguish right from wrong and understand the importance of rules in a social environment. President Kennedy is proud of its pupils and they in turn are eager to assume responsibility. A school council has recently been re-convened with representatives from all ages, elected by their peers. Although there have only been a small number of meetings to date, the council is already being effective, especially in building pupil confidence through involving them in consulting with others. However, opportunities for other pupils to take on responsibility on a broader front are limited – there is no prefect system for example. Pupils' personal achievements gained in and out of school are acknowledged during 'celebration assemblies'.
19. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. It is now close to the national average and above that of similar schools in the Coventry area. The levels of attendance show a declining trend as pupils progress through the school, however. Attendance in some of the Year 7 classes is as high as 98 percent while in many classes in Years 10 and 11 it is much lower, sometimes falling to below 80 percent, and is unsatisfactory, as it is having a detrimental effect on pupils' attainment and progress in their examination courses. The introduction of a good, clear policy has significantly reduced the level of unauthorised absence but efforts to reduce absenteeism in Years 10 and 11 have not yet been effective enough.

### **Sixth form**

20. Sixth form students have very positive attitudes to the school. Very few of them leave before completing their courses and many of them keep in touch with teachers after they have left. The questionnaires completed before the inspection and discussions with students during the inspection indicated considerable support for what the school offers. Students value the range of courses and the generally high quality of teaching that the school makes for them and the support that teachers offer to help individual learning. Almost all students who responded took the time to write on the back of the questionnaires. Their comments were largely supportive and their criticisms of the school were almost entirely constructive and were clearly aimed at improving areas that were legitimately giving them cause for concern. Students' attitudes to learning are rarely less than good and are frequently very good. They are self-motivated, hard working and enthusiastic. When given the opportunity they work well independently,

willing to research material for themselves. They take a lively interest in their work, engaging well in discussions and questioning their teachers. They are active learners.

21. Students' behaviour around school and in lessons is very good. They are courteous and polite and during the inspection many went out of their way to offer assistance to inspectors whom they thought might need some guidance around the extensive site. Although their social accommodation is of modest quality there were few signs of damage other than that resulting from normal wear and tear. On the rare occasions when their behaviour in lessons is not good it is as a response to what they perceive, legitimately, as inappropriate teaching or lesson content.
22. Relationships between all members of the sixth form and their teachers are very good. Most students have considerable respect for their teachers and appreciate the efforts that they make on their behalf. The very mixed ethnic community that forms the sixth form lives in considerable harmony. However, although there are close friendships between white students and those of Asian heritage, there is not as much mixing between different ethnic groups as the school wishes and it is at present attempting to respond to this with the assistance of the students.
23. Attendance, at 93 percent, is good and shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school is rigorous in its monitoring of students' attendance and insists that they attend the daily registration periods when they are in school. Punctuality is good at the start of the school day and lessons start on time.

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

24. The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory overall. The teaching is satisfactory or better in over nine out of ten lessons. It is good or better in almost two thirds and very good or excellent in almost one in five lessons. However, it is unsatisfactory or poor in one in fourteen lessons, rising to almost one in ten for pupils in Years 7 to 9. This is too high a proportion, and it is because the variability of teaching is too great that teaching is only judged to be satisfactory overall.
25. Some good teaching is seen in all subjects and excellent lessons were seen in art, geography, mathematics and religious education. Teaching is good overall in English, history, art, and physical education. It is very good in religious education. It is satisfactory overall in other subjects, except for science and ICT. Unsatisfactory or poor lessons were also seen in mathematics and music and PSHE. The quality of teaching has been negatively affected by the difficulties in staffing, with a high number of supply teachers not necessarily teaching to their specialisms. This contributes to, but is not solely responsible for, the fact that the quality of teaching is not of a consistently high enough quality to secure the improvement in standards that is necessary. Improving the quality of teaching is a key issue for action for the school.
26. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. The planning of lessons is sound – usually with a clear structure that involves sharing objectives with pupils at the start of lessons and, after suitable tasks and activities, appropriately consolidating the gains in pupils' knowledge at the end. The standard lesson planning sheet that is used by all teachers is helpful in promoting consistency in this regard. Teachers employ a good range of strategies and methods and lessons usually contain a good range of activities for pupils, which generally meet the needs of all pupils equally. Most teachers have an inclusive approach to all groups of pupils, have good relationships with them and manage them well in lessons. Pupils appreciate and respond positively to the efforts teachers make on their behalf and generally apply themselves to their work, and are keen to do well. Relationships between pupils, including members of the diverse

groups within the school, are very harmonious and make a very significant contribution to the pleasant atmosphere in most classrooms. In the best lessons, teaching is more inspirational and makes greater intellectual demands of pupils. As a result, pupils work even harder and strive to meet teachers' high expectations of them, enjoying their learning in the process. For example, in many religious education lessons pupils are taught to think deeply about issues and to identify, express and justify their personal stance on a wide range of often sensitive issues, both orally and in writing. This very active and effective engagement with the subject that is demanded of pupils results in very good learning and high levels of enjoyment. Similarly, in many history classes teaching and learning takes place with a sense of urgency and seriousness, but with involvement and enjoyment. For example, Year 10 pupils representing factory workers or Parliamentary commissioners, having undertaken related reading, then participated in a role play which enabled them to form independent and informed opinions on factory conditions and produce recommendations for reform.

27. In the lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, basic teaching skills are not as strong and behaviour management strategies are sometimes not effective. Some teachers' relationships with pupils are not sufficiently supportive. A significant number of ICT lessons are not well prepared, teachers do not explain tasks thoroughly enough and do not organise the use of resources well. As a result pupils are unclear about what is expected of them, and so lose concentration and behaviour deteriorates. Pupils in these lessons make little progress in their learning. In the unsatisfactory PSHE lessons, teachers do not engage effectively with either the materials or the pupils. Pupils are not encouraged to value the work and little is achieved in these lessons. A general weakness is that the provision for homework is unsatisfactory. The setting of it is inconsistent and not always in accordance with the published timetable. While some of a good quality was seen being set and followed up in lessons, this practice is not comprehensive.
28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory, with some good elements, as is the support provided by teaching assistants in mainstream classes. Where teaching and support is good, there is close liaison between the subject teacher and the teaching assistant; they plan jointly, and the teaching assistant is aware both of the specific needs of the pupil and the requirements of the subject and the scheme of work. The quality of this is not consistent, however. Where withdrawal for pupils is necessary, support is usually well matched to the needs of pupils, is usually sensitive and effective and allows pupils access to the same learning opportunities and experiences as others. As a result, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well with other pupils in their groups. However, the interpretation of individual education plans by subject teachers is variable across the school. This means that pupils' learning can be inconsistent across the range of subjects. There is good teaching and support of pupils with specific needs. Pupils with behavioural difficulties benefit from anger and emotional management programmes, pupils with medical conditions benefit from amendments to the method of teaching, for example using a computer instead of writing by hand, and pupils with speech and language difficulties benefit from the involvement of outside specialists working closely with the school.
29. The teaching and support of pupils who speak English as an additional language are satisfactory and also has good elements. A collegial approach is used and the support teachers maintain an ongoing dialogue with subject teachers. For most of the time, minority ethnic pupils are supported in subject lessons but are occasionally withdrawn. In subject lessons, support teachers enhance the understanding of targeted pupils and help them cope with writing tasks. For instance in a geography lesson, the support teacher helped targeted pupils understand what global warming was and why it was

happening, and then guided them in producing appropriate writing. In a withdrawal lesson, the teacher engaged pupils in oral practice and gave them structured and focused support in using past tense. The teacher reinforced pupils' learning with a game and asked them to write the sentences practised orally. The pupils responded well to the task and were able to learn the past tense forms. Subject teachers generally support pupils who speak English as an additional language adequately, but do not always have the additional knowledge necessary to do so more effectively.

30. Overall the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Pupils enter the school with standards of literacy and numeracy which are well below national expectations. The need to improve those standards to meet the demands of the whole curriculum is recognised. English and mathematics teachers give particular attention to this promoting the development of these skills. The teaching of literacy in many subjects is promoted through, for example, to correction of spellings in pupils' written work and the display of and emphasis given to the use of key word. Where pupils need to use number in other subjects of the curriculum, teachers are reinforcing the skills necessary to enable them to do so adequately.

### **Sixth form**

31. Teaching is good overall in the sixth form. The teaching in over nine out of ten lessons is satisfactory or better and is good or better in seven out of ten. Although a reasonably high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was seen, one in fourteen lessons, these were limited to two areas, ICT and PSHE, and in all other subjects teaching is satisfactory or better. Of the other subjects inspected in full, teaching was satisfactory in biology and chemistry, good in English, mathematics, history and psychology, and very good in physics and business education. The teaching sampled in all other subjects was at least satisfactory and some was good.
32. A characteristic of much sixth form teaching is the very secure subject knowledge that teachers have, the thorough coverage of course requirements and the information teachers give students of the criteria they need to meet to be successful. Effective efforts are often made to engage and inform students. In the best lessons, all of this is used to very good effect. In physics lessons, the teachers' practical and illuminating overviews of challenging concepts and the well-conceived practical tasks they are set to develop their understanding enable pupils to thoroughly comprehend complex theories, as evidenced by the demanding questions they asked as a result. In a business studies coursework lesson, the teacher acted very effectively as a facilitator, giving detailed feedback on work submitted and good input which encouraged students to explore ways of improving their work with independence and confidence. Students are often actively engaged in research and their understanding of the outcomes is deepened by the preparation they undertake to present their findings to their peers. Students are very committed to their learning and approach their studies with maturity and enthusiasm. Occasionally, the way teachers present information and direct discussions lacks spark and fails to engage students such as in some chemistry lessons, and sometimes superficial questioning and inappropriate tasks do not make the best use of students' time or intellect, as in some biology lessons.
33. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in ICT in the sixth form, despite some that is satisfactory or better. In too many lessons, teachers have low expectations of students, do not set challenging tasks, and do not provide guidance or assistance to them. As a result, students are not provided with sufficient opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills. Many students make valiant efforts to compensate for the poor teaching by making good efforts to manage their own learning with some success, but this state of affairs should not be necessary. The other area where unsatisfactory

teaching was observed was in PSHE, where the value of a potentially interesting and useful topic was not realised because of the teacher's inability to engage and manage the students resulting in them not taking the lesson seriously.

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

34. In years 7 to 9 the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements and gives pupils good opportunities for learning. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, PSHE and drama are included. Since the last inspection provision for ICT has improved, but in most subjects it is not used enough to support pupils' learning effectively. The curriculum has recently been reviewed and some minor changes are to be made as a result, such as removing the imbalance in the time allocated to subjects across the three years, such as the humanities, and alterations to the timetabling for ICT to enable better access to available resources. The school has established a National Strategy Steering Group to take forward developments in a range of subjects.
35. In Years 10 and 11 a strength of the curriculum is its breadth and the range of courses offered to meet the diverse needs of pupils. It includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and PSHE, and some other subjects offered as GCSE courses such as business studies. The development of the curriculum for pupils of this age is responsive to local circumstances and seeks not to unnecessarily duplicate courses offered elsewhere. Nevertheless, a good range of vocational courses including business studies, health and social care and ICT are offered. For a group of pupils in each of Years 10 and 11 who are at risk of disengaging from their education due to learning difficulties or disabilities that prevent them accessing the curriculum or because of disaffection or behavioural problems that put them at risk of exclusion, the school has taken advantage of the 14-19 curriculum flexibilities now open to them to provide a reduced traditional curriculum and a work related programme of learning. The pupils on this 'Dovetail' project are provided with opportunities to do extended work experience placements, college courses and work with training providers to gain NVQ, City and Guilds and Key Skills qualifications. This scheme aims to reduce truancy and incidents of poor behaviour, raise self-esteem, eliminate short-term and permanent exclusions and give all pupils the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications. This is a very positive development achieving some success, although the high absenteeism in Year 11 indicates that it is not yet as successful with all students as it might be. Not all pupils take a design technology subject or a modern foreign language and the procedures for disapplication are not carried out properly which is in breach of statutory requirements, although these regulations are due to change at the end of this academic year. ICT courses are a popular option for pupils, but provision overall is unsatisfactory. For pupils who do not choose to study it as a separate subject the time allocated to it is inadequate and does not allow statutory requirements to be fulfilled. Too few computers, the continuing use of slow, outdated machines and some unsatisfactory teaching have a negative impact on provision. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good overall and in subjects such as physical education, but there are several areas where the enrichment opportunities offered to pupils are limited, such as in music and English.
36. Pupils with special educational needs have good and full access to the whole curriculum. More of these pupils are entered for GCSE than at the time of the last inspection and more gain qualifications and continue with their education after the age of 16. Some pupils with special educational needs benefit from intensive work in literacy and numeracy designed to keep them in touch with the main school curriculum. The establishment of the student support centre is a recent development,

which adds a valuable extra dimension to the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The centre gives these pupils precisely targeted support designed to address problems with integration in main school classes and emotional and behavioural development. This new facility provides a safety valve for pupils at risk of exclusion, keeping them in mainstream education. There are strict criteria for admission to the centre, and the aim is to reintegrate pupils back into normal classes as soon as is practicable with appropriate support. Additional provision for gifted and talented pupils, both in lessons and outside the regular curriculum, is at an early stage of implementation. In most subjects, either setting arrangements or extension activities are planned into the teaching aims of lessons to meet these pupils' needs. In some subjects, for example, religious education, devices such as worksheets with tasks graduated in difficulty ensure a good level of challenge for all pupils. However, these strategies are not universally applied or effective.

37. Pupils with English as an additional language have access to the whole curriculum. The team supporting these pupils, however, is small, and has to be spread thinly over a large number of pupils. While the provision for these pupils is satisfactory, and once fluent in English pupils achieve well, those who are not yet fluent do not benefit as much as they might should more specialist support be available.
38. The provision for promoting pupils' literacy skills is satisfactory. Approaches vary between subjects. There is good attention given in English, and some subjects which depend heavily on pupils' abilities to read, write and speak competently, such as religious education and history, make a very good contribution. Provision for promoting pupils' numeracy skills is satisfactory but development has been hampered by the staffing difficulties in the mathematics department. The development of pupils' numerical skills now forms a specific and increasing aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Teachers in other curriculum areas reinforce the numeracy skills where necessary in their subjects.
39. Provision for PSHE is satisfactory overall, but there are unsatisfactory features. The linking of the one period per week in all years to registration and assembly time reduces the amount of time available and means that topics cannot be explored in sufficient depth. Form tutors teach PSHE to their own form groups and have differing degrees of expertise in this area. Where issues are covered in specific curriculum areas such as health education and drugs education in science, provision is usually good. The citizenship curriculum is covered through an appropriate combination of subject teaching, PSHE teaching, and additional activities such as theme days, the school council, and a range of pastoral activities. The quality of some provision is good, but that delivered through PSHE is not yet strong enough with an emphasis on pupils gaining knowledge rather than ensuring adequate opportunities for them to develop their skills and understanding.
40. An effective careers education programme develops from Year 9 when pupils consider their emerging and future hopes, reflect on their own personalities, develop their self-knowledge and set targets for themselves. A well - structured programme of lessons in Year 10 leads to a good work experience placement and offers pupils relevant and good preparation for adult life and employment. Careers education is well supported by a sound careers library and careers officers from the Connexions service. These officers work very closely with school staff to counsel and advise pupils in their school and post-16 choices. The good guidance pupils receive by the age of 16 helps them to choose courses, training or employment opportunities to which they are well suited.



41. The community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. The school benefits from its status as a community school with a good programme of adult education activities. Pupils are helped to see learning as continuous, developing well beyond the age of 16. Some senior citizens serve the school in helping young pupils to improve their reading. Very good links with contributory primary schools help pupils to settle quickly into the school. Very good links with industry and commerce benefit pupils when they take up their work experience placements. The school is involved in many initiatives which help pupils, for example, counsellors from Relate visit the school to give help in areas of relationships. The 'Looked After Children' project helps children not in the care of their original families. Participation in the School Sports Co-ordinator programme improves opportunities in physical education. The training of teachers through the Graduate Training Placement programme and links with the universities offers pupils role models of success in higher education. Pockets of excellence occur. The religious education department featured recently in a film made to recruit and train teachers of religious education. This film is being used nationally as part of a government initiative.
42. Improvements in curriculum provision since the last inspection include the widening of opportunities in vocational subjects, full establishment of religious education for all in Years 10 and 11, better approaches to promoting literacy, more attention to developing citizenship, and a responsive curriculum adapting to local circumstances. Not enough improvement has been made in the provision of ICT.
43. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school does not have a clear view of what individual departments are contributing to this aspect of its work but positive contributions are nevertheless being made by a number of departments and more general contributions are made through such activities as assemblies. The work is not yet as strong as it could be, nor is it well-co-ordinated.
44. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship but weekly assemblies give pupils some opportunity to reflect on Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh sacred festivals as well as secular issues such as the diversity of pupils' backgrounds or problems caused by unreasonable behaviour. A particularly moving assembly dramatically alerted pupils to the far-reaching effects of a speeding car. The religious education department, dwelling on the diversity of religious and ethnic background, gives pupils a deep sense of the sacred quality of life. The modern foreign languages department provides insight into the scale and splendour of the natural world with a display on Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Incas, while pupils in history are engaged by religious change during the Reformation.
45. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory while for their social development it is good. The school has a clear code of conduct and a noticeable lack of racial tension in school, allowing pupils to grow both socially and morally. An exploration of racial prejudice is central to the study of "To Kill a Mockingbird" in English, while "Romeo and Juliet" and "Macbeth" highlight love and hate, good and evil. To promote pupils' involvement in citizenship, a recently reformed School Council is planning improvements to the quality of environment, including a challenge to the school's litter problem. Pupils are helped to cope socially through a variety of arrangements, some of which provide other pupils with good opportunities to develop a sense of social responsibility. Pupils with physical or emotional problems have ready access to the school nurse. Counsellors from Relate make weekly visits to school to counsel pupils who require it. "Sorted" is an arrangement where groups of trained, older pupils, are alert to younger pupils who prefer not to go immediately to teachers

with their problems. Some pupils devote their lunch-hour to younger pupils, helping them improve their reading. 'Jeans For Genes', a non-uniform day, offers support to children with genetic disabilities, while the annual Charity Week allows pupils to support groups with whom they particularly identify. Speakers from charities visit whenever possible. Christmas parcels are assembled and delivered to local old people, causing some pupils to reassess their own values. Pupils make up shoeboxes of toys, sweets, paper and crayons for children less fortunate than themselves in the Balkans and other war-torn regions. There are wide ranging extra curricular activities, a Breakfast Club and a Youth Club with an influential youth worker.

46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school is a multi-faith, multi-cultural community and justifiably proud of the different lifestyles of its pupils. The modern languages department has French, Spanish, Punjabi and Urdu in its curriculum, and takes part in the Comenius Project, bringing groups of pupils and teachers to join with others from European countries at a Paris Conference. The department also supports a pen-pal programme and arranges visits to France and Spain. The art department provides an appreciation of art from Europe, America, the Indian sub-continent, Africa, and the Far East and takes pupils to the Tate Modern in London. International Week, with games, food and clothing, is well supported by parents and visitors, often with mother or older brother acting as translators. Pupils give lively musical performances at a high quality, well-attended "Stars in your Eyes" evening. Not all opportunities across the curriculum are yet taken advantage of to fully promote pupils' cultural understanding.

### **Sixth form**

47. A very good wide curriculum is provided post-16. All students follow a small core of personal and social education and guidance. A wide range of subjects at AS and A2 levels is offered currently including English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, ICT, history, business studies, sociology and psychology through to Year 13. In Year 13 only, small groups of students currently take Spanish and media studies. Art, design and technology and geography are part of the curricular provision in Year 12. All students take a well-conceived general studies programme in Year 12 leading to qualification at AS level. GCSE English and mathematics and Key Skills in information and communication technology are also available in Year 12. A little over half of the students are taking AS or A2 courses only, the rest are combining these with vocational courses or are taking vocational courses only. As at the last inspection the school makes provision only for those courses and subjects which it can staff fully without reducing provision in the Years 11-16. A good guidance programme helps pupils to make apt choices and to consider places in other schools and colleges in order to prevent unnecessary duplication of provision within the city. The school offers one of the widest single establishment choices of courses in the city but the consortium arrangements, of which it is a part, offer even greater flexibility in choices to some students.
48. All students have the opportunity to take a unit in religious education entitled 'Beliefs' in the sixth form. The good take-up of a newly introduced AS course in the philosophy and ethics of religion introduced at the request of students is a validation of the good work done in the main school. Two year 13 students join these classes and it is a feature of the sixth form that some Year 13 students choose to repeat AS courses or spend three years in the sixth form building their educational qualifications and confidence.

49. Good opportunities are provided to extend vocational qualifications in information and communication technology, business education and health and social care. Higher attaining students who enter the sixth form with five subjects gained at grades A\*-C have the opportunity to proceed to AS and, or, A2 level. Those who qualify with only two subjects at GCSE can study for GNVQ intermediate level. Most of these students go on to study and qualify for the advanced vocational certificate. Some do so by staying a third year in the sixth form because they have taken time to mature and develop confidence in their potential for higher education. External examiners and moderators have congratulated teachers on their ability to develop students' potential and lead these lower attaining students towards appropriate higher education.
50. The enrichment programme in the sixth form has been curtailed by the introduction and prescription of Curriculum 2000. However, students are fully involved in serving the school through work alongside Year 7 tutors acting as mentors. They give help to pupils with special educational needs in paired reading exercises, take part in activities, such as Youth Enterprise, and participate in a full range of sporting activities which they organise themselves. Although there is an extensive work experience programme for students, there are no links between the school and universities that would enrich the science curriculum in particular. Pupils' access to ICT within subjects and for personal use is too limited.
51. A strength of the school is in developing the curriculum from 14 -19 years so that those who are slow to gain confidence and achieve have the opportunity to take time over their development. For those who stay into the sixth form, and many more do since the last inspection, there is no interruption of progress. Another significant strength is in the development of multi-ethnic and multicultural understanding in all years.
52. There is good provision in the sixth form for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The high standards of behaviour and commitment to study expected of students are made very clear to them. Students respond well, particularly by Year 13 when they realise how these high expectations are supporting them in achieving their goals of higher education or worthwhile employment. The school is very successful in raising the aspirations of its students as almost all of the considerable number who enter higher education each year are from the first generation in their family to do so. There is a powerful ethos of mutual respect between students and with staff. Discussions with students reveal many of them to be aware of how their values and beliefs inform their perspective on life. Most have accepted the concept, presented to them regularly, that in order to be treated as adults in the sixth form they must behave as adults. They understand, and the vast majority accepts, that responsibilities accompany rights.
53. Much of the teaching challenges students' intellects. The religious education department, with an assumption that we are by nature spiritual beings, encourages students to ponder transcendence and imminence, demonstrating how faith empowered Ghandi to promote his philosophy of non-violence. Students in physics are challenged by the breadth of human intellect when considering Newton's Laws of Motion, Galileo's theory of Planetary Motion and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. Psychology students review theories of compliance and creativity, requiring them to think, participate in, and validate their understanding of relationships.
54. Students take considerable responsibility for organising and developing extra-curricular activities, including much work for charities, and actively assist younger pupils in the school. All students recognise the generosity of their teachers in the time that they make available to help them personally or academically. Students of Asian heritage, who account for more than half of the student body, have higher aspirations

and cultural expectations than their white peers and contribute well to the culture of success in the sixth form. Relationships between members of all ethnic groups are good but friendships frequently do not cross ethnic boundaries. The school is aware of this and is seeking to improve the situation. Although students have a useful meeting with their form tutors each morning there is not an opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship.

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

55. The provision for ensuring pupils' health, welfare and safety is very good. The school continues to provide the caring, supportive community, which was commented upon favourably in the previous inspection.
56. Pastoral staff know their pupils well, recognise their needs and give them good support and guidance. The trusting relationship that many pupils enjoy with their form tutors gives them confidence to share concerns and help them cope with the problems that arise in everyday life. Not all staff manage to develop the quality of relationships that engender such trust, however. This situation is exacerbated by the high number of staff changes, which have a negative impact on the degree of centralised knowledge of individual pupils. Nevertheless, pupils generally feel that there is an adult within the school that they could approach for advice and support on personal matters, often a subject teacher with whom they have established a good relationship.
57. The school has thorough procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. While these are effective with most pupils, they have not been fully successful in modifying the behaviour of those pupils who have not developed the high level of self-discipline expected of them. Pupils with behavioural problems are identified prior to entry to the school, and those within the school causing disruption are identified by the form tutors in consultation with colleagues. Effective liaison between form tutors and heads of year ensure that the behaviour support teacher can arrange an appropriate counselling and mentoring programme for individual children. Those requiring further support because of risk of exclusion are prioritised for provision from the student support centre.
58. The centre, which opened in September 2002 and which exists under the umbrella of the learning development faculty, is supporting students, initially those in Year 7 who have faced transition problems from primary schools, focusing on those who have poor anger management skills, or find difficulty in accepting sanctions. The centre aims to prevent more complex difficulties occurring in Years 10 and 11. The centre is seen as an integral part of the school's provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and aims to raise their self confidence and re-integrate them into mainstream classes as soon as possible. Progress is closely monitored and this provision is generally successful. The number of exclusions is falling, although it is still too high.
59. The school Intervention Project (SIP) is well managed by a very enthusiastic and committed team. The project is preventative and aims to identify early those students in Years 7 to 9 who are at risk of disaffection and students on the project have met clear criteria laid down for involvement. The project is generally viewed as offering high quality programmes relevant to the varied needs of the individual students. SIP is a collaboration between the Youth Service and school and multi disciplinary teams meet to assess the needs of students and put appropriate preventative programmes in place. The programme helps to build students' self-esteem and self-confidence, by offering a 'safe-haven' for vulnerable students.

60. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed through the learning development faculty and encompasses provision for those with learning difficulties, those with hearing, speech and language needs, the student support centre described above as well as provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is no special educational needs co-ordinator in post at the moment, reducing the effectiveness of the co-ordination of the various strands of provision. Although teachers' generally have good knowledge of pupils and their needs, their understanding of the requirements and implications of the new Code of Practice and implementation of individual education plans is inconsistent across the school. There is not always sufficient joint planning between subject teachers and learning support assistants. There is some effective liaison with outside agencies, however, such as with the local education authority speech and language development service. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language from the specialist support teachers is satisfactory. They have good knowledge of the pupils and how to support them but their time is spread over a large group of pupils. Subject teachers generally provide adequately for pupils' needs but lack sufficient specialist knowledge.
61. The school recently revised its arrangements for promoting and improving attendance and the more thorough procedures in place are having a positive impact on attendance figures. The use of an electronic register system enables managers to closely scrutinise pupil attendance data, to identify individual and group trends including internal truancy and take action where necessary. An inclusion grant supports an attendance clerk to operate the system and to contact parents outside school hours. Parents generally welcome this communication and the interest the school shows in the welfare of their children. Pupils maintain records of attendance in planners and a variety of incentive schemes, such as the awarding of certificates, are in place. Specific efforts to reduce absenteeism in Year 11 are not effective enough.
62. The governing body has taken a responsible attitude to health and safety and the quality of associated documentation is of a high standard. A health and safety committee meet regularly to discuss relevant issues. Potential hazards have been listed and risk assessments across the school as a whole and within subject departments are conducted in accordance with requirements. The electrical supply and equipment are regularly checked but verification labels were found to be missing from a number of computers and other electrical equipment. Some of the toilets are unhygienic and not conveniently situated.
63. The arrangements for child protection are good and fully comply with requirements. There is a designated member of staff with overall responsibility and there is clear information for staff on the procedures. There are effective arrangements to ensure early identification of any child at risk and good quality records of all cases are maintained. Some of the newer staff have not yet received formal training in identifying indicators of possible abuse. The school nurse visits pupils regularly and carries out health checks.
64. The school's procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good overall, albeit with areas for further development in most subjects. Procedures are good in science, design technology, history, and physical education and in religious education in Years 7 to 9, and very good in English. They are satisfactory in other areas with the exception of ICT, and procedures have yet to be developed for citizenship. In most subjects National Curriculum and examination criteria is used to ensure accurate assessment and to enable specific feedback to be given to pupils on their performance. In the best cases pupils are involved in target setting, although this is not comprehensive and occasionally targets are not specific enough. In art and music, the assessment procedures at the end of Year 9 require standardisation and

centralised records are not kept in music. The lack of use of information from assessment to guide curriculum planning is a general weakness. The progress individual pupils are making is tracked by form tutors and heads of year have an overview of how each pupil is performing. Progress is tracked particularly thoroughly from Year 10 to Year 11, especially for pupils who are at risk of underachievement. Regular reviews take place involving pupils, and parents and carers are informed about outcomes. Systems for recording outcomes and target setting as a result of monitoring are not yet comprehensive enough within subjects. Assessment for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is some careful tracking of pupils' progress, but contributions from across the curriculum are not comprehensive.

65. Some good analysis of performance data to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of provision takes place. Individual teachers analyse their classes' performance and have to account for their results at departmental meetings. Heads of departments then have to explain and justify the subject results overall to senior managers. This is a positive strategy, which results in a good awareness of the patterns of performance within subjects, but opportunities for wider discussion, such as the sharing of findings and insights across subjects are not taken and thus a potential means of developing best practice is lost. Full use of the information gained to effect improvement is not yet made. Not all departments analyse outcomes by ethnicity. A comprehensive range of information is used to assess pupils' attainment on entry to the school and when they embark on examination courses at the age of 14, including the use of national, standardised systems that enable the school to predict performance and measure the value added. The senior manager responsible for this area has a very good understanding of the outcomes of this analysis, but the dissemination of the findings in a readily accessible form to all of those who need the information to promote an improvement in standards or for monitoring performance does not yet take place.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Assessment***

66. Procedures for the assessment of students' attainment and progress are good. A well-documented programme of review is in place to monitor the progress and performance of sixth formers, including the use of target setting, parents' consultation evenings, reports to parents and tutorial discussions. This programme enables problems to be identified early, highlights students working particularly well and allows for self-evaluation and target setting. Heads of departments and senior management maintain an overview of progress in addition to the constant monitoring by most subject teachers. As part of the guidance programme, regular review meetings are held individually between students and senior members of staff, in which the students' general progress, career aspirations and personal development are discussed. Only ten minutes is allocated for each interview however, which is too short for some students and some potential benefit is lost as teachers rather than students make notes of the meetings. Procedures for assessment within subjects are at least good and are very good in history and physics. Most teachers assess students work thoroughly and carefully and students receive good feedback on their progress and what they need to do to improve. Assessment is less good in information and communication technology and in some sections of biology and chemistry. Reports to parents are helpful with specific targets that are agreed with the student.

### ***Advice, support and guidance***

67. Students are aware of and appreciate the good support that they are offered in the sixth form. They recognise that teachers go out of their way to offer constructive advice and assistance on any difficulties they may be having in lessons or in more personal matters. To ensure that students are looked after well they are placed in tutor groups, each of which contains students from years 12 and 13 with a balance of males and females and of students following courses at different levels. This is to encourage good integration into the sixth form. Students stay with the same tutor during their sixth form course and the team of tutors has built up considerable expertise in guiding sixth form students in this specialist area. Relationships between students and their tutors are good and help facilitate productive discussions. Tutors provide references for students and assist them with the process of applying for university. They write reports and regularly review students' progress both with students and with their teachers. Tutors and senior members of staff periodically monitor progress through the guidance programme that forms part of the PSHE programme.
68. The process of induction into the sixth form is thorough. It begins in the autumn term in Year 11 when advice is offered to students on the opportunities available in school and a guidance evening is held for parents. The Connexions Service provides guidance about opportunities elsewhere. Entry requirements for particular courses are made clear, as are the school's expectations of its students. Students participate in taster sessions for post 16 courses in the spring term so students have good opportunities to choose courses that are appropriate for them. The sixth form prospectus contains relevant and useful information although the quality of its production is less impressive than that found in many schools. Induction is completed in September and October in Year 12 by a programme delivered at tutor time and in PSHE and Guidance lessons.
69. Careers advice and guidance is offered throughout the sixth form by form tutors and through the weekly PSHE and guidance sessions. The focus in these sessions is on the skills, aptitudes and knowledge required by students at each stage of their sixth form career. The Connexions Service offers more specialist careers guidance. An excellent guidance session was seen during the inspection when a university admissions tutor ran mock interviews for students in year 13, to prepare them for their own impending interviews. He interviewed four volunteer students while their peers watched and listened, most attentively, then gave very helpful feedback on their performances.
70. All students attend daily registration with their tutors when they are in school. This time is used profitably to monitor and discuss progress as well as helping to ensure good attendance in school.
71. There is some formal involvement of sixth formers with the care of other pupils in the school. Two students from the sixth form have been elected to the school council. Their knowledge of routine operations in the school has provided valuable guidance to the representatives from the earlier years. One higher attaining student from the sixth form takes a lunchtime clinic to help other sixth formers in mathematics.

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

72. Partnership with parents is generally satisfactory. The school is making considerable efforts to inform parents about their children's education and progress, but is meeting with limited success in its attempts to actively involve all parents in supporting their children's learning and the life of the school. The pre-inspection meeting was poorly attended and the response to the questionnaire was below ten percent. Responses

were positive overall, although some specific concerns were raised, mainly relating to inconsistencies in practice and the negative impact of the staffing problems on their children's experiences.

73. The school takes an appropriate interest in the home life of the pupils, and plays an important part in the life of the community. Parents recognise and value the care and support shown for their children and this partnership benefits pupils' personal and academic development. There is much informal contact between pastoral staff and parents. There is little direct help and involvement in activities by parents, however. There is no parents' association, due to lack of interest. A small number of parents assist with school trips. The school is aware of the need to maintain its efforts to involve parents more, especially building on the greater involvement reported in primary schools by targeting those of Year 7 pupils. The school holds a 'settling in' review meeting for those parents in October followed by a parents' meeting with form tutors in November. Under two-thirds of parents attended the latter.
74. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. A good newsletter, The 'Kennedy Contact', is distributed at least once each term to keep parents and members of the community informed about the school. It contains comprehensive information about school activities and pupils' educational and personal successes, and parents appreciate this. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. Written reports are sent out annually informing parents of their child's educational achievements. Although the reports are evaluative, some do not contain comments as to what or how improvements can be made in pupils' work in Years 7 to 9, and targets are not always specific enough in Years 10 and 11. Throughout the academic year parents receive praise cards acknowledging pupils' effort and achievement, and in some cases, letters about specific concerns that the school may have. Some good use is made of pupils' planners to communicate with parents but this practice is not consistent.
75. Homework is an area of concern for many parents with around a third of those returning the questionnaire expressing negative views. Not all parents are aware of the school's policy for homework, but those that are stated it is not adhered to. This was found to be the case during the inspection. Although some good homework was set in many classes, this was not consistent and was not always in accordance with the homework timetable. Inconsistencies are exacerbated by staff changes and heavy use of supply teachers, but are not solely due to this.
76. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well and kept informed about their child's progress. They are provided with copies of educational plans and are encouraged to attend review meeting.

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

77. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher is committed to raising standards and improving the range and quality of education for all pupils. The school accommodates a proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups significantly higher than the local average, and pupils with a wide range of special education need. The headteacher has successfully fostered an ethos of inclusivity. He has used his considerable experience well to guide the school through some difficulties in recent years, removing a budget deficit and managing difficulties caused by considerable changes in staffing. A measure of the success of the school is the growing number of parents who wish to enrol their children and it is currently oversubscribed.



78. The headteacher is well supported by his senior staff. There have been changes in the senior management team since the last inspection and it is now a smaller and more tightly focused group. Responsibilities are clearly defined and delegated well and there is a good, shared commitment to improving standards. The process of identifying and reporting critically on key areas for development that has been adopted, with the clear action to effect improvement as a result, is one demonstration of this. Some areas of school life are not tightly enough managed and result in inconsistencies in practice, a consequence of the time and effort that has had to be put in to managing the problematic staffing situation at the expense of other things. The school improvement plan has clear priorities and targets, and is in a format which provides necessary detail on resources, success criteria, monitoring and evaluation. School priorities are followed in departmental improvement plans which follow the same format, with the costing of resource requirements, formerly omitted in some, now being supplied.
79. The school has implemented fully the national strategy for appraisal and performance management. The headteacher and the senior management team have undertaken training in school self evaluation with the intention of implementation in the near future. There is a well established programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the senior management team, with lesson observations, which informs reviews of subject department performance. LEA officers have been invited to contribute particular subject expertise to the review process. However, the inconsistencies in practice evident in a range of areas of school life indicate that the monitoring process is not yet comprehensive enough. Increasingly, data about pupil attainment is being used to monitor progress and achievement in subjects though it is recognised that more can be done in the analysis and use of the considerable amount of data compiled by the school.
80. At departmental level, the practice of monitoring varies and there is a need for a more rigorous and systematic approach. There is a good commitment to school improvement by middle managers, some of whom, however, are relatively new in post and unused to their role in monitoring and evaluating standards. Departmental leadership and management are satisfactory or better in all subjects except for ICT. Management of some other areas of responsibility, such as some pastoral posts, citizenship, the Dovetail project and the student support centre are also good.
81. Leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. There is currently no substantive special educational needs co-ordinator and the bulk of the work is being carried out by two members of staff. One teacher is responsible for Years 7 to 9, and the other for Years 10 to 13. In the absence of a full time co-ordinator this is at best a holding operation and is inevitably reducing the effectiveness of the co-ordination of the different strands of provision and the degree of development taking place. Nonetheless, documentation is thorough and up to date and annual reviews are being carried out according to statutory requirements, with parents being involved as far as possible. The school has no policy on language support across the curriculum and there is no strategic management to guide and support the work of the English as an additional language support team.
82. The governing body is generally knowledgeable about the school and supportive of it. In addition to the regular termly formal governors' meetings, there are training meetings for governors to develop more specific knowledge and understanding of issues. Governors are linked with specific subject areas. The regular organisation of governors into sub-committees is in place, though a curriculum sub-committee has only recently been re-established after being in abeyance for two years. Under a new chair this term, the governors are requesting and receiving more specific and detailed information about the school, to inform their monitoring and evaluation of the school's

performance. The new chair of governors provides thoughtful and energetic leadership. Overall, the governing body performs its duties satisfactorily, except in the fulfilment of some statutory responsibilities – the provision of a daily act of worship, provision for ICT for pupils in years 10 and 11 and the adoption of disapplication procedures in design technology and modern foreign languages.

83. The school's finances are managed and monitored very effectively and efficiently by a finance team comprising a deputy headteacher, a business manager and a finance officer. The very recent auditor's report commended the school on its good practice. Annually, three-year financial projections are made in the light of the budget allocation so the school has a very clear understanding of its situation and can plan accordingly. Specific allocations of income, including those for special educational needs and for ethnic minorities, as well as the Standards funding and Devolved Capital, are spent effectively on the purposes for which they were intended. Departmental funding is allocated on a formula basis, with some provision for additional funds to be allocated in response to a bidding process – the formula has, however, resulted in significant underfunding of some subjects like geography and art. The unallocated contingency in the school budget, a portion of which is under the governors' direct control, is a proportion of the total budget within normal parameters. There are well-established and proper procedures for securing "best value". The school makes very good use of new technology to aid administration and management.
84. Although expenditure per pupil is high compared to national figures, given the well below average socio-economic circumstances of the school, the well below average attainment of pupils on entry, and their satisfactory achievements, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
85. The staffing provision is unsatisfactory. The shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers has a detrimental impact on standards in a number of subject areas, especially science, music and ICT, although there are also vacancies in other areas. The recent, relatively high turnover of staff has also had a negative impact. That many of these have been key middle managers, including several heads of department, has particularly hampered developments within the school. The quality of staffing is a key concern of senior managers who are making strenuous efforts to address the problem. Most lessons are taught by specialists, though there has been a heavy reliance on supply teachers which has been a further factor contributing to the lack of stability, consistency and continuity. All newly qualified teachers follow an induction programme and their work is systematically and effectively supported. The school benefits from the local education authority youth workers, and careers staff based on site. The important contribution of the support, admin and maintenance staff is recognised and valued.
86. There have been improvements to the school's accommodation since the last inspection including the refurbishment of science laboratories and the relocation of the library. Facilities for physical education are excellent and are used to good effect. However, there continue to be deficiencies, which are having prejudicial effects on teaching and learning in some areas – notably in art, music and drama. While accommodation for geography is generally adequate, there is need for an additional specialist room, and the workshops for design technology are being updated to remedy deficiencies. Though the buildings and site are adequate overall, they are neither practical nor efficient and certainly do not constitute an effective and stimulating environment. There is a problem with the dropping of litter.

87. The resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory in most areas, but there are deficiencies that have a negative impact on pupils' learning. There are particular deficiencies in art, which seriously restrict the breadth of the curriculum. There is a shortage of books in geography and mathematics. There are insufficient computers for the size of classes in ICT, and some machines are old and slow. The ratio of computers to pupils more generally is unsatisfactory and there is insufficient access to ICT for curriculum requirements to be in all subjects. The new library, which is now part of the resources centre, is having a beneficial impact on learning but it has insufficient books and shelving. Private study space is very restricted with too few computers to meet needs. Audio-visual provision is not extensive enough.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

88. Much of the responsibility for leadership and management of the sixth form is delegated by the headteacher to the post 16 manager. She enjoys a considerable amount of autonomy and carries out her responsibilities to the highest of standards. She has a clear vision of what the school should and can offer post 16 students and of what is expected of students to enable them to make the best use of their opportunities. With the support of her senior colleagues and team of form tutors, her vision is translated into very good practice: it is a very successful sixth form. Entry requirements to a wide range of academic and vocational courses are rigorously adhered to, but there are other courses available for less well qualified students who wish to gain qualifications through three years of sixth form study. The majority of the students whom the school encourages and enables to enter higher education are the first generation in their families to continue with their education after the age of sixteen. In recent years all those students who have chosen to continue in higher education have done so and the school has succeeded in encouraging successful applications to Oxford University. Students enter the sixth form with standards of attainment that are below the national average and leave with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average so the school enables them to make good progress. Only a very small minority of students leaves the sixth form before completing courses and some of those who do leave, subsequently return.
89. The school is part of a successful consortium arrangement with other schools in the city. This enables a small number of students from all three schools to study subjects that their own school does not offer or to take a combination of subjects that would not otherwise be possible. The consortium arrangements work well. Day to day administration is delegated to an assistant head of sixth form, the school minibus provides transport between the sites and the deputy heads of all schools work closely together to agree curriculum and timetabling matters.
90. A notable feature of the sixth form is that the majority of the students are from minority ethnic groups and there is a high level of racial harmony between all. There are extremely good relationships between the students and the majority of the teachers, and students all hold the post 16 manager in high regard, recognising the support and appropriate guidance she gives them. Most are aware of and accept her principle that in order to be treated like adults, as they wish, they have to behave like adults. Good counselling of students to direct them to most appropriate courses begins in Year 11. There is a well thought out programme to monitor students' progress throughout the year including timetabled discussions between teachers and individual students to consider their progress.

91. All procedures and practices in the sixth form are collated in a comprehensive staff handbook. Very clear directives and guidelines are given for sixth form tutors and students, all warmly written but firm and clear in their expectations. The sixth form prospectus, while containing much relevant information and written in encouraging language, is not presented in such a professional way as that in most schools. Senior staff have successfully implemented the changes to sixth form provision necessitated by the implementation of Curriculum 2000, while continuing to ensure that they offer good care of and guidance to the students. Curriculum provision is now enriched through a varied programme of extra-curricular activities. Much of this, including charitable activities, is organised by students themselves, who take the opportunity to exercise responsibility in the process.
92. The sixth form is cost effective, paying for itself through the resources that are provided for this purpose.

### **Resources**

93. Sixth form staffing provision is satisfactory. The number of suitably qualified teachers is appropriate to the demands of the subjects available across a broad area of the curriculum including vocational courses. This is a decisive factor in the good standards of teaching and learning evident at this level. Accommodation for sixth form students is however unsatisfactory – more particularly outside the immediate teaching situation. Space and facilities for private study in the library are inadequate for the nearly 200 students involved as are the social area and the arrangements for dining. Toilet provision is inadequate. These factors impinge badly upon the ethos that the school is trying to establish in the sixth form. While specialist rooms for teaching are generally at least satisfactory, in some areas such as biology and business studies some lessons have to take place in non-specialist, sometimes distant, rooms. Resources to support the sixth form curriculum are unsatisfactory overall. Particular concerns relate to the widespread shortfall in provision for the use of information and communication technology across much of the curriculum, and in a general shortage of resources in geography, history and psychology.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

94. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of provision, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Take further action to ensure that there are sufficient permanent, appropriately qualified, high quality members of staff across the curriculum and especially in science and music by : (paragraph 85)
    - Identifying and implementing additional strategies to recruit appropriate teachers.
    - Identifying and implementing additional strategies to retain appropriate teachers.
    - Identifying and implementing further strategies to ensure all staff perform to a high standard.
  - (2) Take further action to ensure teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school by: (paragraphs 24-30)
    - Ensuring that the monitoring of teaching clearly identifies strengths and areas for development for individuals and across the school as a whole.

- Ensuring that strengths are built upon.
- Ensuring that weaknesses are tackled.
- Evaluating improvements and taking further action where necessary.

(3) Improve the quality of provision in ICT by: (paragraphs 35, 158-168)

- Ensuring that statutory curriculum requirements are met.
- Improving the quality of teaching.
- Improving cross-curricular provision.
- Increasing the provision of resources.
- Strengthening the quality of leadership and management of the subject.

(4) Improve the quality of provision in PSHE by: (paragraph 39)

- Ensuring that the timetable arrangements for PSHE allow the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth.
- Planning the curriculum so as to ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in PSHE are effectively promoted.
- Improving the quality of teaching of PSHE.
- Monitoring the quality of provision of PSHE.

## **Sixth form**

(1) Take action to ensure that all teaching is of a high standard, especially in ICT where it is currently unsatisfactory, by: (paragraphs 31-33)

- Monitoring teaching in order to build upon strengths and take effective action to deal with weaknesses, including specific action where it is unsatisfactory.
- Introducing strategies for sharing best practice.
- Ensuring that the content of lessons is sufficiently challenging for students.

(2) Make better provision for the use of ICT within subjects and for individual use by students by: (paragraphs 50, 93)

- Increasing considerably the number of computers available to students for their own use.
- Enhancing the access to computers for subject areas.
- Ensuring that the use of information and communication technology is built into subjects' scheme of work.

(3) Improve the unsatisfactory quality of social accommodation that has a negative impact on the ethos that the school is trying to establish in the sixth form by: (paragraph 93)

- Provide sufficient space for their needs.
- Providing a more welcoming and more adult environment.
- Improving the number and quality of toilets.
- Providing good dining facilities.

In addition to the main areas for development listed above, the governors may wish to consider including the following in their action plan:

- i) Improving attendance in Years 10 and 11. (paragraph 19)
- ii) Improving the provision of homework. (paragraph 19)
- iii) Remedying the deficiencies in resources for learning. (paragraphs 87, 93)
- iv) Taking further action to improve the quality of accommodation. (paragraphs 86, 93)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	162
	Sixth form	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		76

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 - 11</b>							
Number	6	24	70	51	6	5	0
Percentage	4	15	43	31	4	3	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	0	10	22	11	3	0	0
Percentage	0	22	48	24	7	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 here as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1359	194
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	280	-

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	36	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	461	6

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	526

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.1
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	141	131	272

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	70	74	79
	Girls	86	83	94
	Total	156	157	173
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (59)	53 (48)	55 (58)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (26)	25 (22)	20 (24)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	64	68	69
	Girls	88	76	80
	Total	152	144	149
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	57 (56)	58 (41)	64 (45)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (21)	19 (26)	26 (22)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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
	2002	133	130	263

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	38	121	124
	Girls	52	119	126
	Total	90	240	250
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	34.2 (39)	91.1 (88)	95.1 (93)
	National	51.2 (48)	88.9 (91)	94.6 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	29.5 (34.6)
	National	34.6 (39)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	92	57
	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
	2002	34	34	68

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	34	34	38
	Average point score per candidate	18.0 (17.2)	16.2 (17.2)	17.1 (17.2)
National	Average point score per candidate	N/A (16.9)	N/A (18)	N/A (17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	30 (21)	34 (31)	64 (52)	13 (12)	7 (7)	20 (19)
	Average point score per candidate	15.7 (19)	15.5 (18)	15.6 (18.4)	10.9 (12.5)	3.4 (11.1)	8.3 (12)
National	Average point score per candidate	N/A (16.9)	N/A (17.9)	N/A (17.4)	N/A (9.8)	N/A (11.4)	N/A (10.6)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	844	96	8
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	43	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	6	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	361	10	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	43	5	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11	3	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	1	1
Black or Black British – African	8	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	114	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	120	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	96
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.43

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

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	666

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	63.9
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11**

Key Stage 3	26.3
Key Stage 4	24.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	4,760,483
Total expenditure	4,618,379
Expenditure per pupil	2,981.5
Balance brought forward from previous year	166,575
Balance carried forward to next year	142,104

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	46.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	40.3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	8
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)	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 7.1%

Number of questionnaires sent out	1553
Number of questionnaires returned	111

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	54	11	2	3
My child is making good progress in school.	39	49	9	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	51	19	7	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	41	20	10	1
The teaching is good.	19	57	16	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	46	25	6	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	53	5	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	50	7	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	44	24	9	5
The school is well led and managed.	16	51	14	6	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	23	59	14	4	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	49	9	4	10

## 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 **good**.

#### Strengths

- The quality of teaching, learning and relationships in the classroom are good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The procedures for assessment of pupils' work are very good.

#### Areas for improvement

- To raise standards of attainment by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- To fill the longstanding full-time teaching vacancy which has been covered by a series of supply teachers.
- To improve on the very limited provision of extra-curricular activity to enrich pupils' experience of English.

95. Standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average. Girls' results were better than those of boys, as they are nationally, but in comparison with national averages for boys and girls, girls did better. Results were comparable with similar schools. The standards of work of pupils in Year 9 seen during the inspection were generally below national expectations. Pupils are attentive if sometimes passive listeners and need encouragement to become actively involved in lessons. When they do, many, particularly those of higher levels of prior attainment are articulate, readily read aloud and answer questions. Pupils in a Year 9 class studying "Twelfth Night" for example commented perceptively about Orsino. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs speak quite willingly but briefly. Pupils can extract information from and respond to texts though many need help to understand at more than a simple factual level. Pupils in a Year 9 class identified characteristics of Macbeth by selecting appropriate descriptive adjectives from a list provided by their teacher which they then illustrated by details from the play. Pupils complete a good variety of writing through good teacher help, the provision of frameworks and redrafting processes. In general higher-attaining pupils write quite correctly, at length, though spelling can be uncertain. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs write more briefly and have difficulties with grammar, spelling and punctuation.
96. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the proportions of pupils gaining grades A\* to C in both English and English literature were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. The proportions gaining grades A\* to G were above the national average, however, and a greater proportion of pupils was entered for both examinations than is the case nationally. Girls' results were better than boys' but only as is the case nationally. Over time the trend in results has been variable, but in 2001 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to C was broadly in line with the national proportion, though it declined in 2002.
97. The standards of work of pupils in Year 11 seen during the inspection were generally below national expectations. Pupils listen and contribute to discussion and higher-attaining pupils speak and read aloud confidently and articulately, as a Year 11 class did in identifying and analysing the use of literary devices in Andrea Ashworth's prose. Generally, however, pupils reply only briefly and as a response to teacher encouragement. Pupils study a good range of quite demanding texts – in a Year 11

class, for example, extracting information from “Romeo and Juliet” as bullet points in preparation for a coursework essay. Generally, however, pupils need the support and prompting of teachers and the structures they provide to assist and shape their understanding and written responses. Overall standards of writing are below national expectations, but careful preparation, close marking identifying targets for improvement and redrafting help pupils meet coursework requirements.

98. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment well below the national average. By the end of Year 9, achievement in relation to prior attainment is good. Literacy skills are well developed by teachers. Pupils in Year 7, for example, having been given targets for improvement on a marked piece of descriptive writing, discussed with their teacher ways of improving their writing before redrafting. By the end of Year 11, achievement is good through good attention by teachers to the requirements of the GCSE examinations. Pupils benefit from detailed marking and the identification of targets for improvement. Achievement across the ability range is good, as a consequence of teacher support and additional support for pupils of low levels of prior attainment and with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils achieving a grade in GCSE in both English and English literature is above the national proportion. The great majority of pupils for whom English is an additional language have sufficiently developed language skills to make at least similar progress to that of their classmates.
99. The quality of teaching is good overall. In all the lessons observed it was satisfactory or better, and in three quarters it was good or very good. Pupils’ learning is consequently good. Teachers’ good knowledge and understanding ensures well-planned lessons which, in years 7 to 9, pay good attention to literacy development. Lessons contain varied activities which engage pupils, and good use is made of questioning to involve them. Very occasionally, in accepting answers from the most active and articulate, teachers allow some pupils not to participate fully. The quality of assessment of pupils’ written work is very good, detailed and helpful, though in lessons teachers are occasionally less critical of pupils’ responses. Classes are well-managed and relationships are good with many pupils eager to participate. The best teaching is lively and communicates interest through a variety of activity. A Year 7 lesson, for example, used pupils’ experience of reading “Skellig” as the basis for a literacy development starter activity and as the material for a class “Question Time” which gave both the “panel” and the “audience” good opportunities for oracy development.
100. Resources for English are good, and accommodation is satisfactory – teachers share dedicated rooms, though some are too small easily to allow group activities. The scheme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the GCSE and is incorporating the new framework for teaching English in years 7 to 9. The department enjoys its own suite of computers and there are appropriate information and communication technology activities programmed into the scheme of work. Currently there is only a limited provision of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils’ experience of English. Since the beginning of term there has been a full-time teaching vacancy which has been covered by a series of supply teachers.
101. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department, who has a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject, has done a great deal in a relatively short time in post. The scheme of work has been revised, teaching groups reorganised and the activities of a large team of teachers coordinated. There is consistency in the delivery of the curriculum and in the very good practice of assessment of pupils’ work. Teaching and learning are monitored on a regular basis and data analysis is well used to inform target setting and the modification of the practice of teaching. There is good delegation of responsibilities

and teachers share good practice and contribute to the process of planning and development.

102. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Boys' standards of attainment in GCSE have improved and the accommodation for English has been consolidated. The liaison between English and drama suggested in the last report has not, however, taken place – though English teachers make a significant contribution to the teaching of drama.

### Literacy

103. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are generally below national expectations but good in relation to pupils' levels of prior attainment. Pupils are generally attentive listeners, though sometimes rather passive. They will, however, respond when prompted. They are encouraged to talk, explain their work, and answer questions. The quality of their responses varies – higher attaining pupils speak at some length, with confidence, but many pupils make brief contributions. Generally they use sentences when prompted to do so, and they are quite familiar with the technical vocabulary of subjects. Reading skills are sufficient to enable pupils to meet subject reading requirements, in the case of pupils of lower levels of prior attainment often with the help of suitably adapted worksheets. When given opportunities, pupils read aloud competently. Pupils write for a range of purposes suitable to individual subjects, often with the assistance of frameworks, but there is little imaginative or empathetic writing except in English and religious education and some discursive writing in science. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are often insecure, except in the writing of higher-attaining pupils. Handwriting and presentation vary but are generally satisfactory.
104. Overall, the skills of literacy are taught satisfactorily. Pupils enter the school with standards of literacy which are well below national expectations. The need to develop those standards to meet the literacy demands of the whole curriculum has been recognised in the development of a draft school policy shortly to be presented to staff. There has been staff in-service training on the national literacy strategy for pupils in years 7 to 9 led by a local education authority adviser. Subject departments have been encouraged to include a literacy action plan in their handbooks and many have done so. Generally spelling is corrected in pupils' written work. Most subjects display and emphasise the use of key words. The process of developing a whole-school strategy has gained momentum with the recent identification of a member of the senior management team working with a member of the English department to coordinate and monitor cross-curricular literacy development.

### MATHEMATICS

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

#### Strengths

- The good commitment and hard work of the teachers.
- Expectations of pupil achievement are now high.
- Good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.

#### Areas for improvement

- To improve test and examination results at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- To further develop the schemes of work, including planning for a greater use of ICT.
- Further improving the quality of teaching and learning.



105. Standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. There was little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Standards of work seen in lessons and in the pupils' books at the end of Year 9 during the inspection are below average for many pupils. The reason for the improvement from last year is due to the positive impact of a more stable staffing situation within the department. Nevertheless, standards in number work are too variable. Higher attaining pupils could make progress in their understanding of Pythagoras' theorem and the trial and improvement method of solving equations because of their competence in numerical work. Other pupils had difficulty with basic number work and graph drawing, which meant that their solutions to problems were not sufficiently accurate. Pupils' problem solving skills are below average and their ability to apply their mathematical knowledge to new situations is limited. There was some high level work seen in high attaining pupils' books in Year 9 but average attaining pupils' work seen was not of the required standard. A significant problem in mathematics is pupils' poor retention of knowledge which prevents them attaining well.
106. In GCSE examinations in 2002 the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades was below the national average but comparable with similar schools. The proportion gaining A\*-G grades was in line with the national figures. Boys and girls performed equally well. The standards of work of pupils aged 16 seen during the inspection are below the expected level. For example, Year 11 higher attaining pupils had a good understanding of quadratic equations and how the equation affects the shape and position of the curve. Lower attaining pupils were able to understand the process involved in solving simple equations but their poor numerical skills sometimes resulted in inaccurate answers. Some good problem solving work was seen from middle and high attaining pupils in year 11, indicating that these skills have developed. Some Year 11 pupils were able to derive the cosine rule by using Pythagoras' rule in a right-angled triangle drawn inside the main triangle.
107. Pupils enter the school with results well below the national average. Achievement by the majority of pupils at the end of both Years 9 and 11 is now satisfactory. There is little gender difference in achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress, and those with English as an additional language generally achieve well. Pupils are now steadily acquiring knowledge and understanding across all parts of the mathematics curriculum, but they are making slower progress with their problem solving skills.
108. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although the quality in individual lessons ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory which is too variable. The large majority of lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils. In the best lessons seen, the teachers had high expectations of the pupils, the pace was good and a variety of tasks had been prepared. A group of Year 7 pupils were enthusiastically and successfully solving simple equations because of the teacher's clear explanation of the methods used. In a Year 10 lesson, higher attaining pupils were being well prepared for their statistics coursework task by being actively involved in collecting data within the class, displaying it on a scatter graph and correctly interpreting it. Lessons generally started well with good mental exercises. For example, a lesson with a group of high attaining pupils in Year 11 began with them sorting quadratic equations into different types. This was then built on well with pupils sketching graphs using graphical calculators and interpreting the differences between them. The endings of lessons were generally not so well focused, with pupils' learning not always appropriately consolidated. Teachers make effective use of questioning, encouraging pupils to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class. Where the teaching was not satisfactory, the teacher spent too long going over unsuitable homework questions

and the pupils were not paying attention. However, as a result of mainly effective teaching, most pupils acquire knowledge of basic skills and concepts which enable them to work on their own to improve their understanding. Literacy skills are improved by the good displays of key words, the insistence of teachers on the use of correct mathematical language and the good oral work in lessons. Pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics and behave well in lessons, and relationships between pupils and with the teachers are good. The quality of homework set and of marking is not consistent – some is not good enough.

109. The mathematics curriculum is appropriate and meets the statutory requirements. However, although the department is responding positively to the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect, the schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 do not yet fully incorporate all of its requirements and do not identify a wide enough variety of teaching strategies. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, and some teachers give specific information to pupils about the National Curriculum levels they are working at, but this practice is not yet consistent. Pupils do not have enough access to computers to enrich their work in mathematics and there are not enough text-books.
110. Leadership and management of mathematics are now satisfactory. The head of department has only been in post since September but he has already identified appropriate priorities for development and has started to work on these effectively. This is welcomed by the department, which is made up of enthusiastic, hard working and committed teachers. Teachers generally have a secure grasp of the subject and its requirements, but the sharing of good practice in the department is necessary to further improve teaching and learning. Now that the department is fully staffed this is a priority.
111. Progress since the last inspection has been hampered because of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. Those teachers who have been in the department for some time have worked hard to maintain standards. Now that the department is fully staffed it is in a good position to move forward and address the areas for development.

## **Numeracy**

112. Pupils' standards of numeracy overall are below expected levels. However, the school is responding positively to the National Numeracy Strategy by involving all departments in action to improve numeracy. The development of pupils' numerical skills forms a specific and increasing aspect of the mathematics curriculum. Most mathematics lessons in all years adopt the lesson structure recommended by the strategy, including mental exercises at the beginning and ending of lessons, and, although pupils' basic computational skills have weaknesses, they are showing increasing levels of skills and confidence with number when undertaking these exercises.
113. Members of the mathematics department led a training session with all members of staff on the details of the National Numeracy Strategy, and, where pupils need to use number in other subjects of the curriculum, teachers are reinforcing the skills necessary to enable them to do so adequately. For example, in science, geography, modern foreign languages, history, design and technology and religious education pupils demonstrate their ability to draw charts and graphs. Pupils are able to analyse and interpret data in information and communication technology, geography and design and technology. Mental arithmetic skills are used in physical education, modern foreign languages and design and technology. In science, pupils are able to measure time, volume, weight and temperature with satisfactory degrees of accuracy and Year

10 and 11 pupils are able to use formulae and change the subject of a formula. It is clear that pupils are transferring their mathematical learning to assist their learning in different subjects. The school is now well placed to continue to make improvements in this area.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- A relatively new but effective subject leader, who is committed to raising standards.
- Good assessment and analysis resulting in the identification of improvement strategies.

### Areas for improvement

- To raise standards at Year 9 and GCSE.
- To ensure provision of a full compliment of effective, permanent staff.
- To improve the resources for information and communication technology.

114. Pupils' attainment in the 2002 National Curriculum tests, taken at the end of Year 9, was below the national average overall, although it was average for the proportion of pupils obtaining level 6. When compared to similar schools the standards were average. Standards have shown a rising trend over the last 4 years. Girls outperform boys. Observations of lessons and written work indicate that current standards are also below average. Pupils know basic scientific facts but their understanding of concepts is limited. For example, pupils know the scientific terms for the structures concerned with breathing, can accurately label them on a diagram and they know what lungs do, but many have difficulty with linking structure and function. Similarly, pupils can understand ray diagrams for reflection and refraction, but many are unsure as to what a virtual image is and how refraction causes lens to focus. When doing practical work, pupils can follow instructions and use equipment appropriately, but their ability to apply their knowledge to new situations is weak.

115. In the 2002 GCSE, the proportion of pupils gaining grades in the range A\* to C was well below national average, but in line with it for grades A\* to G. Results were below those of similar schools. The standards in science were lower than those seen in English and mathematics and were lower than in 2001 when they were below average. This was due to a decline in the quality of coursework, brought about by staffing problems and pupils' poor attendance. The new head of science has improved the delivery of the course and its assessment. While standards remain below average they are better than last year. This was well instanced by a Year 11 group who showed that they had a good grasp of the evaluation procedure needed for coursework and how a practical should be written up. However, especially in the lower sets, many pupils find difficulty in producing good graphs and in understanding and using specialist equipments such as diodes. Although pupils learn facts, such as how the names of chemicals reflect their formulae, and can undertake some exercises manipulating formulae to reflect chemical reactions, their understanding of the important principles behind these activities is often insecure.

116. Pupils enter the school with well below average standards of attainment in science. Although the achievement of many pupils across the age range is satisfactory, where teaching is less secure pupils' achievement is not satisfactory, and therefore achievement overall by the end of Years 9 and 11 is unsatisfactory. The achievement of higher attaining pupils is generally better than for other pupils. These pupils are presented with more demanding work due to the setting system, but they are not often

stimulated within their sets to go further. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as teachers match their approach to individuals; they are sometimes well supported by support assistants who may produce work especially tailored to their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language generally make good progress as they are also often well supported. Asian girls show the best achievement and white boys the weakest. Satisfactory attention is paid to developing literary and numeracy skills. The achievement of some pupils is limited by poor attendance.

117. The quality of teaching for many pupils is satisfactory. Some good and very good lessons were seen. Nevertheless far too high a proportion is unsatisfactory; a situation made worse by staffing difficulties and therefore teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Most lessons start by checking and reinforcing what was learned last time, but only in some classes is the new learning well consolidated at the end. In the best lessons pupils' ideas are sought and then developed by skilfully crafted questions to drive the lesson to its objectives. In a Year 11 lesson on ultrasound, good interaction between pupils and teacher took the subject forward with good learning as a result. During a well-delivered demonstration, the teacher posed challenging questions and encouraged pupils to expand on answers, stimulating them to think deeply resulting in enjoyable and successful learning that is likely to be remembered. Where lessons are less successful pupils are told, rather than asked to think. They are given information and questioned to see that they have understood the facts, but are not given opportunities to apply their knowledge and thus deepen their understanding of the concepts being covered. Pupils know how to do their practicals, but have little idea why they are doing them. Pace may be low and discipline poor, pupils are not stimulated to ask questions. Whilst almost all work is marked some of it lacks useful corrections, suggestions for improvement or guidance as to at what level or grade a pupils is performing. Homework is usually set and provides a useful extension to learning. Many staff give up much of their time to provide extra teaching for pupils.
118. The department is well led by an effective and enthusiastic subject leader who is relatively new in post but who is having a positive impact on the subject. The curriculum is good and enhanced by visits, such as those to the Space Centre, Coombe Abbey Nature Reserve and Jaguar cars. Methods of assessment and analysis are good and their use to aid individual pupils is developing well. There have been and continue to be problems with recruiting suitable staff and despite the school's strenuous efforts to overcome this the situation is having a negative effect on standards. The accommodation is good with many new laboratories. The resources are satisfactory except for the computer hardware, which severely limits what can be achieved.
119. Improvement since the last inspection has not been satisfactory. Laboratories have been upgraded and there is more monitoring of the work for pupils and teachers. All pupils now take double science. However, there are problems with staffing, standards at Year 9 remain below national average, while those at GCSE have dropped. The lack of facilities for information technology remains an important issue.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Teaching, learning and management of pupils are good.
- Relationships are very good.
- The multi-cultural content of the subject, reflecting the school's population, is positive.
- Leadership of the department is very strong.

### Areas for improvement

- To raise standards of attainment.
- To deliver a broader curriculum to increase opportunities to work with sculpture, textiles, printmaking, computers and photography.
- To improve the teaching of drawing and the use of sketchbooks.
- To ensure assessment is used to guide curriculum planning.
- To improve accommodation and resources.

120. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were very low. The assessments were inaccurate, however. The work in school is below average but rising, reflecting the improvements brought about by new leadership. Sketchbooks are not well enough used for experimentation or investigation. While the standard of drawing in lessons is increasingly close to expectations it tends to be presentational rather than to gather information. Pupils are generally unaware of the possibilities of varying line quality to show texture or space. Most work is from observation but there is some reliance on copying. The pupils' compositional skills are close to average. Pupils have a basic knowledge of art including Picasso's Cubist, Blue and Rose periods and a good understanding of primary, secondary and tertiary colours. Their written work and annotations are less good and tend to be copied from the Internet rather than giving a personal opinion. There is an emphasis on finished work with development work figuring little in folders or displays. Pupils do not use computers in art. Almost all of the work is two-dimensional painting and drawing.
121. The GCSE results for pupils at the end of Year 11 in 2002 were well below average and similar to those at the last inspection. The girls' results were less good than the boys' due to staffing problems in a class of mainly girls. Nevertheless, these results were significantly better than those of 2001. Standards in Year 11 currently are below average but improving rapidly thanks to good teaching and an end to staffing problems. The work is increasingly investigative but the failure to keep a sketchbook for research is preventing any thread of continuity running through pupils' study. Projects are self-contained and pupils are dependent on teachers for future direction. Once again there are few opportunities for pupils to use a wide enough range of processes.
122. The narrow curriculum restricts the progress that pupils make and limits their achievements by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 to being satisfactory overall. Those with the lowest prior attainment make satisfactory progress due to their teachers' knowledge of their special needs. The particularly good relationships and increasingly challenging nature of the work allows most pupils, irrespective of gender or ethnicity, to feel equally valued and to make parallel progress. The exceptions are those who are most capable: their inability to develop original ideas from observation and personal research limits their progress to unsatisfactory. None of the pupils gain the highest grade in the GCSE examination.

123. Teaching is good overall although it is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, a genuine feel for their subject and effectively manage their classes. Lessons begin with a review of previous learning and a well-presented exposition of expectations, ending with a review of progress. Year 8 pupils alert to the qualities of natural objects after looking at Georgia O'Keefe's paintings, were using textured papers as a base for drawing and were challenged to make stones appear hard and leaves delicate. The lesson was well planned and the pupils were fully engaged. They paused after 35 minutes to engage in a discussion of their progress, and as a result then produced even better work. Year 10 pupils made excellent progress in a lesson centred on Cézanne's portrayal of light falling on form. The teacher made good reference to sketchbook work and emphasised the value of working from observation. The teacher circulated, assessing, encouraging and redirecting pupils and as a result they made excellent gains in knowledge and technical skills producing drawings of above average standard. The teacher's manner and personality were significant features of the lesson, promoting pace and productivity and the pupils' concentration was intense as they developed their ideas. There are occasions when pupils' shading flattens form rather than accentuating it or when they are unsure of the difference between tone and colour. Teachers talk with their pupils rather than at them, promoting very good relationships, behaviour and good opportunities to reflect on their own and their peers' work. These measures also ensure the progress of those in the early stages of speaking English and who arrive in class without specialist language support. Praise is given warmly and pupils make efforts to please their teachers. Challenge is a feature of lessons when pupils are asked to draw in ink rather than relying on an eraser to correct mistakes. Expectations can be raised yet further by focusing more closely on developing a greater understanding of drawing for different purposes, in different media and scale, or as a means to select and gather information, record thoughts and sensations or develop ideas via different methods and materials. Pupils are gaining in confidence and are increasingly independent but they find it difficult to evaluate or talk about their work, or that of famous artists. Homework is not always as challenging as classwork.
124. Data gained from the assessment of pupils' work is not used to identify or remedy weaknesses in the curriculum. The curriculum is under-funded, unbalanced and narrow with few opportunities for pupils to engage in three-dimensional work, creative textiles or printmaking. The lack of computers and specialist software restricts the full delivery of the National Curriculum. There are many opportunities to enjoy the work of famous artists from European and other cultures, questioning stereotyping, artists' responsibilities, morality and what constitutes art. Chagall's dream paintings and the compositions of the Indian artist Chanti Panchal allow insight of the spirituality in art. While there are good multi-cultural influences, there is little of Coventry's local culture in the work. Teachers make themselves available for pupils at lunchtime or after school when those who cannot opt for art at the end of Year 9 are also taught.
125. The head of department is ambitious for his department and both pupils and teachers welcome his very strong leadership, providing stability after a long period of staffing difficulties. Standards have risen significantly and continue to be driven upwards. Programmes of study are well designed but planning is not yet focused on raising attainment, reflecting insufficient management training. The accommodation with its inefficient heating and very mixed quality of furniture, much with the scars of previous activity, is unsatisfactory. The kilns are old and lack a protective cage. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and there is huge potential for growth.

## CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and effective.
- The planning for citizenship is thorough.
- There is some good teaching of citizenship through several subjects.
- There are some good whole school activities for promoting citizenship, such as the school council.

### Areas for improvement

- To increase the emphasis on developing pupils' skills and ability to apply their knowledge.
- To strengthen the teaching of citizenship, especially though PSHE.
- To develop procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress.
- To monitor the effectiveness of provision for citizenship.

126. The standards attained by pupils in citizenship are below average at the end of both Years 9 and 11, in line with the standards they attain generally within the school. They are acquiring appropriate knowledge of aspects of citizenship, such as the importance of voting and its place in a democracy, and rights and the rights and responsibilities of individual and groups living in a democratic society. They have a reasonable understanding of the issues they cover – as demonstrated in their contributions to discussions within their lessons, especially on topics such as euthanasia and animal rights in religious education lessons, where pupils showed their ability to form opinions and express informed points of view. Their skills are less well developed. There are some occasions when pupils do demonstrate a satisfactory level of skill such as in physical education where team captains carry out their roles well. In general, however, pupils' ability to apply their knowledge, use their initiative and work with independence is more limited.

127. The standards pupils are attaining represent satisfactory levels of achievement for those of all ages. They enter the school with general standards well below the national average. They are steadily acquiring knowledge and understanding of citizenship across the curriculum as a whole and are doing so well in those subjects that plan more explicitly for its delivery. Their development of the skills and more active elements of citizenship are progressing, but more slowly. This is partly due to the fact that the approach taken in PSHE lessons, through which a substantial proportion of the citizenship curriculum is delivered, does not promote an active enough approach overall. Elements of whole school provision for citizenship that are taking place are making a good contribution to pupils' achievements. Those pupils elected onto the school council by their peers are beginning to represent their peers with confidence and fairness. All pupils, boys and girls from all ethnic groups and those of all levels of prior attainment, achieve similarly, although some interesting gender differences are being noted. For example, more girls voted in the school council elections but more boys were elected.

128. The quality of teaching of citizenship overall is satisfactory. It is best, and generally good, where it is taught through subjects that have explicitly planned for its coverage. This is particularly the case in religious education and history. In these subjects, lessons are organised in such a way as to make topics very interesting, and approaches are adopted in lessons that require and encourage pupils to actively engage with the subject matter, for example, through role play and group discussion.

Some other subjects make a good, though less extensive contribution, such as in art, where pupils develop a good understanding of the portrayal of minority ethnic groups in the media. In subjects where issues of relevance are touched upon, but not necessarily planned for in detail, such as in a lesson on blood groups in science, the teaching of citizenship is satisfactory. A significant contribution to the teaching of citizenship is made through the teaching of PSHE. While much of this is satisfactory, not all of it is. There is an emphasis on pupils gaining knowledge rather than them developing their understanding though being given opportunities to apply their knowledge in practical situations. In some lessons, teachers appear not to take the content seriously enough, and this reduces the status of the issues in the eyes of the pupils. Outside of the subject curriculum some good opportunities are provided for pupils to engage with aspects of citizenship. The setting up of the school council is a notable example. Many pupils were involved in the process of voting for form and then year group representatives, from the organisation of and involvement in hustings to the analysis of voting patterns afterwards. Other good examples include the making and distributing of food parcels for the elderly at Christmas and attendance at an international conference in Paris organised by the modern foreign languages department.

129. The leadership and management of citizenship are good. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to introduce the new requirements and improve provision, and her enthusiasm and vision have resulted in much being achieved in a short space of time. In this she has been assisted by the support and receptiveness of other key colleagues. Current provision is satisfactory, largely due to the newness of the requirements and the relatively early stage of development of the subject. Nevertheless, there is much that is positive. A good curriculum audit has been carried out, although some departments have yet to respond. Building on this, how the requirements of the subject will be delivered has been mapped out, and includes an appropriate combination of delivery through subject teaching, PSHE teaching, and additional activities such as theme days, the school council, and a range of pastoral activities. Areas for further development include ensuring a greater emphasis on active approaches and developing pupils' skills, improving the quality of some of the teaching of citizenship, especially through PSHE, developing procedures to assess the performance of pupils and track their progress, and monitoring the quality and effectiveness of provision. Some of these developments are already planned.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Standards in graphics are average and standards of practical work are good.
- Assessment procedures are linked to national curriculum levels and examination board criteria.
- There is a shared vision for development of the department.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are good.

### Areas for improvement

- To improve examination performance, particularly in resistant materials.
- To develop the structures and control modules in more depth in Years 7 to 9.
- To improve graphical and written presentational skills in all areas.
- To undertake more monitoring across the department to promote consistency of practice.



130. Teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average, with no significant difference between girls and boys. Standards of work currently in Year 9 are also below the national average overall. Designing skills are below average. Some of the better design folders are neatly presented with a good range of ideas, use of commercial material and well-labelled drawings, such as in a Year 9 textiles project on designing a cover for the homework diary. Good investigations in the pizza project in Year 8 were evident. Where the work is weaker, mainly in the resistant materials area, there are poor standards of graphical and written presentation, drawings are sometimes done in pen and not pencil, and little use of colour is seen. Standards in the structures and control modules of the curriculum are weak due to a lack of emphasis on this part of the curriculum. Practical work is stronger than other areas. Some work shows good use of information communication technology in research, for example, the Wood Green Animal Shelter project.
131. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results are below the national average overall at grades A\*-C, but are average at A\*-G grades. Girls' results have improved at A\*-C grades, whereas boys' results have declined. There has been a slight improvement from 2001 in overall results. Individual specialisms had varied examination success, with textiles performing above the national average and graphics in line with the national average. Results in both food technology and resistant materials were well below the national average although there was an improvement in food technology and a decline in resistant materials from the previous year. Child development results were well below the national average in 2002, as they were in 2001. This subject and GNVQ manufacturing are no longer offered, although manufacturing was successful in 2002 with good results.
132. Current standards of work in Year 11 are below average overall. In graphics standards are average, and in textiles, electronics and food technology they are below average. In resistant materials, standards are well below average. Where current standards differ from the 2002 examination results, this is due to changes of staffing which, in the case of food technology have brought about an improvement, while in textiles they have been responsible for a reduction, although the newly qualified teachers in post show good potential. Good work is seen from a minority of pupils in all specialisms. Again practical making skills are stronger than other areas. In textiles, there is good use of colour employed in a range of processes, including stencilling, batik and tie-dye in the wall hanging project. Some satisfactory research skills are evident, such as in a graphics project on mobile phones where pupils were investigating current products and the materials used in their manufacture. This was also seen in a food technology project on designing novelty cakes where ICT was used well to give greater depth to the research. The use of ICT generally is limited. In an electronics safety light project, some good task analysis was seen with user needs being well identified, but in general, analytical skills are weak. Where the work is weaker, mainly in resistant materials but also across other specialisms, it is often due to lack of depth in research, limited development of ideas, an over reliance on commercial material in research and weak graphical and written presentation. Work is sometimes unfinished and evaluations can be superficial.
133. From a very low starting point pupils make satisfactory progress across Years 7 to Year 9 and achievement is satisfactory. Achievement is also satisfactory for pupils in Years 10 and 11 in all areas except resistant materials where it is unsatisfactory. This is in part due to the fact that more pupils of lower prior attainment tend to opt for this subject, but the teaching does not always adequately cater for this. Pupils' acquisition of practical skills is stronger than other areas. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

134. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although some good lessons were also seen in all specialisms. In the better lessons, learning is increased and good progress made because there is good pace, teachers use good subject expertise to develop or expand ideas, use time and resources effectively and have good pupil management skills. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were developing simple electronic skills through making circuit boards. In this lesson the teacher explained and demonstrated how to strip a wire prior to soldering, and the clarity of the input meant that pupils were well equipped to carry out the practical task to a good standard. In a Year 11 graphics lesson where pupils were making prototypes for their projects the teacher gave detailed and specific input to individual pupils, asking questions and making suggestions that challenged pupils to expand their ideas and improve their modelling skills. Lessons that are only satisfactory rather than better have many positive features but can have lengthy theory sessions where pupils lose concentration, insufficient use of material to suit different pupil needs and do not always ensure the full attention of pupils. This is more common in resistant materials. Pupils' attitudes are generally good and they respond well when suitably challenged. Relationships are usually good in all areas.
135. Assessment of pupils' work is usually helpful and informative and indicates a gradual improvement in standards. Marking of pupils' work is sometimes too generous, resulting in pupils not having an accurate view of how well they are performing or what they need to do to improve. A positive feature of work in food technology and textiles is that it sometimes makes a contribution to broadening pupils' cultural development, such as looking at recipes from other countries, and different ethnic traditions in fabric design as in African culture in the wall hanging project.
136. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good documentation, appropriate department improvement plans and good assessment procedures are positive features and are contributing to improving examination performance. There is a shared vision for development and a cohesive team approach within the department. Monitoring the effectiveness of practice across all areas of the department is not sharply enough focussed. The structures and control part of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is not developed in enough depth. Pupils' graphical and written presentation are areas of weakness and their design and analytical skills are not yet strong enough to enable them to achieve the highest standards. Not all pupils take a technology subject in Years 10 and 11 and proper procedures to disapply pupils from the subject are not followed, which is in breach of statutory requirements. These regulations are due to change at the end of this academic year, however. Staffing is now more stable resulting in better continuity of work. Accommodation has deficiencies, such as that for multi-media work benches and enough access to ICT equipment to enable the effective delivery of computer assisted design and manufacturing. It is being upgraded, however. At present access to information communication technology facilities is limited. The literacy and numeracy strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on standards.
137. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Levels of attainment are improving gradually, but are still below average. Assessment procedures are now linked to national curriculum levels and there is some sharing of good practice, although this aspect requires further improvement. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed wholly or in part and issues from the recent review are in the departmental development plan.

## DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The leadership and management of the subject are informed by good subject knowledge.
- The scheme of work is clear, well-organised and helpful to non-specialist teachers.
- Drama is separately timetabled as a subject in its own right for pupils in years 7 to 9.

### Areas for improvement

- Reviewing staffing arrangements: a large number of lessons are taught by non-specialists.
- Improving accommodation: specialist accommodation is inadequate and much teaching takes place in ordinary classrooms.
- Ensuring some provision of drama for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

138. The standards of work of pupils in Year 9 seen during the inspection were generally in line with national expectations. Pupils work cooperatively in groups, planning, preparing and presenting improvisations and rehearsing and performing scripted drama. They showed skill in improvising scenes illustrating the accidental destruction of a family treasure and the subsequent consequences. They improvised dialogue quite fluently and without inhibition, moving comfortably and showing some sense of the use of space.

139. Pupils' achievement is good. They develop drama skills progressively and systematically. In Year 7 pupils created narrative mime sequences, performing sensibly and unselfconsciously. They worked conscientiously and with enjoyment, appreciating each other's performances. Pupils in Year 8 showed good skills in group work, creating characters and developing a narrative of a "whodunnit", for which they devised a "freeze frame" ending. They responded with imagination and represented reactions vividly. Low levels of prior academic attainment do not prevent pupils from participating fully in drama activities. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy and contribute to preparation and performance alongside their peers, in some lessons with good support from classroom assistants. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have, in general, sufficient English skills to make similar good progress to that of their peers.

140. The quality of teaching was good in all the lessons observed, and consequently pupils' learning is good. Good knowledge and understanding of the subject ensure well-planned lessons which progressively introduce and consolidate pupils' drama skills. Pupils are engaged by interesting and varied activities and they show enjoyment. Classes are managed well, firmly but with good humour.

141. The scheme of work is well-designed and helpful to the number of non-specialist teachers. There is good practice in the assessment of pupils' work, including pupil self-assessment. There is a designated specialist teaching room, but it is, however, insufficient in terms of facilities and space. When more than one class is taught at the same time, ordinary classrooms have to be used.

142. The subject is led by a well-experienced drama specialist, but management is made difficult by the number of lessons taught by non-specialists. Communication between staff, and monitoring to ensure consistency of practice in teaching and learning, is essentially limited and informal. There is a major school production planned this year

in conjunction with music but in general there is little opportunity for pupils to pursue an interest in drama outside lessons. Currently there is no opportunity for pupils to continue to study drama in years 10 and 11.

143. Since the last inspection drama has ceased to be offered in the curriculum for pupils in years 10 and 11. The improved liaison with the English department suggested in the last report has not taken place.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are almost always good and are often very good.
- Despite staffing difficulties in recent years, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and for some pupils is good.

### Areas for improvement

- To develop an up to date, comprehensive scheme of work.
- To meet national curriculum requirements in the use of and provision for, information and communication technology and enquiry work, including fieldwork in years 7 to 9.
- To implement good assessment procedures across the department.
- To improve resources, in particular audio-visual resources and textbooks.

144. Standards attained by pupils shown by teacher assessments at the end of year 9 in 2002 were below the national average. The performance of girls was better than that of boys. In lessons and in work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of year 9 were still below average, but close to national expectations, due in part to much good teaching. The standards of pupils who have English as an additional language are close to national expectations but standards of pupils with special educational needs are well below national expectations.

145. In year 9 pupils have acquired and use with some confidence, a good geographical vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language sometimes require help with pronunciation, but all try to use the correct terminology. All pupils have adequate basic map skills and can integrate maps and diagrams into their written text. They have a satisfactory understanding of the impact of natural disasters, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, upon the environment. They understand the economic inter-relationships of less and more economically developed countries, the exploitation of the former by the latter and the environmental damage wrought by development such as that in the Amazon forest. However, the quality of presentation of many pupils' maps and diagrams is unsatisfactory and does not help pupils to learn from them. While there are some examples of independent writing in their exercise books, much of their writing is copied from work-sheets or text-books and pupils have not sufficiently made it their own to ensure that they understand it well.

146. In the GCSE examinations at the end of year 11 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*- C in 2002 was well below the national average. However, all pupils who were entered for the examination attained a pass at grades A\*-G, a proportion a little above the national average. Seventeen pupils were entered for the certificate of achievement and all achieved pass grades. The low results are due to the lack of

development of the subject caused by the fact there has been a high turnover of managers of the subject, which has impeded improvements in provision.

147. Although standards of written work in exercise books of pupils at the end of Year 11 was in line with expectations, much was copied and pupils are not often tested on their understanding so it is unlikely that they will attain in line with the national average in the GCSE examination. Standards are therefore below average overall. Pupils use geographical vocabulary well. Diagrams are integrated into text, but again they are not carefully drawn so do not support explanation well. Pupils of higher prior attainment have a good sense of location and scale and can accurately transcribe information onto maps. They understand well the causal relationship between climate and vegetation in tropical rain forests and the written work of many is above average. Pupils of lower prior attainment leave written work unfinished, which diminishes their already tenuous understanding of such processes as desertification, and the meteorological processes that produce depressions. Coursework produced by year 11 is below national expectations of attainment. Pupils have competently carried out a first hand investigation in the local area but their analysis of data and conclusions are generally superficial and not well expressed.
148. Achievement by pupils in year 9 is satisfactory overall, although for many pupils it is good. They have learnt to describe and to explain the inter-relationship of physical and human processes and show a commendable empathy for those exploited by economic activity. They can apply their knowledge to carry out some independent enquiry. Achievement by pupils in year 11 is satisfactory. Although their understanding of the reasons for the differences between places is good, many still struggle to understand more complex processes of physical geography. In years 9 and 11 there is very little work of a particularly high standard so there is some evidence therefore that gifted and talented pupils are under-achieving. The achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language is good in both years.
149. Teaching and learning are overall good with some lessons seen being very good or excellent. In lessons seen, teaching and learning were better in years 7 to 9 than in years 10 and 11. Where teaching is good or better, challenging tasks, clear lively exposition, very good management of pupils and very good relationships between teacher and pupils engage the interest of pupils, encourage them to work hard and to achieve well. A well-chosen video clip of the Amazon rain forest totally engaged the interest of pupils in year 9 and gave them a very good sense of the size and scale of the Amazon forest. Challenging discussion with pupils in year 8 enabled them to identify very pertinent questions to put to the managing directors of a multi-national company exploiting cheap labour in China to produce consumer goods for the West. Learning is reinforced effectively in these lessons, so pupils are sure of what they are trying to do and opportunities are given for independent responses. Where teaching was satisfactory, specific weaknesses include the provision of work that has not been amended to meet pupils' individual learning needs, and insecure management of pupils so that they waste a significant amount of time.
150. The department has suffered a series of changes of leadership in recent years. A new head of department took over in September but is still in the early stages of seeking to improve provision in the department and leadership and management can only be said to be satisfactory currently. The lack of development as a result of this staffing situation is responsible for pupils' achievement only being satisfactory overall, despite much good teaching. There are shortcomings in the curriculum. The use of information and communication technology is not planned for. Although some pupils make good use of it for assessed tasks it is not used systematically enough to meet the requirements of the national curriculum. Likewise, the requirement for geographical

investigation is not well met and there is no provision for fieldwork in years 7 to 9. The scheme of work is insufficiently detailed, with few strategies included to meet the learning needs of pupils of different levels of prior attainment or pupils who have English as an additional language. Assessment procedures have been inconsistent and new ones currently being introduced will not be fully in place until later this year. The school's policy on the monitoring of teaching and learning is being followed, but there is scope for the development of peer monitoring to disseminate good practice.

151. Resources in the department are inadequate. Information and communication technology provision is virtually non-existent and access to the school's central resources is very limited. Audio-visual resources are sufficiently poor as to hinder the attainment of pupils. Textbooks are in short supply and are not available for pupils to take home to use. There are hardly any atlases in the school. Accommodation is unsatisfactory as four teachers have to share three specialist classrooms, none of which has adequate blackout.
152. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There are now no non-specialist teachers, pupils' use of geographical terms is much better, behaviour is much improved and much teaching secures good learning. Other areas of concern remain – there are few opportunities for extended writing, there is limited use of information and communication technology, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning still have room for improvement.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good – direct, confident and well informed.
- Careful guidance ensures that pupils are fully involved in lessons.
- Very good management of classes and relationships ensures a secure learning environment for all groups of pupils.
- Management of the subject is very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Ensuring greater access to ICT.
- Providing more extra curricular activities.
- The introduction of more historical controversy.

153. Teachers' assessments indicate that in 2002 standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that by the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Given the lower prior attainment of these pupils on entry to the school this represents good achievement. Pupils in Year 7 are improving their historical skills. They are able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. Their historical vocabulary is growing, for example, they understand an anachronism. Year 9 pupils are beginning to understand social and moral issues. They are able to define a slave as property. They understand the Slave Triangle and the profit involved in the trade. Other Year 9 pupils are able to explain the motives of the Luddites and understand the anger generated by poor living and working conditions. All groups are of mixed ability and the standard of written work varies. Many are better orally than on paper. The great majority of pupils are able to follow instructions and apply themselves to the work set.

154. In 2002 the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades at GCSE dipped to below the national average. In 2001 it had been above the national average. This reflected a whole school dip and was due in part to poor attendance and low expectations of the cohort of pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that current attainment overall is in line with national expectations, the improvement being due to better attendance of a higher attaining group of pupils. Using documentary evidence pupils are able to prepare and deliver confident presentations as when Year 11 pupils explain the different systems of poor relief in the mid Nineteenth Century. They are articulate and able to communicate facts and opinions well. Pupils are able to handle source materials. Lively class discussions are based on factual knowledge already acquired. Year 11 pupils studying medieval health and medicine are able to consider the consequences of the wilful contamination of public places by unhygienic cellars of food. They use source materials to suggest appropriate punishments. The introduction of more historical controversy for pupils to debate and form views about is necessary to sharpen pupils' analytical skills and help them attain higher levels.
155. Achievement overall is good. Occasionally pupils do not make sufficient progress because they are not given difficult enough work. More often pupils learn well and add to their historical knowledge. They learn skills which are transferable to other subjects and other situations. For example, they know the difference between fact and opinion. They can detect bias. The department recognises the relationship between good progress in history and good literacy skills. There is an element of reading and writing in every lesson. New words are targeted and explained. Lists of historical terms are posted in history rooms. Well written projects make relevant and striking wall displays. The different groups represented in each class make progress according to their differing levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language usually make satisfactory progress. Teachers know their individual needs and learning support assistants make a significant contribution. A departmental policy for gifted and talented pupils is being considered but is not yet in place.
156. Teaching, overall, is good. It is always satisfactory, usually good and sometimes very good. A mixture of experienced staff and newly qualified teachers, all well qualified and with good subject knowledge, make up a strong teaching team. Energetic teaching and varied activities ensure that pupils are kept involved, their attention held and their concentration sustained. Teaching is distinguished by its clarity so that pupils always know what is expected of them. Lessons are well planned. Classes are very well managed. Pupils feel secure and learning is rarely interrupted. Many history classes have a sense of urgency. Work is taken very seriously. Year 10 pupils representing factory workers or Parliamentary commissioners discuss factory conditions and produce recommendations for reform. Having done the required reading they enjoy the rôle play which they say enables them to become involved in the issues. As a result of thorough teaching beforehand and guidance during the lesson they are learning to question, to assess and to produce independent opinions. Learning is made relevant. The attention of Year 10 pupils is caught by the comment that a local hotel was once the workhouse. The reinforcement of learning, for example, by quick fire oral tests, is good. Occasionally there is too much repetition of material already dealt with. On occasions when the pace is too fast for some pupils the teacher is always on hand to give extra help. Pupils learn to work to time but are not put under undue pressure. The encouragement offered by teachers and the respect given to pupils' opinions gives them the confidence to participate in the class discussion which they enjoy. Relationships are very good between pupils and with teachers. All groups of pupils cooperate well, are happy to work in pairs and react to teaching and learning in similar ways. In most classes there is a very pleasant and hardworking atmosphere. Homework is set at the end of each topic. Marking is

thorough and constructive. Assessment exercises are set and marked according to national curriculum levels. All the pupils asked know their current position and the level they should be working towards.

157. The department is very well managed. Planning and organisation are very good. Departmental plans, for example, to improve teaching are practical and achievable. The department makes a positive contribution to cross curricular learning. Schemes of work refer specifically to citizenship issues. Assessment procedures are well developed and carefully used to the benefit of pupils. Since the previous inspection regular departmental meetings ensure the sharing of good practice. There is still not enough access to information and communication technology and extra-curricular activities and visits are limited. The history department is committed to the improvement of pupils' academic performance and to increasing their enjoyment of the subject.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Pupils are enthusiastic about ICT.
- The degree of independent learning across all years is good.

### Areas for improvement

- To improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- To develop the curriculum to improve the provision of discreet and cross-curricular ICT across the school.
- To ensure statutory requirements for the delivery of ICT in Years 10 and 11 are met.
- To improve assessment procedures.
- To deploy ICT staff and allocate teaching groups and rooms more effectively.
- To improve the provision of resources.

158. The National Curriculum teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated the standards attained by pupils to be in line with the national average, with girls attaining higher standards than boys. Evidence from the inspection indicates current standards in Year 9 to be below average, with no difference between the achievement of girls and boys. The reason for the difference is that the teacher assessments were too generous and the quality of current work is a more accurate reflection of standards being attained.

159. Pupils in Year 7 are able to select graphics in a multi-media presentation which relate to the text, but are not able to add sound or links to other pages. They do not consider the audience nor share their ideas with other pupils. Pupils in Year 8 can use a programme to write a sequence of instructions with single procedures but cannot use these as building blocks to create a program with several procedures. They create some simple rules in a spreadsheet model but can not describe the system in a structured manner. They do not explore the relationships between the data nor make predictions about the consequences of their decisions and so the work is below average. Year 9 pupils have created a multi-media presentation for a specific audience with basic animation and graphics. They have not presented the information in a variety of formats for a range of audiences, however, which they would need to do to achieve at a high level. They can use a created spreadsheet to explore the effects of altering the source data, but cannot vary the rules within the model.



160. The standards attained by pupils who took the Intermediate GNVQ course at the end of Year 11 in 2002 were below the national figures. The quality of work examined on inspection varies considerably but overall indicates current standards at end of Year 11 to be well below national expectations. This represents unsatisfactory progress, and is due to a range of problems in the subject, including the quality of teaching.
161. Year 11 pupils can use graphics and text to design leaflets and flyers for a small business. They have created spreadsheets with simple formulae and conditional text statements, but have no understanding of how the model can be used to predict performance. They can create a database with simple queries but cannot generate forms or reports. The quality of work is too varied; some folders had no evidence of completed tasks. Pupils in Year 10 can use a spreadsheet, as in one linked to the management of a small business. The more competent pupils have inputted data, created formulae and written conditional statements to print text messages. They are able to explain technical terms and describe how they would use different functions. The less competent pupils are just able to insert text and formulae but do not fully appreciate the purpose of functions nor explain why or how they use them.
162. For those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not choose to take ICT as a separate subject or through Business Studies at examination level, there is an ICT entitlement course which is supposed to deliver the statutory requirements of the subject. The content of the course is based upon an integrated project about a small company. However, the material is pitched at too low a level and does not extend pupils' ICT skills or knowledge sufficiently. Standards attained by these pupils are well below average.
163. The prior attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average. During Year 7 to 9 the standards attained rise to being below average and this represents satisfactory achievement for those pupils. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. This is true for those who choose to study ICT as a specific subject and for those who follow the entitlement course. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.
164. The quality of teaching and learning overall is unsatisfactory, although there is some satisfactory or better teaching. Where the teaching is satisfactory or better, teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and prepare reasonably for lessons. They provide structured worksheets and set constructive tasks, which extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, teachers do not prepare fully for lessons. They do not set challenging tasks and have low expectations of pupils. Pace of lessons is slow and poor management of pupils allows them to behave inappropriately and move off task. Teachers do not clearly explain the targets for the lesson or the tasks, nor do they make proper use of resources. As a result, pupils are often confused about what they have to do. Individual assistance is limited and in some lessons pupils are left to manage their own progress. Where teaching is satisfactory, pupils show enthusiasm for the work and co-operate with and help each other. They have respect for the teachers, each other and the equipment. They freely discuss their work and are able to explain what they are doing and how they use the facilities of the software. A notable feature is the extent to which they work independently and are willing to experiment and find out new techniques for themselves. Some pupils take advantage of the poor quality of teaching and behave less well in these lessons. A number of pupils lack concentration and do not keep to task, and some make very little progress in their learning.

165. In Years 7, 8 and 9 teachers assess the progress of pupils but do not provide them with specific enough information related to National Curriculum criteria to assist them to complete tasks, assess their own progress or know how to improve. Teachers do not always identify targets for individual pupils and assessments are not used to inform future curriculum planning. In Years 10 and 11, each piece of work is assessed against the criteria set by the examination board, but regular assessments are not used enough.
166. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Inspectors observed good examples in physical education and modern foreign languages. Use of ICT in English and design and technology is satisfactory although not extensive in the latter subject, but it is unsatisfactory in science, mathematics, geography, art and music. Strategic management of ICT across the curriculum is not strong enough and pupils are not offered the wide range of experiences they should have in all subjects.
167. The head of department has been in post for some years and is responsible for the teaching of ICT as a discrete subject. The installation of the new resources and new schemes of work has been managed satisfactorily as well as the national funding for teacher training. There is no strategic plan to monitor and improve teaching and the management of the Year 10 and 11 courses has been unsatisfactory. The deployment of staff and rooms is unsatisfactory. In September a new assistant head was appointed with curriculum responsibility for the development of ICT. With the head of department he has identified issues relating to ICT in the department and across the school. He has developed a plan to improve the provision for ICT and he has the knowledge and energy required to raise standards and improve the teaching of ICT although as yet has not had time to make the necessary impact on provision. There are adequate resources, although some of the hardware needs replacing and technical problems hamper the progress of the pupils and make lesson planning difficult. Pupils have to share computers, which is unsatisfactory as it impedes progress. There are two technicians who manage the networks well and provide both technical and curriculum support. Overall, the quality of leadership and management overall is unsatisfactory.
168. The progress made since the last inspection is limited to the installation of some resources and the introduction of new schemes of work and is unsatisfactory. Much improvement is necessary.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Lessons are well planned and structured.
- There is a strong commitment to the cultural development of pupils.
- Leadership and management are good.

### Areas for improvement

- To improve results in French by the end of Year 11.
- To extend opportunities for pupils to achieve higher levels by the end of Year 9.
- To make more use of ICT in lessons.

169. Assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed the standards attained by pupils in both French and Spanish were below national averages. Standards seen during the inspection were also below average. Pupils make

satisfactory progress in the early stages of learning a modern language. During Years 7 and 8 they acquire vocabulary at a good rate and their listening and reading skills develop well. By the end of Year 9, however, not enough pupils are producing sufficient extended responses in speaking and writing to be certain of reaching the expected National Curriculum levels. They can refer to past and future events, but in a limited fashion.

170. By the end of Year 11 in 2002, results in French at GCSE were well below national averages. Results in Spanish and for the small number of pupils who took Panjabi GCSE were below national averages. In all three subjects girls performed better than boys, but the gap between the genders was not as wide as the national gap, because girls under-performed when compared with girls nationally. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average overall across all languages, although higher attaining pupils are reaching standards in line with expectations. Instability in staffing in recent years has contributed to low standards, and was a major factor in the sharp decline in results in French in 2002. This decline unfortunately came after a sustained period of improvement, and shows just how badly affected the situation affected the department. It was particularly acute in the speaking element of the GCSE in 2002, as many pupils recorded an unclassified grade because they had had virtually no opportunity to practise. This staffing difficulty is now resolved. Currently, pupils can produce short responses in speaking and writing, but many cannot produce more complex extended answers, for example, by joining sentences together or using clauses.
171. Pupils do not begin to study a modern language until the start of Year 7, and as they join the school with general attainment levels well below national averages the standards they are currently attaining by the end of both Years 9 and 11 represent satisfactory achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs of all ages achieve satisfactorily because teachers are able to adjust lessons to cater for them.
172. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, taking into account lesson observations and standards of work seen during the inspection. Some teaching was good and none was unsatisfactory. In all lessons teachers are becoming skilled at sharing lesson objectives with pupils and reviewing learning at the end of the lesson. This means that pupils have a clear sense of the progress they are expected to make during the lesson, which helps their learning. In the good lessons teachers use the foreign language for routine purposes as well as for practice; lessons proceed at a brisk pace; there is a variety of activity and teachers use paired work to develop speaking skills. For example, in a Year 10 Spanish lessons, pupils worked on a written task which they had to complete before a music track finished. They then practised a role play in pairs, which the teacher had prepared using a humorous presentation using the computer. These features mean that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs are able to make similar progress to other pupils in their groups. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' knowledge of tense is less secure in French. All of these factors promote at least satisfactory learning, and contribute to the sense of recent improvement as a result of more stable staffing. This improvement has yet to work fully through and impact upon results. Pupils mostly respond well to their teachers and show positive attitudes in lessons. There are some pockets of poor behaviour and attitudes among older pupils, largely as a result of the unstable staffing in recent years. These more resistant attitudes have a negative impact on the learning of these pupils.

173. The faculty does much to promote the cultural development of pupils. The International Week is a major feature of the faculty's work, allowing pupils to have experiences of different languages such as Chinese and Welsh, play sports, taste food, take part in dance and wear traditional costumes. In addition, there are pen friend links, the Spanish club, master classes for higher attaining pupils, trips to both Spain and France, and participation in the Comenius project, which fosters direct links with schools in other countries. All of these features enhance pupils' motivation towards the subject, which in turn promotes better learning.
174. The faculty is well led by a good classroom practitioner who has a passionate commitment to the subject and a clear vision for its development in future years. Documentation is well organised, schemes of work are appropriately pitched and sequenced and there are clear procedures for assessment. The quality of teaching is monitored by classroom observation, scrutiny of pupils' work and pupil interviews. Some elements of the faculty's development have been hindered recently by staffing problems, which have proved difficult to resolve. These problems have contributed in no small part to the recent poor run of results, particularly in French. There are signs of recent improvement following this difficult period, as the stability in staffing has brought about a greater sense of teamwork. It will take time for this to feed through into better results. The modern languages curriculum meets statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9, but not in Years 10 and 11, as some pupils are not properly disapplied from the study of the subject, although these regulations are due to change. The department tries hard to deliver National Curriculum requirements in information and communication technology, but is restricted in this work by lack of appropriate hardware and inadequate access to computer facilities in the school.
175. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The faculty now has policies for reading and the use of information and communication technology and classrooms now have improved displays as standard.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Increased resources for music technology.
- A commitment to developing and improving the subject.

### Areas for improvement

- To ensure provision of sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- To improve teaching and learning in years 7 to 9.
- To extend extra curricular work.
- To improve accommodation.

176. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated that standards were below national expectations. The quality of work seen during the inspection is also below average. In the best work seen, pupils in year 9 were able to engage with sounds creatively to produce imaginative music for a film scenario. In Year 7, pupils were able to create some successful pentatonic improvisations in march and waltz time. However, this level of attainment is not sufficiently widespread and pupils' basic musical knowledge is below average. Singing in Year 7 is enthusiastic, but more attention is needed to improve the quality of vocal performance. Opportunities for singing above Year 7 are insufficient.

177. In 2002, GCSE examination results were below the national average. The standards attained by pupil in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection are also below the national average. Pupils showed a secure but limited understanding of the structural elements involved in composition work on an Indian Raga. The performance skills of Year 11 pupils involved in a group performance related to a project on African drumming were not sufficiently developed for the special rhythmic character of this music to be adequately realised. Listening skills are being developed, but at an elementary level. The approach tends to focus on inert information rather than aural awareness and understanding.
178. Given that the standard on entry to the school is well below what might be expected, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Boys and girls respond and achieve equally. Students with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are identified and supported appropriately and enabled to make satisfactory achievement. The progress that pupils make has been hampered by problems in ensuring sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
179. There is some unsatisfactory teaching of music, but overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is most successful where good pupil-teacher relationships foster positive attitudes to the subject and students are engaged in challenging, well organised practical activities, which are well matched to their needs. In unsatisfactory lessons, the atmosphere and pupils/teacher relationships are not conducive to enjoyment and creativity and subject knowledge is not being acquired in the context of a stimulating musical experience.
180. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is delivered through a range of units, which generally meet National Curriculum requirements although they do not provide as stimulating and worthwhile a musical experience as should be the case. The new resources for music technology are extending musical opportunities for pupils, but these have yet to be formally integrated into the curriculum. The range of music that pupils are introduced to is limited. It includes a representative section of world music, but western classical music, music from the British Isles and folk music are under represented. Assessment procedures are in place although the way in which the standard of pupils' work is judged is not sharply enough focussed. An improved method of recording information is being developed. As yet, this does not include recordings of students' work in performance and composition.
181. Some 40 pupils receive instrumental tuition from 7 visiting teachers. The standard of teaching sampled is at least satisfactory and some is better. This provision is making a valuable contribution to the work of the department and is particularly effective in the support it gives to GCSE students, as exemplified in the "hands on" pop music ensemble. The amount of provision is, however, well below the national average for this size of school. The school hopes that the newly purchased instruments will allow this provision to be extended and that this in turn will foster a greater participation and higher standards in a wider range of extra curricular activity, which at the moment is limited. Choral and instrumental performance is under developed. Inadequate accommodation continues to impede progress.
182. In the face of difficulties recruiting sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced members of staff for music, leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory despite the development work needed in the subject. For similar reasons there has not been sufficient improvement since the last inspection, but targets for development aiming at improving provision and enhancing the musical experience of pupils have been identified.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching and learning.
- Good extra-curricular provision.
- The management of the department and the commitment of the staff are good.
- Excellent visual displays enhance excellent accommodation.

### Areas for improvement

- To further increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum levels in order to set individual learning targets and raise attainment further.
- To increase the amount of time that pupils are actively engaged in physical activity.

183. Teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards in physical education were close to the national average. Girls attained slightly higher standards than boys. Evidence from the inspection confirms standards to be in line with national standards. Girls and boys attain similar standards. During Years 7 to 9 pupils begin to apply skills accurately with precision and control. This was apparent in a Year 8 hockey lesson where all the boys were consolidating the push, pass and stop with accuracy whilst learning to run and dribble with the ball well. In a Year 8 girls' and a Year 7 boys' gymnastic lessons, students were beginning to perform balances and rolls with technical accuracy whilst highlighting their creative abilities when linking movements in paired or group sequences. The department is not according sufficient importance to the health related fitness aspect of the pupils' warm up and cool down exercises.
184. In 2002, the GCSE pass rate at A\*-C grades was below the national average. All students gained a pass at A\*-G. The 2002 A\*-C pass rate was, however, a significant improvement on the 2001 A\*-C pass rate. Predicted grades for present Year 11 students, based on secure information, suggests that the improving trend will continue. This reflects the different prior attainment of the students, and a more suitable examination syllabus.
185. The attainment of pupils in Years 10 and 11 core physical education lessons is broadly in line with national expectation. The attainment of boys is slightly higher than girls. Through Years 10 and 11 students are developing their awareness of tactical play. This was evident in a Year 10 netball lesson where the girls were timing their spin dodges very well within game related practice. In a Year 10 football lesson most boys understood the key purposes of the midfield player. The good curriculum provided for pupils gives them full opportunities to develop expected knowledge and understanding and skills in a wide variety of activities.
186. Pupils' achievement in relation to standards on entry is good. Most pupils throughout the school work at a level in line with their age and level of attainment. Below average standards of literacy and numeracy have less of a negative impact on pupils' performance in physical education. Nevertheless, the department puts importance on developing the pupils' literacy skills. Staff emphasise key words. The promotion of numeracy skills is not as well developed. The use of video and a digital camera in gymnastic lessons is giving the students an ideal opportunity to evaluate their performance and gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of technical performance. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. The department uses teaching and learning styles appropriate to pupils of different levels of

attainment. Activities are generally matched to pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils are stretched by more demanding tasks. This was very evident in the Year 10 netball lesson. The department has a limited range of strategies for working with students who have low levels of English language acquisition.

187. Pupils are encouraged to learn well by the good teaching they receive. In a very high proportion of the lessons seen teaching was good or better. The high quality of teaching has a good impact on the pace and productivity in lessons. It enhances the learning environment and promotes pupil success. All specialist teachers are secure in their knowledge of their subject. All teachers produce enjoyable lessons, which promote high levels of enthusiasm. Teachers plan their lessons well. Learning objectives are shared with pupils. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning. Very good examples of teaching and learning were seen in lessons on hockey and basketball where teachers gave very clear explanations and high quality demonstrations which, coupled with an appropriate balance of short activities to develop skills and longer game situations where pupils had the opportunity to apply their skills, resulted in good levels of achievement. Occasionally, when class management is less than good, some immature behaviour amongst a few students inhibits learning. The majority of students are hard working, enthusiastic and well motivated. There are extremely high levels of participation, although on a few occasions attendance at lessons was below national averages, particularly at Key Stage 4.
188. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is exciting and stimulating, capturing the pupils' interest and expanding their physical and intellectual abilities. Extra curricular provision is good. Students have opportunities to participate in clubs, competitive team games and individual competitions. Many students gain representative honours. Assessment procedures are good and are used to show how students are progressing. Students know of the National Curriculum level that they are achieving, but the department is not developing the students' understanding of the levels in order that they can set themselves targets in order to achieve higher levels of attainment. The department is not analysing the attainment of students of different ethnic groups. The amount of physical activity that the students participate in is only half of that recommended nationally.
189. The physical education department is well managed. The staff form a strong and committed team. Departmental documentation is very comprehensive. The department contributes significantly to the ethos of the school. Excellent visual displays enhance the excellent facilities which support the good provision provided by the department. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good; teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Standards are above average.
- There is very strong commitment to raising standards for all students at examination.
- The management of the subject is very good.
- The subject makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development.

### Areas for improvement

- To extend opportunities for the use of ICT.
- To build on the successful assessment arrangements in Years 7 to 9 by improving them in Years 10 and 11.

190. In 2002 the school adopted nationally produced assessments to judge the standards attained by pupils and found that more than half achieved expected levels. No national comparisons are available. By the end of year 9, inspection evidence indicates that pupils reach levels in line with the expectations of Coventry's Agreed Syllabus for religious education. All pupils gain an elementary understanding of aspects of world faiths such as Judaism and Sikhism. They understand the importance of symbolism and life cycle ceremonies such as initiation ceremonies or marriage. A strength of the subject is the stress on improving standards of literacy to help pupils express themselves with clarity. The success of this was seen in some very good dialogue between a 'believer' and a 'non-believer' about the existence of God. Good oral presentations feature in many lessons which raises standards of speaking and listening and instils confidence in the pupils. Good standards of personal expression are achieved. By the end of Year 9 pupils discuss sensitive issues with respect for differing opinions and faiths. A good understanding of the way belief influences action in people of all faiths and no faith is acquired. They consider aspects of justice world wide and develop respect for differing customs and cultures.

191. In 2002, thirteen pupils took the full course option in GCSE. The girls, of diverse ethnic and faith heritages, attained results above the national average. Very large numbers took the GCSE short course in the subject. Results were positive but there are no national figures with which to compare them. Above average standards by the end of Year 11 were seen during the inspection in all areas. Coursework on relevant issues such as 'Religion and the media' is of a good standard. For example, a consideration of a case in 'Eastenders' where a character assisted the suicide of her terminally ill friend showed good exploration of the issues. A full analysis and evaluation of the different perspectives involved was made and the complexities of balancing religious and emotional perspectives were considered. In lessons on crime and punishment, pupils can distinguish between sin and crime and know, for example that adultery is a sin but not a crime for Christians but for many Muslims it is both. Pupils achieve a good appreciation of the relationship between religion and social responsibilities, and how various faiths regard the environment and the responsibility to act as stewards. They acquire a good understanding of issues of peace and conflict. By the end of Year 11 pupils have developed good skills of discussion and debate. They listen to each other and to their teachers respectfully.

192. Pupils enter the school with widely varying backgrounds in the subject. All have studied the requirements of the Coventry Agreed Syllabus but standards on entry have been well below average in literacy, which affect attainment in religious education.



Achievement is good as pupils of all ages develop their moral understanding and spiritual awareness by reflection on issues which affect all societies and cultures. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well.

193. Teaching is good overall with a high proportion of lessons that are very good, and some that are excellent. In all lessons clear objectives and well paced introductions help pupils to focus quickly. Probing questions lead pupils to give good, extended answers; for example, the teacher says 'can you take that further?' In all lessons there is a very good balance between speaking, listening, reading and writing activities, always around appropriate themes. The moving testimony of a young, disabled man on the impact of a pilgrimage to Lourdes deepened pupils' religious understanding. Another helped pupils to understand the impact of capital punishment on the families of victim and perpetrator. A significant strength is the way pupils are taught to do individual, personal reflective writing in lessons. There is often a rapt silence as pupils think through their personal responses in a journal type activity, which deepens spiritual understanding. Teachers respect and value pupils' contributions and pupils model this, respecting and valuing each other's. Class management is very good. Teachers know when to animate and energise pupils by lively and persuasive presentations and when to radiate calm and quiet to allow a peaceful atmosphere to quell potentially restive pupils. Help is given unobtrusively. Well focused pair and group work builds knowledge so that pupils learn to speculate and debate successfully. All pupils know that they have high expectations placed upon them and respond with high expectations of themselves and others.
194. The subject is at an early stage of incorporating ICT in teaching and learning. With the assistance of the librarian, the newly appointed head of department has piloted a research module which uses computers for research and retrieval of information as well as book searches and identified web sites. Pupils' progress is monitored well in Years 7 to 9 so that teachers know which groups are doing best and least well and can tailor curriculum experiences to suit. The department has identified white European boys as performing least well and is adopting strategies to improve their achievements. The arrangements are not so strong in Years 10 and 11. The subject makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. It gives all a real sense of the sacred. The diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds of pupils are a great enrichment to learning because pupils are able to speak to each other from their own authentic faith perspectives. Great tolerance is learned.
195. The subject makes a very good contribution to citizenship through its consideration of different societies, faiths and cultures.
196. Leadership and management are very good. A good scheme of work fulfils the requirements of the LEA Agreed Syllabus for pupils of all ages and guides detailed planning. Teaching and learning are monitored well with points for development assigned to the observed teachers. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. This is a good department serving its pupils well.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002. There is no national data available yet for comparison.

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	19	79	N/a	26	N/a	4.4	N/a
Chemistry	14	79	N/a	21	N/a	4.1	N/a
Biology	20	90	N/a	10	N/a	4.9	N/a
Physics	16	81	N/a	31	N/a	4.8	N/a
Business Studies	33	97	N/a	9	N/a	4.0	N/a
Business VQ	6	100	N/a	0	N/a	4.9	N/a
ICT	16	63	N/a	13	N/a	3.3	N/a
IT VQ	19	95	N/a	33	N/a	5.9	N/a
Physical education	3	100	N/a	0	N/a	3.3	N/a
Health and social care VQ	5	100	N/a	0	N/a	3.6	N/a
Art	5	40	N/a	20	N/a	2.4	N/a
Media Studies	2	100	N/a	0	N/a	5.0	N/a
History	26	96	N/a	27	N/a	5.0	N/a
Sociology	18	56	N/a	5	N/a	1.9	N/a
Psychology	39	77	N/a	18	N/a	3.5	N/a
English Literature	26	56	N/a	58	N/a	7.2	N/a
Spanish	6	33	N/a	0	N/a	0.7	N/a
General Studies	89	89	N/a	36	N/a	5.6	N/a

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	14	93	N/a	43	N/a	5.7	N/a
Chemistry	16	94	N/a	32	N/a	5.4	N/a
Biology	14	100	N/a	21	N/a	5.1	N/a
Physics	10	100	N/a	80	N/a	8.4	N/a
Business Studies	9	75	N/a	0	N/a	5.1	N/a
Business VQ	3	100	N/a	33	N/a	6.3	N/a
ICT	11	82	N/a	9	N/a	3.3	N/a
ICT VQ	11	100	N/a	13	N/a	5.9	N/a
Art and Design	4	75	N/a	25	N/a	4.5	N/a
Media Studies	2	100	N/a	50	N/a	8.0	N/a
Geography	3	100	N/a	66	N/a	8.0	N/a
History	21	90	N/a	23	N/a	4.2	N/a
Sociology	9	89	N/a	0	N/a	3.3	N/a
Psychology	22	100	N/a	18	N/a	4.6	N/a
English Literature	19	100	N/a	32	N/a	6.2	N/a
French	1	100	N/a	0	N/a	4.0	N/a
Gujerati	1	100	N/a	100	N/a	10	N/a

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS**

### **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES**

Mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics were inspected.

#### **Mathematics**

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

#### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students are well motivated and work hard.
- Provision for sixth form teaching is well managed and shared effectively between a number of teachers.

#### Areas for improvement

- Increase the use of information and communication technology.
- Encourage students to make more use of independent learning.

197. The GCE A level examination results in 2001 were in line with the national average. Three quarters of students achieved a grade and well over a third achieved grade A or B. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students. In 2002 the results improved. Fewer students took the examination but nearly all achieved a grade and a slightly higher proportion achieved an A or B grade. In the AS level examination in 2002, over three-quarters of students achieved a grade and one quarter achieved an A or B grade.
198. Standards of work seen in the inspection in the sixth form during the inspection are above average and reflect the standards required for the higher examination grades, the improvement from last year due to developments within the subject. In year 13 students' good algebraic skills enable them to cope with the demands of the differentiation and integration parts of the course which form a considerable part of the pure mathematics course. The clarity of diagrams in mechanics is good and promotes understanding. In year 12 students' work indicates they have been well prepared for their mathematical methods examination in January. They understand well the early stages of differentiation and integration. In their statistics work they are developing methods of answering probability questions. Male and female students do equally well.
199. The standards of students' work as indicated by their examination results and by work seen during the inspection are better than predicted from students' prior attainment and achievement is good. Students who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
200. Teaching is good and in some lessons very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, their planning is good and the pace at which the work is undertaken is well matched to the needs of the students. They question students well and students answer questions confidently with a good level of understanding. Teachers give clear explanations and make good use of relevant examples where appropriate. For example, in a year 13 mechanics lesson, the students' understanding of contact forces was helped by the demonstration of a wallet moving along the register cover. The students were then able to draw a force diagram for a sledge moving up a slope. In a year 12 lesson the students were challenged by the calculation of numerical approximations to the gradient, at particular points on a curve. Because of the clear explanation and good support by the teacher when the students were working on the questions they were able to understand this type of question. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the use of a limited range of teaching strategies made the lesson less interesting and challenging.
201. Relationships between the students and with the teachers are very good. The students work hard, are committed to achieving high standards and co-operate with their teachers. They find the course interesting and challenging. Much of the written work demanded of students is in the form of questions that test their understanding. Homework and tests are set regularly and marked in a sufficiently detailed way as to help the students make progress in their understanding. They are aware of their progress and predicted grades and recognise and appreciate the support given by the teachers. Teachers know individual students' strengths and weaknesses well.
202. The curriculum for sixth form mathematics is appropriate and meets the needs of the students because of its interesting and relevant nature. Some students use graphical calculators confidently but no other use of information and communication technology was seen. The sixth form work is well managed. Staff co-operate in the planning and work well together under the good leadership of the new head of department.

203. Since the last inspection A level results have improved in relation to national averages. Monitoring of teaching is now taking place although due to the recent appointment of the head of department it is in the early stages of development.

## Chemistry

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

### Strengths

- Students achieve well in the sixth form and achieve results that are broadly in line with the national average.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress are good.
- Student recruitment and retention rates are good.
- Students have very good communication skills. They discuss their work with confidence and fluency.

### Areas for improvement

- Develop the use of computers in teaching and learning.
- Use a wider range of teaching styles to ensure that all students are always fully engaged.
- Create opportunities for curriculum enrichment via links with higher education institutions and industry.

204. The vast majority of students achieved a pass grade in the 2001 AS level examinations and almost one-quarter achieved the highest A or B grades. The results generally reflected students' prior attainment at GCSE level. In the 2001 A level examinations the results were broadly in line with the national average, and one-third gained A or B grades. Unconfirmed results for the 2002 examinations are similar to those in 2001. Since the previous inspection satisfactory results have been maintained and have contributed significantly to the school's overall A level performance.

205. The standards of work seen during the inspection were generally above the expected standards in both the AS and A2 levels. Standards are improving as the new AS level course in Year 12 is proving a very sound foundation for students to achieve well in Year 13. Students in Year 12 have generally made a successful transition from GCSE level work and are achieving satisfactorily. They are gaining in confidence as their knowledge base grows. They successfully apply their knowledge to new situations, such as calculating enthalpy changes from standard data provided. Year 13 student, including those who speak English as an additional language, are achieving well and are very confident in discussing all aspects of their work. They have very good speaking skills and use scientific language very well. They have a secure background knowledge of chemical equilibria and organic molecular structures and are well able to link ideas on acids and bases to organic reaction mechanisms. Students have good practical skills and work carefully and accurately with due attention to safety. Numeracy skills are used confidently in calculating equilibrium constants and pH values.

206. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well prepared with clear learning objectives and tasks designed to challenge students at an appropriate level. Lessons generally proceed at a good pace, although occasionally a lack of drive in the delivery fails to engage fully all the students. Practical work is well organised and supervised. Teachers give good support to students during set tasks, and make good use of

plenary sessions to review the learning objectives. Students enjoy their courses and respond well to the level of challenge in the course and the work set.

207. The subject is well led. There is a clear commitment to high standards and the recent results and current recruitment to the subject reflect this. Curriculum planning is thorough and practical work is well integrated into the teaching. Computers are still under-used in teaching and learning, restricting the development of teaching styles and students' independent learning. Students' progress is well monitored. They are regularly assessed and informed of their progress in reaching set targets although this could be thorough on occasions.
208. Since the last inspection the good standards have been maintained but the department still makes insufficient use of information and communication technology.

## Biology

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

### Strengths

- The good subject knowledge of the teachers giving the potential for good learning.
- Some very good teaching leading to very good learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Provide more consistently good teaching.
- Develop university links and a programme of visits.

209. Standards in the GCE AS examination in 2001 were in line with national expectations. They were similar in 2002 and almost all students attained a pass grade, although the proportion of students gaining grades A and B was lower than for most subjects in the school. Students who took the A2 examination in 2002 attained standards a little higher than those in 2001, when standards were just below the national average. No students failed to gain grades in the range A to E. The performance of male and female students were similar. There has been no significant trend in standards over the last few years.
210. Lesson observations and analysis of student's work show that their standards are average. Students in Year 12 have built on their GCSE knowledge and skills to a satisfactory degree. This was evidenced by students who gave well-researched presentations on the structure and function of gas exchange surfaces in plants, fish and mammals. In Year 13 pupils could accurately define a range of terms relating to genetic variation and could appropriately explain their role and impact. Students, including those who speak English as an additional language, demonstrate satisfactory achievement in the sixth form in relation to their GCSE results.
211. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and it enables the students to learn satisfactorily. However, it ranges from very good to barely satisfactory. In the best lessons students are continually challenged to think and to reason, they are fully involved with the formulation and development of ideas. They are stimulated to research and to make presentations to the rest of the class. Where teaching is less successful students are only questioned about what they have learned and then sometimes presented with an illogical assemblage of facts and activities that do not make the best use of their time and intellect. All teachers have a good knowledge of the subject giving the potential for good learning. There are warm relationships and teachers are always willing to help students with problems in their own time, if asked;

they also identify to individuals areas that they feel will need reinforcement. Suitable and challenging homework is often set, which requires research and extends knowledge. Marking is variable: the best gives an indication of AS/A2 grades, corrects mistakes and offers suggestions for improvement. Less good marking uses little more than ticks and blandishments.

212. The numbers opting for biology in the sixth form are variable, but healthy, and show a rising trend necessitating two sets in each year group. The retention rate is good: almost all students who set out on the AS and A2 courses complete them. Those who do not, tend to repeat the year. There is a good curriculum with field study built in but it is not enhanced by visits to places of biological interest or by links with universities. There are good systems of assessment and students are aware how their standards relate to AS/A2 grades, although feedback is not always detailed enough.
213. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Staffing is good in so far as all staff have good subject knowledge, but staffing difficulties have had an impact on standards. Resources are satisfactory, but there is a shortage of computer hardware, there is limited Internet access and the library contains few sixth form books other than textbooks. Whilst the accommodation is good, with refurbished laboratories, some lessons have to be taught outside the department.
214. Standards in 2002 were lower than at the last inspection, but this is not significant as they vary greatly from year to year.

## Physics

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Standards are improving and recruitment to the subject is buoyant.
- Procedures for monitoring students' progress are very good.
- Students have very impressive skills in oral contributions to lessons and in discussions about their work.

### Areas for improvement

- Increase the opportunities for enriching students' learning through contacts with higher education institutions and industry.

215. In the 2001 AS level examinations the vast majority of students gained a pass grade and only two students failed to finish the course. In the A level examinations all the students obtained pass grades that were well in line with their predicted grade, and one-third gained A or B grades. Their average points score was in line with the national average. The results were the best since the previous inspection and made a significant contribution to the school's overall A level performance. Unconfirmed results for the 2002 examinations indicated a considerable improvement at both levels, but particularly at A level, where again all students gained a pass grade and a high proportion obtained A or B grades.
216. Standards of work seen during the inspection were generally above average in both Years 12 and 13. Students have good knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, and are impressive in their ability to coherently discuss their work using appropriate scientific language. They are well able to apply their knowledge to new situations. Year 12 students confidently developed their knowledge of fundamental

particles to predict the results of possible quark combinations. Year 13 students have a good understanding of simple harmonic motion and resonance, and link their knowledge well to everyday experiences such as damping washing machine vibrations and understanding how the Tacoma Bridge disaster occurred. All students, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in both the AS and A level courses in relation to their attainment at GCSE level.

217. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are impressive in their delivery of the course content and in responding to demanding questions from students. Lessons are very well prepared with a variety of appropriate activities, such as producing a chart to show how a fluorescent lighting tube operates, and by explaining the physical processes involved. Teachers have very high expectations and present students with challenging tasks. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace with a high level of student involvement that leads to very good learning. Relationships are very good and students are enthusiastic and very responsive in lessons.

218. The subject is very well led. There is a very clear commitment to achieving high standards and recruitment to both courses is buoyant. Retention rates are good and the vast majority of students achieve grades at least in line with their predicted grade. Curriculum planning is very good with thorough and very comprehensive coverage of the examination syllabus requirements. The course offers good opportunities for students to learn of the contribution of many famous physicists, such as Pauli, Newton, Galileo and Heisenberg to the development of modern physics. The progress of students through Years 12 and 13 is very well monitored, with regular testing of their attainment, and students are kept fully informed of their progress in reaching their set targets.

219. Since the last inspection the already good provision has improved still further.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

220. These subjects were not inspected in full but an AS lesson of design technology was sampled. Teaching was good and standards were average.

## **BUSINESS**

221. Business education was inspected.

### **Business education**

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

#### **Strengths**

- The quality of teaching is very good, resulting in enthusiastic and committed students.
- Assessment and feedback to students is good.
- There is a wide range of courses offered at post-16 and increased recruitment to the courses as a result of the recent improvement in standards at GCSE.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Increase access to computers in school.
- Increase specialist accommodation to avoid lengthy transfers between teaching rooms.



222. Attainment at advanced level in 2001 was above the national average for grades A to E, although it was well below average for grades A and B. Attainment based on average points score was below the national average. This represents an improvement since 1999. In 2002 there was an improvement in the proportion of A and B grades, but a slight fall in the overall pass rate.
223. AS level results in 2001 were below national expectations for grades A and B, but at one hundred per cent, above expectations for grades A to E. From 2001 to 2002 there was a considerable increase in the number of students from 9 to 33 and the proportion of grades A and B declined but only one student failed to obtain a grade.
224. In GNVQ there have been one or two distinction grades awarded each year, and overall pass rates and student retention rates have mostly been good. Group numbers have tended to be in single figures, and standards above average. In the final GNVQ advanced in 2001 standards were above average as all students gained merit or distinction. Comparisons on the basis of average points score were well above the national average. In the new AVCE course in 2002, a small mixed double-award and single-award group of 5 students achieved grades between B, C and D.
225. In the intermediate course there was no group in 2001. In previous years the school had achieved a hundred per cent pass rate, although no students achieved distinction grade. In 2002, 15 out of 17 students completed the course, with two students gaining distinction, seven gaining merit and six pass grades.
226. There has been significant improvement in standards at GCSE in the past two years, resulting in a rise in the numbers recruited to business courses in the sixth form. Students with GCSE business qualification form at least half of those recruited and have raised the calibre of the groups. Additionally many students come into AVCE via the GNVQ intermediate course. Retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 are good.
227. Boys outnumber girls although girls have tended to achieve better results. Given the nature of the school's intake to the sixth form, the pass rates achieved by the business students represent good progress; this is borne out by the value-added data in the examination analyses. The subject has a positive impact on the school's overall performance.
228. Evidence from the inspection shows that all students on the one-year GNVQ intermediate business course are fulfilling the course criteria and achieving well. They show good understanding of the subject and the course requirements, their presentation is good, their writing mostly coherent. Only the occasional omission of detail detracts from the overall quality of their work. There is good evidence of independent note-taking and research skills. Most of the students in the group are from minority ethnic backgrounds and some are pupils who have English as an additional language. These latter students are progressing well, as there are plenty of opportunities for individual guidance in lessons set aside for coursework preparation.
229. On the two-year AVCE course standards are high. Students have the opportunity to re-draft and re-submit their major written coursework assignments. Whereas their first submissions may have lacked illustrative detail in applying theory to practice, or suffered from crucial omissions, they are able to rectify these faults from feedback given by teachers. As the sequence of tasks within the assignment is graded, students can choose to submit at a lower level, then aim for higher achievement after discussion with the teacher. Most students in Year 13 are currently working at grade A in their coursework, the rest achieving at grades B and C. The overall target grades will be at least one grade lower when taking the externally-assessed units into

account. Year 12 students are showing good understanding of key words and technical terms and produce competent classwork and homework. They are still, however, in the process of learning how to illustrate business theory with sufficient detail from their case studies.

230. Students at AS and A2 level are fulfilling the requirements of the course and their standards are in line with expectations. They show good understanding of business theory, and an ability to express themselves clearly and precisely.
231. Teaching is very good overall, with all lessons observed good or better. All members of the departmental team are specialists with a detailed and profound knowledge of the subject. Students are aware of the objectives of the lessons, of the ultimate aim of each task, and of the criteria they need to meet to achieve success. During preparation of coursework, teachers were very effective in their role of facilitator, giving full and constructive feedback on work submitted so far, with every encouragement to students to discuss ways of improving their work. Planning in lessons is good. Varied activities serve to extend and consolidate knowledge, with special emphasis on retaining key vocabulary and technical terms. The best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, and students are fully involved in class exchanges or in individual and group work. Learning is enhanced by recall of prior knowledge, and relating the theory to relevant contexts. Teaching has its most profound impact on learning when students are constantly stretched and challenged. This was very evident in a finance lesson with the Year 13 AVCE group that was challenged to recall the previously acquired terms relating to the balance sheet, before tackling the new material concerning the profit and loss account. To consolidate all that knowledge at the end of the lesson, they were presented with a chart requiring them to link up each term with the relevant part of the financial report. Marking and feedback are very detailed and constructive, especially on major assignments, where teachers highlight precisely where each criterion has been fulfilled. Teachers also explain exactly why criteria are not fulfilled, give detailed advice on what is needed to rectify omissions, or to extend the work to obtain higher grades. Students with English as an additional language are well supported, and make good progress.
232. There is a very good rapport between students and with their teachers. Students clearly enjoy the subject, their enthusiasm and motivation is apparent, and they show a high degree of maturity, responsibility and independence in the preparation and completion of their work.
233. The curriculum is broad and relevant, and there is a wide range of courses to suit students' qualifications and needs. There are good links with industry, with two major manufacturing companies supporting units based on a case study of their organisation. However, there is very limited access to ICT facilities in school, most students having to rely on computers at home to draft and present their major assignments. The department closely monitors students' attainment and progress through the school-based systems, and is able to set effective targets. Students are constantly aware of their current attainment and progress through the system of re-drafting and discrete graded tasks previously mentioned. Students are also taking advantage of the greater opportunities to combine vocational courses with other advanced level subjects.
234. This is a strong department, which is well led and managed, with clear educational direction. A committed team has worked hard to raise standards in the last two years. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching occurs regularly, but staff have not yet begun to observe each other, to see and share good practice at first hand. Shortage of dedicated accommodation, and the necessity to make lengthy transfers between rooms in different parts of the school, put extra pressure on both teachers and

students. Although the department feels that this has no serious effect on post-16 teaching and learning, it does represent much time wasted over the year, and inhibits display of work and key vocabulary.

235. There has been good improvement since the last inspection: differentiated tasks have been built into major assessments, tasks overall encourage greater use of research skills, and students are showing a high level of independence.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

236. Information and communication technology was inspected.

### **Information and communication technology**

Overall, the quality of provision in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

#### **Strengths**

- Students are enthusiastic about ICT and keen to learn.
- Students continue to learn independently despite unsatisfactory teaching.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Improve the quality of teaching including classroom management.
- Improve the development and deployment of ICT staff and rooms.
- Review the range of courses offered to reduce the wide variety and make them more appropriate to students' prior experiences.

237. In 2001 standards in the GCE A level Information Technology were below the national average. Students entered for AS Computing or Information Technology attained results below national expectations as less than three quarters of the students gained pass grades. The standards of the year 13 students entered for the GNVQ course were above national averages with nearly half of them gaining a distinction and a little over half gaining a merit.

238. Standards in GCE A level in 2002 were below those of 2001. For the first time some students were entered for the Vocational A level courses. All students entered for the single award gained grades A-C and half of the students entered for the double award obtained grades in the range AA – CC.

239. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below expectations. Year 12 students are able to explain the structure of computer systems and use correctly a range of ICT terms. They use a variety of software packages to create presentations, but often do not use the more advanced features of the software. One year 13 group created web pages using appropriate Internet language. About half the students were enthusiastic enough to extend the activity beyond the set task to experiment with procedures and commands to enhance their web page. The other half, however, did not advance their programming skills through experimentation. Another group candidly discussed the ethical issues of using ICT showing insight and understanding but this was not within a framework that would lead them to further understanding.

240. Although there is some variation in standards of attainment from year to year between the academic and vocational courses, overall there has been a decline in standards since 2000. The achievement of students, including those who speak English as an additional language, is unsatisfactory as they are failing to realise their potential.

241. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory. Even where teaching is satisfactory or better and students do extend their knowledge and understanding of ICT, the general approach is pedestrian. Teachers prepare lessons with a structure that leads students through specific tasks. They give appropriate guidance, but do not always provide relevant worksheets. Tasks are based on the examination requirements and teachers encourage students to develop strategies to progress their own learning, for example, in a Year 13 group which followed a progressive task to use an Internet search to find websites that provided city break holidays. They identified the sites and evaluated the effectiveness of the presentation and content of those sites.
242. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory lessons are illogically structured with unchallenging tasks, teachers have low expectations of the students, the pace of lessons is slow and teachers do not provide guidance or assistance to students. Students' learning is inhibited rather than facilitated by the teaching. A year 13 group created a flat file database with a small number of fields and records – a task that they should have undertaken in year 10 or 11. A pupil gave the demonstration and the teacher did not assist or support individuals when working on the computer. Three students did not undertake the task and were not challenged. Students did not therefore adequately extend their knowledge and skills in ICT. Some teachers assess work in class individually and provide constructive comments on any written work presented. In other groups work is not always marked constructively nor returned in time to allow students to make appropriate corrections to their knowledge and skills. Relationships between half the teachers and students are unsatisfactory. Much of the progress that students do make is the result of their desire to learn, their enthusiasm for the subject and the good efforts they make to manage their own learning in spite of the inappropriate teaching.
243. While the technology resources available to students during lessons are satisfactory they do not have adequate access to computers outside of lessons so resources overall are unsatisfactory. The range of courses offered are not effectively delivered. Resources are dissipated and some students are on an inappropriate course. Staff deployment and timetabling of rooms are unsatisfactory. The school has held two reviews of teaching and learning and the second shows some improvement in quality. However, there is no formal departmental procedure for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Overall the management of post 16 ICT is unsatisfactory.
244. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have declined and technology resources are still inadequate.

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

245. None of these subjects were inspected but a lesson in art was sampled. The teaching was good but standards were below average.

## **HUMANITIES**

246. History and psychology were inspected and lessons in geography and religious studies were sampled. The teaching in geography was good, and standards attained are average. In religious studies the teaching was very good and standards attained were above average.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- There is a strong, very well led, teaching team so that teaching is always satisfactory, more usually good or very good. It is confident, energetic and well informed.
- Relationships are good. Teachers and students share an enthusiasm for the subject.
- Transferable skills, for example, essay writing, research skills and the development of intellectual curiosity are taught well.

### Areas for improvement

- Provide more access to information and communication technology.
- Provide more reference books.

247. After being in line with the national average in 1999 and 2000 in 2001 standards at A Level were below the national average. In 2002 students attained A Level standards above those predicted for them and above the standards for 2001.

248. Inspection evidence confirms that standards overall are in line with national expectations. Since a large proportion of history students have the minimum grades for entry to the Sixth Form this represents good achievement. Students who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Year 12 students studying the Peoples' Budget of 1909 read documents critically and ask pertinent questions. They are gaining an insight into the constitutional crisis and the political manoeuvring which lay behind it. Those studying Hitler's education policies are able to compare the beliefs of the Hitler Youth with the opposed views of other youth groups in well researched and well delivered presentations. Year 13 students are well informed and academically confident. A group studying parliamentary reform acts is gaining political insight from their analysis of the benefits and limitations of each act. They appreciate why the 1872 reform act was a substantial step towards democracy. They sometimes express themselves better orally than on paper. Presentations putting forward diametrically opposed views of Hitler's foreign policy are well argued and intellectually provocative. Students show a maturity of understanding and a very good grasp of detail. They find the research demands and the amount of information they are expected to deal with formidable. They recognise that cogent arguments can only be built on solid evidence. They are able to deal with academic uncertainty and are becoming familiar with academic controversy. They are able to comment on the conflicting views of professional historians and are developing a healthy scepticism.

249. This good progress is the result of good teaching. Teaching is always satisfactory and more usually good or very good. Students benefit from the different teaching techniques of individual teachers. Teaching is direct, energetic, up to date and distinguished by its clarity. Year 13 students preparing to write a complex essay involving comparisons were shown how to select and clarify the information required by constructing a chart. Students always understand what is expected of them. Expectations are high. The best lessons are teacher led, but not teacher directed. Skilful questioning means that the students produce much of the factual information on which the lesson is based. Teachers are particularly skilful in involving the whole class in lessons and lessons become a corporate venture. The reinforcement of learning is good although occasionally there is too much repetition and sometimes students are not intellectually stretched because the work is not difficult enough. Class management and the planning of lessons are very good. Careful guidance and encouragement give students the confidence to think independently. Teachers are

generous with their time and are always available to give extra help and advice. Marking is accurate and constructive.

250. Students enjoy the course. Numbers have fluctuated but, at present, recruitment is healthy. All A/S Level students continue to A Level. Some continue to degree level. Students cooperate well. They make joint presentations and share their research. Students' enjoyment of debate and controversy is patent. Relationships are very good. The differing groups react to teaching and learning in similar ways. There is a pleasant hardworking atmosphere in classes and much good humour. Students list with appreciation the skills which they believe their study of history has taught them – to analyse, to communicate, to plan, to see two sides of every argument and, always, to question. Access to ICT is still limited. There are not enough reference books.
251. The leadership and management of the department are very good. Well-qualified staff work as a team and are very supportive of each other. Planning and organisation are meticulous. Strategies to improve teaching and learning are clear and efficiently implemented. The history department is forward looking, progressive and receptive to change. Teachers are committed to raising the standards of all students in their care.
252. The department has maintained the high standards of the last inspection but there is still insufficient use made of information and communication technology.

## Psychology

The quality of provision for psychology is **good**.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Students' A-level attainment is above the national average.
- Students develop an informed and mature response to the subject.
- There are very good relationships between staff and students.

### Areas for improvement

- Increase students' access to information and communication technology (ICT).
- Incorporate the use of ICT into students' work.
- Increase the range of supportive reading material and other library resources.

253. A level results in psychology are above average. More than half the students gained the highest grades and only a small number achieved below grade C. In 2002 all students obtained a pass grade. In the AS examinations in 2001 all students achieved passes. The vast majority of students are female but the small numbers of male students perform in line with the rest of the group.
254. The standard of work of the current year 13 students is above average. Students, including those who speak English as an additional language, are achieving well in relation to their previous GCSE examination results. They deal confidently with the application of psychological theory to practical situations and have a good understanding of the work of a range of psychologists. For example students' work, in small groups, on an exploration and analysis of scenes from the video of "1984" showed insight and understanding when applied to their work in Conditioning Theory. They write coherent and critical essays and answers to examination questions in which they express well-informed views.

255. In year 12 students' attainment is above average; they are achieving well and their progress in relation to their GCSE examination results is good. They demonstrate secure knowledge of the elements of psychology they have covered. This is demonstrated by their understanding of Freudian theory and classical conditioning. This understanding is aided by students' developing technical vocabulary, which is a significant element in their understanding.
256. The teaching of psychology is good. Teachers encourage pupils to interpret theory and apply it to practical situations. They emphasise the value of interpretation and application through ample opportunities for discussion and analysis in pairs, small groups and the whole class. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils and to help them build upon their ideas. Teachers' good subject knowledge allows them to provide students with sufficient knowledge to enable them to develop informed and mature responses. Students respond well to this approach, working hard and co-operatively with each other. They recognise the teachers' expertise and the mutual respect between students and staff makes a significant contribution to students' learning. Teachers plan well and use a wide range of interesting methods. For example, a year 12 group were intrigued by the use of a video of "The Jungle Book" to explain parental attachment theory. Similarly, a year 13 group responded well to a series of prepared grids and tables which enabled them to arrange their ideas well on conditioning theory. This careful planning and imaginative presentation is successful in maintaining students' attention in sessions, which due to timetable constraints are overly long.
257. Students' learning could be further improved by developing the use of computers for both research and presentation of work. Similarly, students' independent learning would be aided by the development of library resources. The assessment of students' work is of consistently good quality including effective student self-assessment of their own work.
258. Psychology is well managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the teaching strategies that are used. The provision of a classroom specifically for the subject has helped the development of the teaching.
259. Psychology was not inspected at the time of the last inspection.

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

English was inspected and a lesson in Spanish was sampled. In Spanish, the teaching was good and standards attained were average.

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

### Strengths

- Teaching of English literature is good overall and teachers have a secure command of the subject.
- Students' work is well marked and feedback given to them.
- Group discussions enhance students' learning and develop their independence.
- The leadership and management of English are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Continue to maintain and develop the trend of improvement in results.
- Share good practice among teachers.
- Develop curriculum enrichment activities.
- Continue supporting students in the analysis of language, critical interpretations of texts and development of style and flair in writing.

260. Standards achieved in GCE A-level examinations have fluctuated from 1999 to 2001 particularly in relation to higher grades A and B. In 2001 one fifth of students achieved grades A-B which was below the national average of one third. However, all students gained grades A-E which is higher than the national average. Although 2002 results are provisional at this stage, they show an improvement over 2001 results. Over half of the students gained grades A-B in AS-level examination and one third obtained grades A-B in the A level examination whilst the pass rate in both examinations was 100 per cent.
261. Work seen during the inspection is broadly in line with the results achieved in 2002. Above average attaining students write with knowledge and understanding, produce a good range of presentable work, provide sufficient information on context, show a good focus upon the writer's technique and interpret texts with care. The work of average attaining students is generally presentable. Writing style is often lucid and coherent though at times it lacks precision. In some cases, careful analysis of the text's language and structure is needed and critical interpretation is developing. Low attaining students share some of these features. Their work shows a developing style and content and there are occasional spelling errors. These students need to choose more appropriate vocabulary at times, develop their arguments and strengthen their textual analysis. Whilst this is the general position, in Year 12, most students can write in a lucid and intelligent manner. They show an understanding of literary texts but need to focus on language analysis and show how the author's choice of form, structure and language shapes meaning. In Year 13, although the writing style is mature and subtly perceptive and students show an understanding of symbols and imagery and independent judgements, they need to develop analysis of quotations and read into the motives of characters. Overall, all students show an understanding of literary genres.
262. There is no consistent gender difference in results and minority ethnic pupils usually perform better than their peers. Students interviewed during the inspection expressed satisfaction with the course. They said that since starting the course they had developed their vocabulary and a passion for the study of literature. Lesson observations support these views, as growing interest and motivation were evident. The value added analysis for 2001 shows that the school adds good value to students' education.
263. The quality of teaching English literature is good overall. Teachers plan their lessons with care and show a secure knowledge of the subject. Teachers attempt to broaden students' knowledge and develop their understanding of literary works and concepts.



Links between texts are explored, e.g. between Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* and Angela Carter's *Bloody Chamber* and contrasting images are juxtaposed. In a lesson on *King Lear*, the teacher helped students understand major themes and characterisation. Following the teacher's exposition, students discussed key aspects of the play in groups and reported back to the class. Teacher-student interaction was good and key terms such as 'redemption' were explained. This kind of lesson develops students' understanding and independence. The pace of the lesson was brisk. Students listened attentively and developed understanding of the text and also their skills of oracy and literacy. This kind of practice needs to be shared widely within the department with a view to ensuring that there is a variety of activities within the lesson, student involvement is maximised and lessons proceed at a good pace. Marking of students' work is thorough. Strengths of students' work are outlined and suggestions made for improvement. Although computers were not seen in use during lesson observations, it is understood that students use them for research and for word processing.

264. The department has made a start with curriculum enrichment activities. Film sharing and theatre visits take place and a book event has been organised with the library. However, the scope of these activities needs to be widened to include visits to places of literary heritage with a view to extending students' ideas and developing their written expression.
265. Teachers are rigorously implementing the department's assessment policy. Students are fully made aware of assessment objectives and how they are applied.
266. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. The teaching accommodation for English literature is well set up and very pleasant. Learning resources are adequate though it would be to the advantage of the department to have more resources in the library.
267. The leadership and management of English are good. Teachers co-operate and share resources. The team has produced good quality documentation, for example, the departmental handbook. All teachers are specialists with good subject knowledge. They keep themselves up to date by attending professional development courses. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching takes place both formally and informally. The team is forward-looking and has the capacity to improve further.
268. The school has continued to maintain the good standards of the last inspection.