

INSPECTION REPORT

**TILE HILL WOOD SCHOOL AND LANGUAGE
COLLEGE**

Tile Hill, Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103735

Headteacher: Mrs R M Westbrook

Reporting inspector: Ms J McKenna
2485

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 January, 2003

Inspection number: 249676

Short 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:	Female
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Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Crighton
Date of previous inspection:	10 March, 1997

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2485	J McKenna	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9520	J Leigh	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?
17453	C Edney	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
30941	K Brammer	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	
31096	J Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12356	R Dickason	Team inspector	Physics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32147	A Wallis	Team inspector	Geography	
24887	Y Salmon	Team inspector	Spanish English as an additional language Language College Status	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tile Hill Wood School and Language College is an 11 to 18 comprehensive school in Coventry. It is a single sex girls' school, although, due to the joint sixth form provision established with a neighbouring boys' school in 2000, there is teaching of mixed groups in the sixth form. The school is bigger than average with 1349 pupils on roll, of whom 163 are in the sixth form, 45 in Year 13 and 118 in Year 12. The new arrangements, and the greater range of courses that it is possible to offer, are attracting more girls into in the sixth form. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than in most schools, at around 20 percent, with a wide range of ethnic groups represented. Around ten percent speak English as an additional language which is average, although none are at early stages of fluency. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average; the proportion with statements is below average. Pupils with specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties form the largest groups. The profile of pupils entering the school is very mixed, but socio-economic data indicates that it is average overall. The proportion entitled to free school meals is average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 is in line with the national average. The school became a Language College in 1998. It is popular and over subscribed. The sixth form is becoming increasingly well established. For the first time last year, over 50 percent of pupils stayed on into the sixth form. Attainment on entry into the sixth form is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching and the leadership and management of the school are excellent. A broad, rich curriculum and high quality support are provided. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their studies are very good. As a result of these factors, the standards attained by pupils by the age of 16 are well above average and pupils achieve very well. The school provides very good value for money. Students in the sixth form attain standards that are well above average and they achieve well.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well and attain high standards by the age of sixteen. Students in the sixth form achieve well and also attain high standards.
- Leadership and management of the school are excellent.
- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching.
- There is extremely good curricular and extra-curricular provision.
- The support for pupils' academic and personal development is of an exceptionally high quality.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their learning.
- The very effective provision for languages has an extremely good impact on pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards are not yet consistently high in all subjects across the school.
- Aspects of the joint sixth form provision require further development to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

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 1997 and received a positive report. There has been excellent improvement since then. All of the key issues identified have been very effectively tackled. There has been further development in all areas of school life. Teaching has improved, there is a broader curriculum which includes more vocational courses, the school has gained Language College Status and has gained awards for achievement and curriculum development. As a result, the standards attained by pupils have improved and are now well above average. There has been very good

improvement in the sixth form, with the joint provision being established since the last inspection. The numbers staying on into the sixth form are increasing and results are steadily improving.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	C	A	N/a		

Pupils achieve very well. Their attainment when they enter the school in Year 7 is broadly average. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, their results in national tests and teacher assessments were above average in all subjects. Results were higher, and well above average in English, and in modern foreign languages and information and communication technology (ICT). At the end of Year 11 in 2002, pupils' results at GCSE were well above the national average. The results compared very well with similar schools – they were in the top five percent of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards across Years 7 to 11 are rising faster than they are nationally. These results are impressive and represent very good achievement for pupils.

Results in all subjects at GCSE in 2002 apart from drama and graphics were either in line with or above the national average. Results in double award science were well above average and in English and mathematics were above average. Over the past few years pupils have generally performed very well in science, French, geography, history, music and GNVQ business and health and social care, and have performed well in German, Japanese, Spanish, religious education, business and food technology. In most other subjects results are generally at least average. However, pupils have not performed as well in graphics, electronics, drama, art and biology as they have in other subjects over recent years.

In 2001, results in A levels were above the average for girls nationally and well above the average for all students. Results in 2002 are higher than in 2001. There are no figures available for national comparison. There has been a steady rise in results over the past few years, and a corresponding rise in the value added to student's attainment in the sixth form, albeit with a slight dip in the latter in 2002. Students in the sixth form achieve well. There are some differences in standards between subjects, although the number of students in several has been very small. Subjects in which students have performed well over time are business, health and social care, mathematics, media studies, physics, chemistry, sociology and general studies.

The targets set by the school for pupil and student attainment are challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils recognise and value the high quality of education they receive. They enjoy school and respond well to the opportunities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the very large majority of pupils is impeccable both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between all groups of pupils and with staff are excellent. Pupils are mature, responsible and show consideration for others. Some do not show sufficient independence in their learning.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good for pupils in Years 7 to 11 and satisfactory for students in the sixth form.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good overall and is a strength of the school. It is good or better in over four out of every five lessons, and very good or excellent in over two out of every five. Good teaching was seen in most curriculum areas including English, mathematics and science. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This consistent, high quality teaching makes a major contribution to how well pupils learn and their very good achievement.

A considerable strength is the very good subject knowledge that teachers have, which they use to ensure pupils acquire a good knowledge base and a deep understanding. Teachers plan lessons very well – the common format helps to promote consistency in this regard. They use a good variety of methods and strategies to motivate and engage pupils and meet the needs of different groups. Their delivery is confident and purposeful, resulting in a fast and productive pace to learning. ICT is well used and literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils both in terms of work and behaviour. Pupils work extremely hard to meet them. They know that teachers have a strong commitment to enabling them to succeed and appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. Another strength is teachers' extremely thorough assessing of pupils and marking of their work and the detailed feedback they give pupils on how to improve. This attention to detail results in pupils having a very good understanding of their strengths and the areas they need to develop, and helps them to make very good progress in their learning. Occasionally, pupils show an over-reliance on teachers and a lack of independence in their work.

A high proportion of teaching in the sixth form is good or better and many lessons have very good features. Strengths are similar to those for younger pupils, and include teachers' subject knowledge, lesson planning and use of time, and their very good assessment and feedback to students on how to improve their work and meet the requirements of the course. Students strive to do their best. They have a strong desire to meet their teachers' high expectations. They concentrate well and work hard in lessons and at home. Many students, however, although they do what is asked of them, do not yet show enough independence in their studies and rely too much on teacher direction for aspects of their work rather than taking responsibility for their own learning. The teaching does not yet promote these skills successfully enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular opportunities are extremely good with a broad range of courses available to meet a wide range of needs. Impressive opportunities are provided for languages. Provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Pupils' needs are well diagnosed and met through detailed planning and extremely good support from teachers and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good in-class support is provided and pupils are well integrated into the school community. Pupils receive extremely good personal and cultural support from teachers who speak the same languages.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. There is a spiritual awareness policy in place. As a result of the emphasis given to languages and the international dimension, the provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know pupils very well and provide high quality, carefully targeted support and guidance for them. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the action taken to promote improvement are very good.

The school works well with parents; it values their involvement and support and communicates well with them.

The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship, although good attention is paid to promoting spiritual development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is excellent. The headteacher has an absolute commitment to providing the very best education for pupils and provides extremely clear and focussed direction. She is very well supported in this by senior managers and other staff. The school is very effectively managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play a full role in the strategic management of the school and monitoring its effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Evaluation and monitoring procedures are extremely rigorous and comprehensive. Strengths and areas for development are well known with effective action taken to bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are very well targeted on ensuring the best possible education. The principles of best values are applied very well to decisions on spending, resulting in more-cost effective provision.

Staffing and staff development are very good. Accommodation and learning resources are good, although space for private study for sixth form students is limited, as is access to ICT during such study.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How hard the school expects pupils to work.• The quality of teaching.• The progress that pupils make.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How closely the school works with parents.• Information given about pupils' progress.• The amount of homework given to pupils.

The positive views held by parents are fully justified. Pupils are expected to work very hard, pupils are very well taught and make very good progress by the end of Year 11. Evidence does not support the less positive views expressed. The school communicates well with parents, information given to them about their children's progress is very good, and appropriate amounts of good quality homework are given.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

TILE HILL WOOD SCHOOL AND LANGUAGE COLLEGE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Although in Years 7 to 11 the school is girls only, there is teaching of mixed groups in the sixth form, due to the joint provision established with a neighbouring boys' school in 2000. Since then, the sixth form has grown. In the current Year 13 there are 45 girls on roll, while in the current Year 12 there are 118. For the first time this year, over 50 percent of girls stayed on into the sixth form. Sixty percent of those finishing Year 12 stayed on into Year 13. The proportion of girls entitled to free school meals in the sixth form is three times the national average. The proportion of girls of Asian heritage is greater than in the school as a whole. The school offers a wide range of A and AS level courses, as well as some vocational courses. Some girls are taught entirely at Tile Hill Wood, others partly or mainly at the other school. If a student wishes to study a subject that neither school offers, alternative provision at another school in the area is arranged where possible. The curriculum also includes a tutorial programme and key skills. The criteria for admission onto courses in the sixth form are similar to those in most schools, and the attainment of students on entry is average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an effective, cost-effective sixth form. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Joint provision with the neighbouring boys' school has been established, and a broader, rich curriculum is offered. Teaching is good with many very good features and there is very good support for students. Students have very positive attitudes toward their studies. Leadership and management are excellent, with good liaison with the partner school at all levels. As a result, standards are well above average and students achieve well.

Strengths

- Students' achievement is good.
- The joint arrangements with the partner school have broadened the curriculum offered.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent.
- Teaching is good with many very good features.
- There is high quality support and guidance for students.
- The attitudes of the large majority of students to school and their studies are positive.

What could be improved

- The effectiveness and efficiency of some aspects of the joint sixth form arrangements.
- Students' attendance and punctuality.
- The accommodation for private study and the access to ICT for independent learning.
- The provision of one year courses to meet the needs of those students who do not gain the qualifications necessary to study for AS and A level courses.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Good teaching and effective academic support for students results in good achievement.
Physics	Very good. Students achieve very well due to very effective leadership and management, teaching and assessment.
ICT	Good. Good teaching, support for students and resources mean that students achieve well.
Health and social care	Very good. Very good teaching, strong leadership and management and very good monitoring of students' progress result in students achieving very well.
Theatre studies	Satisfactory. This is a new course. Teaching and the standards being achieved by students are satisfactory.
Geography	Good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and well planned lessons means students achieve well.
Psychology	Good. Good teaching and the positive attitudes of students lead to good achievement.
English language and literature combined course	Good. Students' achievement is good because of good teaching and their own positive attitudes to the subject.
Spanish	Very good. Teachers' have excellent language competence, use ICT expertly and give extremely good support to pupils. Students' achievement is satisfactory in Year 13, but very good in Year 12.

Lessons were sampled in biology, chemistry, art, music, history, German, Italian and Japanese. Teaching and learning were excellent in Italian, very good in history and Japanese, good in biology, art and music and satisfactory in chemistry and German. Tutorials and general studies were also sampled, where the teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students receive very good information and advice about the sixth form and are helped to choose courses and settle in very well. They continue to receive very good advice and support, although students would like more access to careers advice. Their academic attainment and progress is assessed thoroughly with very good feedback given and action taken to promote improvement. Opportunities for informal dialogue with teachers about work are fewer for those pupils taught at the partner school.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Much hard work takes place to ensure the joint arrangements with the partner school are effective, involving co-ordination and liaison between staff from the two schools from headteacher to individual class teachers. The head of sixth form does a very good job of managing the sixth form on a day to day basis. There are high expectations of students and their progress is monitored closely, with considerable efforts made to meet their academic and personal needs. Some constraints and issues result from the joint arrangements but these are known about and are being tackled.

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"> • How the school helped them to settle into the sixth form. • How accessible teachers are if they have difficulties. • That the courses chosen suit their talents. • That they are taught well and challenged to do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of careers advice available. • How well informed they are about their progress. • The extent to which they are treated as responsible young adults. • The range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

The positive views held by students are fully justified. Induction arrangements for students entering the sixth form are very good and strong efforts are made to ensure that students choose appropriate courses. Teachers are readily available to students in and out of lessons to give advice and support on academic and personal matters. Teaching is of a high quality and students are helped to achieve well.

Students report that quality of careers advice is good, but that it is not as readily available as they would like. Arrangements for keeping students well-informed about their progress are very good. Formal arrangements are identical at both schools, but inevitably, there are fewer opportunities for informal dialogue with teachers outside of the classroom when students are taught at the partner school. Students are generally treated like young adults, although there are occasions when teachers need to remind students of their responsibilities, such as to arrive at lessons on time and there are occasions when teachers direct pupils rather than letting them take responsibility for aspects of their learning. The range of enrichment activities on offer in the sixth form is very good.

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

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve very well and attain high standards by the age of sixteen. Students in the sixth form achieve well and also attain high standards.

1. Pupils at Tile Hill Wood School and Language College achieve very well. Their attainment when they enter the school in Year 7 is broadly average. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, their results in national tests and teacher assessments were above average in all subjects. Results were higher, and well above average in English, and in languages and ICT. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, pupils' results at GCSE were well above the national average. The results compared very well with similar schools. They were in the top five percent of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards across Years 7 to 11 are rising faster than they are nationally. These results are impressive and represent very good achievement for pupils.
2. Results in all subjects at GCSE in 2002 apart from drama and graphics were either in line with or above the national average. Results in French, German, double award science, ICT and religious education and in the GNVQ courses in health and social care and business were particularly high. Results in English and mathematics were above average. Over the past few years pupils have generally performed very well in science, French, geography, history, music and GNVQ business and health and social care, and have performed well in German, Japanese, Spanish, religious education, business and food technology, where results have been above average. In most other subjects results are generally at least average. However, pupils have not performed as well in graphics, electronics, drama, art and biology as they have in other subjects over recent years.
3. The standard of work seen on inspection in the core subjects generally matches the standards indicated by these results. In English, standards are above average overall. All creative writing, for example, shows good imagination and most has good technical accuracy. That produced by higher attaining pupils is distinguished by the use of wide vocabulary and original imagery; this is less evident with lower attaining pupils, whose ideas tend to be under-developed. Higher attaining pupils show thoughtful and perceptive responses to literature. Lower attaining pupils' responses are more formulaic. However, pupils' work in Year 11 generally indicates a lack of confidence and independence to go beyond the framework provided for them. An accelerated group has just been introduced in the current Year 10, to build on the success of recent strategies adopted in Key Stage 3 which have raised the standards attained, especially by higher attaining pupils. This is proving to be effective, and the standards being attained by pupils in these groups are very high. Challenging texts are being used successfully to develop pupils' higher order thinking skills and their independence. Writing is highly original, the vocabulary used is mature and the imagery is emotive and powerful.
4. In mathematics, closer targeting of individual pupils over the past year has resulted in a considerable improvement in GCSE results from 2001 to 2002. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding across the mathematics curriculum. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment are proficient with basic algebra, for example. Pupils of higher attainment can manipulate algebraic expressions well, solve quadratic equations using a variety of methods and can recognise and are able to sketch a variety of functions locating maximum and minimum points.

5. Pupils acquire very thorough knowledge of all aspects of science and show good levels of understanding. In one class, all pupils had an appreciation of the fact that genetic mutation caused variation in populations and that natural selection was responsible for differential survival of species. The higher attaining pupils could accurately explain how genetic mutation occurs. In another lesson, all pupils had a good grasp of distillation and the reasons why liquids separate, and the higher attaining pupils could explain this by reference to molecular structure.
6. In 2001, results in A levels were above the average for girls nationally and well above the average for all students. Results in 2002 are higher than in 2001. There are no figures available for national comparison. There has been a steady rise in results over the past few years, and a corresponding rise in the value added to student's attainment in the sixth form, albeit with a dip in 2002. Students in the sixth form achieve well.
7. In 2001, the numbers of students entering for courses was small in many subjects and thus comparisons with the national average need to be regarded with some caution. Value added analysis indicates that a majority of students achieved or exceeded in their predictions in most subjects, in some, such as media studies and history, by a good margin. However, in business, art, the combined English language and literature course and biology, this was not the case.
8. How the 2002 results compare to those in 2001 varies across subjects. Of the nine subjects inspected, results were higher in Spanish, were similar in psychology, were lower in mathematics, ICT and geography, and very slightly lower in health and social care. The combined English language and literature course and the theatre studies courses were new, with no previous results with which to compare. There were no entries for physics in 2001, but results had been well above average in 2000, and were also very high in 2002. Subjects in which students have performed well over time are business, health and social care, mathematics, media studies, physics, chemistry, sociology and general studies.
9. The standard of work during the inspection in the nine subjects inspected also varies. In most subjects standards are at least average and students achieve well. This is the case in ICT, geography, psychology and the combined English language and literature course. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics and standards are above average. Students achieve very well in physics and achieve high standards. Results are slightly below average in health and social care, but pupils are achieving very well in this subject, given their attainment at GCSE. In Spanish, standards and achievement are different in Years 12 and 13. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 13, but in Year 12 students are achieving very well – the impact of the Language College Status is beginning to be seen in the higher standards being attained. Attainment is below average at this stage of the new theatre studies course, but students' achievement is satisfactory.
10. The strengths in practice outlined in the following sections of the commentary explain why pupils' and students' achievement is so good.

Leadership and management of the school are excellent.

11. Leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher shows an absolute commitment to ensuring the very best provision and outcomes for pupils and provides extremely clear focus and direction to the school community. There is a constant striving for improvement and raising of the already high standards in all areas of school life. The headteacher leads by example, and as a result, her commitment to

the pupils is shared by the staff as a whole. The members of the leadership group work very well together and all provide extremely effective direction in their areas of responsibility. While they fully accept their ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the school and take a clear lead on developments and innovations, there is a strong emphasis on teamwork throughout the school. The management structure is well defined; everyone understands their role and responsibilities. Teachers and managers are held accountable for their work and its effectiveness, but are also provided with very good support. The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good, with other examples of excellence such as in the management of student support, health and social care and the Language College activities. Day to day management is very efficient and supports the effective functioning of the school.

12. Governors play a full role in shaping the direction of the school and in its strategic management. The good range of knowledge and expertise amongst governors, especially from the world of commerce, is helpful to the school. They have played a particularly important role in the recent developments relating to Language College Status and the joint sixth form provision. For the former, they gave excellent advice on raising sponsorship from local employers. Governors have a very good working relationship with the headteacher. They adopt a supportive but questioning approach, which helps to develop and clarify thinking and planning. There is a good committee structure which enables governors to carry out their responsibilities, including for monitoring and evaluation, well. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, with the exception of ensuring a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
13. The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of practice within the school is excellent. It is extremely rigorous and thorough. All managers have been trained in relevant techniques of school self-evaluation. Evaluation is embedded across all aspects of school life. There is very regular monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and examination results. Each term, a specific focus is identified and senior managers work closely with middle managers to monitor this area and develop good practice as a result. As a result of this work, there is accurate and detailed knowledge of the strengths and areas for development within the school, and clear and appropriate priorities for improvement. Action is quickly taken when relative areas of weakness are identified and subsequent improvement is checked closely. This practice contributes well to the maintenance of the high standards and to the very good rate of improvement within the school.
14. The school makes very good use of the resources available to it, with a clear focus on ensuring the best provision for students. For example, many administrative duties such as examination entries and financial transactions have been allocated to administrative staff to enable teachers to focus on teaching. The joint sixth form arrangements have resulted in broader, more cost-effective provision. The school gains extra funds through being a Language College and these are very well used to extremely positive effect. Best value principles are applied to all spending decisions with good savings as a result, such as for catering and repairs and maintenance.

There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching.

15. Teaching is very good overall for pupils in Years 7 to 11 and is a strength of the school. All teaching is at least satisfactory. It is good or better in over four out of every five lessons, and very good or excellent in over two out of every five. Good teaching was seen in virtually all curriculum areas including English, mathematics and science. This consistent, high quality practice makes a major contribution to how well pupils learn and their very good achievement.

16. A considerable strength of the teaching for pupils is the very good subject knowledge that teachers have and the way they use this to ensure that pupils have a very good grounding in the subjects they are studying. Their clear and detailed explanations result in pupils acquiring a good knowledge base, and the written and practical activities set require pupils to apply this knowledge and thereby arrive at a deeper understanding. Probing questioning is also used to check and promote pupils' understanding. In several language lessons, for example, with a Year 10 class studying German and a Year 11 class studying Spanish, the teachers' own high levels of competence in the language served as excellent models of the spoken language for pupils. The very good activities that included extension tasks for higher attaining pupils resulted in pupils developing very good levels of accuracy and confidence in their own speaking. Teachers plan lessons very well – the common format helps to promote consistency in this regard. They use a good variety of methods and strategies to motivate and engage pupils. Their delivery is confident and purposeful, resulting in a fast and productive pace to learning. They plan to meet the needs of different groups of pupils well. Resources, especially ICT, are well used, and literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils both in terms of work and behaviour which are clearly communicated to them. Pupils work extremely hard to meet them. They know that teachers have a strong commitment to enabling them to succeed and appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. This was seen in a Year 10 science lesson where pupils were learning about electro-plating with copper. The teacher's clear explanations, constant questioning to check pupils' understanding and insistence on the correct use of terminology and detail, resulted in lower attaining pupils working extremely hard and making good gains in their understanding of a challenging concept. Another strength is teachers' extremely thorough assessing of pupils and marking of their work and the detailed feedback they give pupils on how to improve, related clearly to National Curriculum and examination course criteria. This attention to detail results in pupils having a very good understanding of their strengths and the areas they need to develop and helps them to make very good progress in their learning. Occasionally, pupils show an over-reliance on the teacher and a lack of independence in their work.
17. The teaching in the sixth form is good with many very good features and also makes a strong contribution to the success of students. There are similar strengths to those for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Students and staff report that teaching mixed classes has required some adjustment and is having an impact on teaching styles adopted and dynamics within classrooms. This situation needs to be monitored in order to ensure that best practice is developed. Students strive to do their best. They have a strong desire to meet their teachers' high expectations, and to succeed. They concentrate well and work hard in lessons and at home. Many students, however, although they do what is asked of them, do not yet show enough independence in their studies and rely too much on teacher approval and direction for aspects of their work rather than taking responsibility for their own learning, and the teaching does not yet promote these skills successfully enough.

There is extremely good curricular and extra-curricular provision.

18. The curricular opportunities provided for pupils in Year 7 to 11 are excellent. In the sixth form, they are developing well and are very good. An innovative approach is taken to developing provision, such as the joint arrangements with a neighbouring boys' school in the sixth form, emphasis on language learning and the international dimension to the curriculum resulting from Language College Status.

19. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided, with all subjects of the National Curriculum delivered to pupils in Years 7 to 9, along with RE and drama. There is extra support for pupils in Year 7 who require help with developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Following specific modules on ICT in Year 7, the subject is taught across the curriculum in an innovative manner. All students take two languages and have the taste of a third. The national strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is being successfully implemented. All pupils have tutorials through which a good PSHE programme is delivered.
20. A wide range of courses are on offer to meet the needs of pupils in Years 10 and 11, though a programme designed to give pupils as much flexibility as possible in their choices. These include GCSE courses in National Curriculum and other subjects. Pupils can choose between single award and double award science and the separate sciences. Four languages are offered. All pupils study at least one language in Years 10 and 11, half study two, and some three. Vocational courses are offered, which provide an alternative route into post sixteen education. For those at risk of disaffection, there is an access course with a strong work-related element and links with FE colleges. Different forms and routes to accreditation are offered to meet the range of pupil needs. There are opportunities for fast-tracking for higher attaining pupils in several subjects, aimed at early GCSE entry. A certificate of achievement is offered for those pupils for whom GCSE is not appropriate. Pupils' ICT entitlement is delivered effectively to all pupils using a variety of mechanisms which take account of the different courses pupils are following. All pupils have tutorials and PSHE lessons.
21. Through the joint arrangements, a good range of AS and A2 courses are offered, supported by key skills provision and a tutorial programme. If pupils wish to study subjects not offered, arrangements are made for the student to travel to another school in Coventry to do so where possible. Vocational courses are offered, and the school intends to further develop its provision of one year courses. Great care is taken to ensure that students are well advised and choose appropriate courses.
22. The range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities offered to pupils and students is excellent. There are many clubs, related both to curriculum subjects and broader areas. Sport and music make extensive contributions, but clubs run in almost all areas. Many departments run extra lessons and revision classes out of school hours. There are dance and drama performances, and inter-school quizzes and other similar activities. There are visits into the local community – to the magistrates' court for example, and to theatres. A very notable feature of the extra-curricular provision is the international dimension. There are many trips and visits to other countries, including to the countries of whom languages are being studied. One Year 11 girl talked animatedly about her trip to Japan, for example. There has been a trek in Venezuela for community work. Additional activities are offered to students in the sixth form, which include some opportunities for international work experience, and for paid work within the school. Pupils and students appreciate and participate in these opportunities and a significant contribution to developing their broader interests and education is made by doing so.
23. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social development, and excellent provision for their cultural development. The PSHE programme that pupils' follow is well-designed to develop their knowledge and understanding of important issues through topics of interest and relevance. There has been very good improvement in the promotion of spiritual awareness since the last inspection. There is a spiritual awareness policy in place, which guides tutors' promotion of it during the two 'reflection' periods that pupils have each week during form time. The weekly assembly for each year group promotes good consideration of spiritual and moral

issues, through reflection on the chosen theme, although the requirement to deliver a daily act of collective worship is not met. Through their participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and charity fund-raising events, pupils are provided with good opportunities for social and moral development. The international dimension to the curriculum and the very strong provision for languages results in excellent provision for cultural development. The modern languages department makes a major contribution to this provision. The approach taken to promoting the cultures of the countries whose languages pupils are learning provides them with excellent opportunities for deepening their understanding of life in France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain, not least through the visits to the countries concerned. Other subjects contribute well to developing students' cultural awareness, such as through art, music, theatre trips and history visits. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate cultural diversity.

The support for pupils' academic and personal development is of an exceptionally high quality.

24. Procedures for assessing pupils and students, and the use made of the information gained to promote improvement are very good indeed. There is a comprehensive, computerised database which all staff have access to, which contains assessment information on each pupil and student. This is used to develop a good knowledge of individual pupils, to monitor progress and to set targets. Pupils are assessed regularly by teachers against very detailed criteria related to the courses they are studying, and they receive regular specific and precise feedback in lessons. Work is very well marked with clear guidance given on how to improve. Pupils are formally assessed termly and are given a clear indication of their progress; this is reported to parents either in writing or verbally at meetings.
25. Tutors and heads of year use the data from pupils' progress reviews to form a good overview of the performance of each pupil, and to provide well focussed support for them. There is comprehensive mentoring, including some specifically targeted on pupils at risk of not completing course work or underachieving in examinations, and post GCSE and AS level counselling. The headteacher's commitment to individual pupils is shown by the fact she interviews every Year 11 and Year 13 pupil and student to discuss progress towards examination targets. Pupils feel that staff both know and care about their progress. Although a large school, no pupil slips through the net; arrangements are well devised and implemented to ensure there is a good overview of everyone.
26. The analysis of performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of provision and the progress of pupils is very good. Heads of department have to carry out an annual analysis of test and examination results to a common format, which enables patterns and trends relating to courses, group organisation and teachers to be identified. Issues are then discussed with their line manager and action that needs to be taken to effect improvement is agreed. There is a good analysis of performance data at whole school level, which results in senior managers having a good knowledge and understanding of how pupils and subjects are performing overall. An area for development identified by the school is carrying out further analysis of performance by ethnicity and socio-economic background in order sharpen up the process of target setting.
27. There is a strong pastoral system which ensures very effective monitoring of pupils' personal development and which provides extremely good support and guidance for them. Tutors and heads of year have a good knowledge of individual pupils which enables them to give specific support according to need. Very good support and advice is given to groups at key times, such as induction into the school, choice of options for Year 10 and the sixth form, and induction into the sixth form. Each tutor

team has a development plan linked to the needs of the particular cohort of pupils. Pupils feel that teachers know them well. They are confident that there are a good number of teachers they could go to should they have a problem to discuss. A further source of support is from the youth support group that has been set up to provide peer counselling.

28. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Pupils' needs are well diagnosed. The plans produced to support their learning are very detailed and useful. There is outstanding liaison between the head of student support and teaching staff, with learning support assistants fully involved, resulting in high quality teamwork and all concerned being fully conversant with the needs of all identified pupils. There is training for learning support assistants of exceptional quality; they are equipped to deal with a wide range of special needs and language needs. Target setting for pupils, the tracking of their progress and record keeping are impressively thorough. Leadership of student support, especially planning for further development and improvement is first rate, as is the management of the area as a whole.
29. The school receives funding from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant for two specialist part time teachers and three learning assistants, who also support ethnic minority pupils who have literacy needs. On entry to the school the pupils are assessed in English language and a suitable programme of in-class support is provided. Their progress is carefully monitored and results of assessments are made known to all teachers. The pupils with English as an additional language also receive excellent personal and cultural support from caring staff some of whom are speakers of their languages. All the pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress in their learning and are well integrated into the school community.

Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their learning.

30. Pupils' attitudes to school and their work are very good. Pupils are proud to attend Tile Hill Wood. They recognise the high quality of provision made for them and the efforts that teachers make on their behalf and fully appreciate both. They concentrate very well in lessons and show interest in their work, and involve themselves fully in the range of extra-curricular activities that are provided. They are self-motivated and take pleasure in their own success. They respond very well to the high expectations of them in all areas and take great pride in their work. The behaviour of the large majority of pupils is impeccable both in lessons and around school. As a result all of their energy is directed towards their learning. They arrive at school punctually and settle quickly in lessons. They move around the large site in an orderly and safe manner.
31. The school has worked hard to develop the personal attributes of all its pupils, to good effect. Pupils are mature and respond well to the opportunities available to them. Most are confident and articulate. Pupils from all ethnic groups form very good, constructive relationships with each other and with their teachers and other adults. They co-operate and work well together. Older students are good role models for younger pupils, both generally and when students run specific activities for pupils such as the drama club that Year 12 students run for Year 7 pupils and when students support younger pupils in class. Opportunities to exercise genuine responsibility are well taken. Pupils were seen making very considered contributions in a school council meeting following a survey on toilets within the school. Others have volunteered to become peer counsellors and take their considerable responsibilities very seriously. Pupils are unfailingly courteous. They respect each other's views and beliefs and use the opportunities they are given to develop their own very well, although sometimes pupils and students are over-reliant on teachers and do not show sufficient independence.

The very effective provision for languages has an extremely good impact on pupils' learning.

32. Since the school gained Language College status in 1998, the school has developed a strong international dimension. The excellent leadership and management of the modern languages department and the language expertise of its teachers have made an exceptional contribution to the pupils' linguistic and cultural knowledge. The four main languages taught in the school - French, German, Spanish, and Japanese - are continued into the sixth form, where students can also study beginners' courses in Japanese and Italian. The department not only provides a wide range of visits, exchanges, clubs and language events to enhance pupils' knowledge of the four main languages, but also organises a series of language days which in turn highlight different cultures of the world, for example an Asian Day and a Russian Day. In addition, the department receives visitors from all over the world, for example Chile, Finland, and America. Through links with the Peugeot Company in Coventry, Year 10 pupils develop their spoken French by undertaking work experience alongside French-speaking personnel. Punjabi-speaking pupils can attend a lunchtime language club and minority ethnic pupils have good opportunities to study their home languages to GCSE and A Level through an LEA programme of bilingual visiting teachers. Colourful and informative displays throughout the department promote the world's languages and cultures.
33. The department works closely with other subjects to encourage international understanding. For example the foreign language assistants demonstrate foreign dishes in the food technology department, and also one Year 7 class learns part of the geography national curriculum in French. The Comenius Project links the languages, science and geography departments with pupils in schools in Italy, Hungary and Portugal.
34. The department plays a substantial role in developing modern foreign languages teaching policy and practice throughout the local education authority. In collaboration with the education department in the University of Warwick it hosts and delivers sixth form languages conferences for students from local schools and colleges. It contributes substantially to the Primary Language Initiative by delivering foreign language lessons in five local primary schools and training primary school teachers in language teaching skills. It provides master classes in French, German and Spanish for gifted and talented pupils from local secondary schools. The department shares its ICT facilities and teaching expertise by providing in-service training for secondary teachers of modern foreign languages, for example, in the teacher and pupil use of PowerPoint, and raising achievement at GCSE. The department contributes effectively to international initiatives such as the Project Partnership between Languages Colleges and French schools.
35. The teachers are committed and innovative. For example, as part of a local authority project, the department has devised an on-line introductory sixth form German course for students to use nationwide, and students have access to video-linked conferencing with pupils in an American school.
36. The work of the foreign languages department is highly effective; the head of department uses her exceptional professional qualities to lead strongly, and with vision.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards are not yet consistently high in all subjects across the school.

37. Although the standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 11 are well above the national average overall and very high in relation to similar schools, they are not consistently high in all subjects, and, although pupils achieve very well overall, they do not do so in all subjects. Differences in students' performance across subjects in the sixth form also exist. No subject performs badly, and the issue is one of relative weakness, rather than absolute, and of making very good provision even better.
38. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, for example, the results in English were above those of mathematics and science. Teacher assessments in modern foreign languages and ICT were higher than other subjects. At level 6 and above, results in most subjects were still above the national figures, although by less of a margin, but in design technology and geography, they were below.
39. In GCSE in 2002, results in all subjects were in line with the national average except for drama and graphics. Standards were high in several subjects, but subjects in which pupils performed less well than others included biology, drama, English language and literature, physics, mathematics, graphics and physical education. The school reports that there are below average results generally in graphics, electronics, drama, art and design and biology.
40. In the sixth form in 2001, many groups had very small numbers of students, and so results have to be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, results in different subjects ranged from well above to well below average. Not all students met their predictions, and subjects where a majority of students did not were A level business, art, the combined English language and literature course and biology. In 2002, although overall results were higher, the results in several subjects were lower, and the value added to students also dipped after a steady rise over several years.
41. The school analyses pupils and students' results and value added carefully, and are aware of the strengths and areas that need to be developed. It takes appropriate action to promote improvement. For example, the improvement in English results at the end of Year 9 were the result of strategies put in place to raise attainment, especially that of higher attaining pupils. Strategies have now been put in place in Years 10 and 11, and are already proving to be effective in raising standards. Biology is acknowledged to be the weaker science and work is going on to develop schemes of work to raise attainment. Such analysis and action needs to be continued until pupils are achieving equally well in all subjects.

Aspects of the joint sixth form provision require further development to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

42. The establishing of the joint sixth form provision with a neighbouring boys' school is a positive measure and has resulted in improved provision and popularity of the sixth form. Much hard and very productive work has gone on at all levels to ensure successful arrangements, resulting in an effective sixth form in which students achieve well. The fact that there are areas that require further development to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency are a reflection of the state of development, rather than any particular weakness. Issues are known about and action is planned. This action needs to take place to ensure that the sixth form becomes as even better established and as successful as provision in the main school.

43. Aspects of provision that require further consideration and development include the following. Recruitment into the sixth form has been low, but in this academic year, the third year the joint arrangements have been in place, recruitment has risen substantially to 118. This trend needs to be continued and consolidated. Retention from Year 12 to 13 also needs consideration. Forty five of the 76 students in last years Year 12, stayed on at school into the current Year 13. While many left for legitimate reasons and to go on to further study at college, the school needs to continue to ensure that appropriate courses are offered and students choose ones that meet their needs. The development of provision of one year courses to meet the needs of students who do not gain the qualifications necessary for A and AS level courses is planned. The complexities of travelling between sites are contributing to attendance and punctuality not being as good as they should be. Students and staff report that teaching mixed classes has required some adjustment and is having an impact in teaching styles adopted and dynamics within classroom. This situation needs to be monitored in order to ensure that best practice is developed. Although arrangements for assessing and monitoring students' attainment and progress are identical across sites, there are inevitably fewer opportunities for informal dialogue about work for students taught for part of their time on the other site. This issue needs consideration in order that students neither feel, nor are, disadvantaged.
44. If the action planned to address these and other issues is carried out to the usual high standard, it should result in improvement to the already good quality of sixth form provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to improve upon the very good quality of provision and raise the high standards even further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Continue to analyse examination results, the progress that pupils and students make and other aspects of provision including teaching, and continue to take appropriate action to bring about improvement. (Paragraphs 37-41, 46-50)
 - (2) Continue to develop the joint sixth form provision in liaison with the partner school to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. (Paragraphs 42-43)

Sixth form

- (1) Continue to develop the joint sixth form provision in liaison with the partner school to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. (Paragraphs 42-43)
- (2) Improve attendance and punctuality in the sixth form. (Paragraph 53)
- (3) Improve the provision for private study in the sixth form and access to ICT for independent work. (Paragraphs 75-76)
- (4) Further develop provision of the one year courses to meet the needs of those who do not gain the qualifications necessary for AS and A level courses. (Paragraph 59)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	55
	Sixth form	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		89

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - Y11							
Number	4	23	19	9	0	0	0
Percentage	7	42	35	16	0	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	3	12	14	5	0	0	0
Percentage	9	35	41	15	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 7 – 11 and the sixth form as each lesson represents 1.8 percentage points for Years 7 – 11 and 2.9 percentage points for the sixth form.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 - Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1,186	163
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	201	15

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	245	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	139

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	43

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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	0	235	235

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	188	165	173
	Total	188	165	173
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (79)	70 (70)	74 (77)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (25)	52 (46)	44 (42)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	164	182	173
	Total	164	182	173
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (72)	77 (74)	73 (78)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (22)	52 (38)	43 (35)
	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	0	235	235

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	0	0	0
	Girls	157	226	233
	Total	157	226	233
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	66.8 (60)	96.2 (92)	99.1 (98)
	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	48.9 (45.9)
	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	153	90.2
	National		n/a

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	0	64	64
	Average point score per candidate	N/a	18.2 (18.7)	18.2 (18.7)
National	Average point score per candidate	* (16.9)	* (18)	* (17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	0	48	48	0	16	16
	Average point score per candidate	0	19.4	19.4	0	13.6	13.6
National	Average point score per candidate	*	*	*	*	*	*

* National comparison data for AS/A level results in 2002 are not yet available. Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1074	23	3
White – Irish	7	0	0
White – any other White background	36	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	19	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	43	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	83	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	16	0	1
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	10	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	25	3	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)	81.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	710

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	67.3
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	27.2
Key Stage 4	21.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	4,196,610
Total expenditure	4,335,909
Expenditure per pupil	3,277
Balance brought forward from previous year	203,728
Balance carried forward to next year	64,429

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17.8
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 33.1%

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,186
Number of questionnaires returned	392

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	60	6	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	52	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	56	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	58	13	3	2
The teaching is good.	29	63	3	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	55	16	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	49	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	42	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	57	15	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	36	52	4	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	57	4	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	52	6	2	11

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

46. In 2001, results in A and AS levels were above the average for girls nationally and well above the average for all students. Results in 2002 are higher than in 2001. There are no figures available for national comparison. There has been a steady rise in results over the past few years, and a corresponding rise in the value added to student's attainment in the sixth form. Students in the sixth form achieve well.
47. In 2001, the numbers of students entering for courses was small in many subjects and thus comparisons with the national average need to be regarded with some caution. Nevertheless, results were well above average in media studies, ICT, and physical education. They were above average in English literature, mathematics, and chemistry. They were average in biology, geography and health and social care. They were below average in English language and art, and well below average in business, Spanish, German and French. Value added analysis indicates that a majority of students achieved or exceeded in their predictions in most subjects, in some, such as media studies and history, by a good margin. However, in business, art, the combined English language and literature course and biology this was not the case.
48. How the 2002 results compare to the 2001 results varies across subjects. Of the nine subjects inspected, results were higher in Spanish, were similar in psychology, and were lower in mathematics, ICT and geography, and very slightly lower in health and social care. The combined English language and literature course and the theatre studies courses were new, with no previous results with which to compare. There were no entries for physics in 2001, but results had been well above average in 2000, and were very high in 2002. Subjects in which students have performed well over time are business, health and social care, mathematics, media studies, physics, chemistry, sociology and general studies.
49. The standard of work during the inspection in the nine subjects inspected varies. In most subjects standards are at least average and students achieve well. This is the case in ICT, geography, psychology and the combined English language and literature course. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics and standards are above average. Students achieve very well in physics and achieve high standards. Results are slightly below average in health and social care, but pupils are achieving very well in this subject, given their attainment at GCSE. In Spanish, standards and achievement is different in Years 12 and 13. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 13, but in Year 12 students are achieving very well; the impact of the Language College Status is beginning to be seen in the higher standards being attained. Attainment is below average at this stage of the new theatre studies course, but students' achievement is satisfactory.
50. In AS courses, standards are generally at least in line with expectations. The impact of the Language College status can be seen in the rising standards in all languages in the sixth form.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

51. The sixth form is becoming increasingly popular as seen in the significant increase in the number of students joining the current Year 12. Students' attitudes to the sixth-form are good. They have all made a conscious and considered decision to join the sixth form and wish to get as much out of it as possible. They are therefore enthusiastic and keen to succeed. Most involve themselves well in the range of curricular and extra-curricular activities that are provided for them, although the involvement of some is limited by their participation in paid employment. Students work hard in lessons. They take their learning seriously and rise to the intellectual challenge of the work. They respond well to opportunities for participation in lessons, such as in the animated discussion in a general studies lesson in Year 12 on the power of marketing and advertising. Some students take some time to settle into the sixth form culture, such as in taking responsibility for getting themselves to lessons on time following break time in the common room, and in using private study time profitably. This is quickly picked up on by teachers. The behaviour of sixth formers is very good in lessons and in their common room, resulting in few distractions to learning.
52. Personal development is very good. The hard work the school puts in to develop the personal attributes of all of its students continues to have a positive impact into the sixth-form. Students are mature and confident and acquire the attitudes and skills that equip them well for either employment or higher education. Students are willing to take on responsibility. For example, they support younger students in classes, run extra-curricular activities for them, such as a drama club for Year 7 pupils and act as peer counsellors, and in doing so provide good role models for pupils. Some take advantage of opportunities for paid work within the school. Students from all ethnic groups form very good relationships with each other and with members of staff. They work effectively in groups and show respect for differing viewpoints. This was seen in a good PSHE lesson where they discussed, debated and agreed on various forms of evil and answered questions such as "If God is all powerful, why is there evil in the world?" and "Does evil exist in every person?". They are receptive to new ideas and fresh viewpoints and are willing to consider views and beliefs other than their own. When given the opportunity to work independently they do so, seeking help when needed. However, some show a degree of over-reliance on their teachers and lack the confidence and skills to take appropriate responsibility for their own learning.
53. Attendance and punctuality in the sixth form is satisfactory but could be better, a situation exacerbated by the complexities of travelling between school sites. Attendance in some tutor groups is below 90 percent. Although the school provides transport between the sites at key points during the school day, students say that the buses are sometimes late which can mean them either being late for lessons or not having time to eat lunch. However, not all unpunctuality is due to this, but to students not moving quickly enough to lessons at the end of break time, for example. New arrangements for registering pupils are being put in place across both schools to try to improve attendance.
54. The large majority of students responding to the questionnaires and spoken to during the inspection are positive about almost all aspects of the sixth form and are pleased with their decision to enrol.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

55. Teaching is good overall. A high proportion of teaching in the sixth form is good or better and many lessons have very good features. The high quality of teaching makes a major contribution to the good quality of students' learning. Good teaching was seen in most subjects inspected and in some that were sampled. It was particularly good in health and social care, languages, physics and mathematics. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
56. Teachers have very secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects which is evident in the high quality of explanations they give to students. In some lessons the teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects shines through and serves to engage students more in their learning. Teachers use time very well. Lessons are often long, often two to three hours, due to timetabling requirements within the local education authority. However, these long periods are planned very well, with a good range of activities employed to break up the time into discreet but inter-related units, which helps to maintain student's interest and concentration. Pace is good and maximum use is made of the time available. Clear objectives for learning are identified and communicated to students. Precise instructions are given so that students know exactly what is expected of them. They are given encouragement and support to develop intellectual and social confidence, which enables them to participate in lessons more fully and effectively. A very strong feature of the teaching is the very detailed assessing and marking of students' work, and the highly focussed and specific feedback given to students on how to improve their work. Students respond to the comments made and as a result improve their work at a good rate. Good examples of this were seen in health and social care. Teachers understand the requirements of examination specifications very well and they prepare students very thoroughly for their examinations. Students and staff report that teaching mixed classes has required some adjustment and is having an impact in teaching styles adopted and dynamics within classrooms. This situation needs to be monitored in order to ensure that best practice is developed.
57. Students strive to do their best. They have a strong desire to meet their teachers' high expectations, and to succeed. They concentrate well and work hard in lessons and at home. Many students, however, although they do what is asked of them, do not yet show enough independence or initiative in their studies and rely too much on teacher approval and direction for aspects of their work rather than taking responsibility for their own learning, and the teaching does not yet promote these skills successfully enough. In physics, for example, there were not enough research or decision making activities. In geography, teaching strategies which allow students to develop their thinking skills and ideas in depth are developing but, are as yet, underused. In Spanish, there are too few opportunities incorporated into lesson planning in Year 13 for students to develop confidence and independence in writing. It is because the teaching does not yet have enough impact on this aspect of students' learning, that it is judged to be good overall, rather than very good, despite many very positive characteristics.

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

58. Curriculum provision in the sixth form is very good and provides opportunities for students with a wide range of interests and abilities. The curriculum is flexible, and offers a varied choice depending on individual students' performance in the GCSE examinations and on their aspirations and needs. These are surveyed on two occasions before the sixth form curriculum is finalised. If students express an interest

in a subject that is not currently offered the school carries out a feasibility study to find out if it can be included. If it cannot be, arrangements will be made to enable the student to study at a different school in Coventry where possible. There are clear entry criteria for different types of course, and great care is taken to ensure that students are well advised and choose appropriate courses.

59. The joint arrangements extends the range of courses that can be offered and enables the school to offer more than twenty AS and A level courses and general studies. Students are encouraged to continue their study of a modern foreign language into the sixth form. Five modern languages are offered, including beginners' courses in Italian and Japanese, along with the AS and A2 courses, and students clearly benefit from this excellent aspect of the curriculum that is provided by the school's Language College status. Community languages are offered by the local education authority's Language Service. There are successful vocational A level courses in health and social care and business. One year intermediate level vocational courses are offered in several subjects and run according to demand. Students choosing this route take two such courses. The school recognises the need to develop further its provision of these one-year courses. Students taking these courses also follow the key skills programme and spend one day each week in a Further Education College. A key skills programme is also available to students following two-year courses if the need is identified by the school. RE is an established module within the sixth form curriculum and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
60. Provision is made for meeting the personal development needs of groups and individual students in the sixth form through excellent student support systems, tutorials and one-to-one sessions with sixth-form tutors, and through the very good PSHE programme. Students receive a broad PHSE curriculum that includes aspects of health, sex and drug education, economic, commercial and industrial understanding, careers guidance and citizenship. They are developing a good sense of what it means to be an adult and a citizen in this country. There are opportunities for students to discuss topics in depth, which leads to improved communication, problem solving and personal skills. There is involvement of appropriate external agencies into the programme. In a tutorial session, following a talk about personal finance from a representative from a local university, students were observed discussing what levels of income and expenditure they could realistically expect at university. They were given good tips and ideas for budgeting. This increased their knowledge and confidence about managing should they choose to go into higher education.
61. There is very 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 clear to them. Most students respond well and act as good role models to younger pupils. They understand that rights are accompanied by responsibilities, and that to be treated as responsible young adults, they have to act as such and show commitment to their studies. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect between students and with staff.
62. Improvement since the last inspection for the provision of spiritual development has been very good, and it is promoted very well. There is a spiritual awareness policy in place. Sixth form tutors teach a programme of work which allows students to reflect on spiritual and moral issues. There is a weekly assembly - the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not met. However, the assembly provides good opportunities for students to reflect on related issues through the theme of the week, which, during the inspection was 'choices'. There is an opportunity for reflection in two registration times each week. Students have very good opportunities for social and moral development through participation in a wide range of extra-curricular

activities including residential visits, the joint sixth form council, the youth support group and fund raising activities. There are good opportunities for visits abroad, including to countries whose languages are studied in the school, and to other European and world wide destinations such as Venezuela. The presence of boys in the sixth form adds a new dimension to social activities which is helping students to mature and is adding to the attractiveness of the sixth form. Other activities offered to students in the sixth form include some opportunities for international work experience, and for paid work within the school.

63. The provision for cultural development is excellent. The modern languages department makes a major contribution to this provision. The wide range of languages offered, and the approach taken to promoting the cultures of the countries concerned, provides students with excellent opportunities for deepening their understanding of life in France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain, not least through visits to the countries concerned. Students are encouraged to celebrate cultural diversity. Geography students gain an understanding of the culture of countries with different degrees of economic development and experience Dutch culture at first hand through visiting Holland. During a school 'international day' sixth form tutor groups produced displays on the culture of different countries. Other subjects contribute well to developing students' cultural awareness, such as through art, music, theatre trips and history visits.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

64. Assessment is very good. Students are assessed regularly by staff against very detailed criteria related to examination courses and they receive regular and precise feedback in lessons. Work is very well marked with clear guidance given on how to improve. Students are also assessed termly and given a clear indication of their progress; this is reported to parents either in writing or verbally at meetings. The formal arrangements at the partner school are identical so as to ensure consistency of practice. However, the opportunities for informal dialogue with teachers about aspects of their work and progress are inevitably fewer when students are taught at the other school for part of their time, and despite the school's best efforts, some students report feeling disadvantaged by this. The school is aware of this difficulty and is attempting to address it. Teachers use assessment data to monitor students' progress well and to prepare them thoroughly for examinations.
65. Tutors and the head of sixth form use the data generated to form a good overview of the performance of each student and to provide well focussed support for them. There is good post GCSE and AS level counselling. The headteacher's commitment to individual students is shown by the fact she interviews every Year 13 student to discuss progress towards examination targets.

Advice, support and guidance

66. There is excellent personal support and guidance available for all students through a variety of opportunities, including on-going teaching, group tutorials and one-to-one meetings with tutors or other staff. All students are placed in tutor groups designed to be supportive, irrespective of the amount of teaching they receive at the partner school. Much effort goes into ensuring successful induction into the sixth form and students report being very happy with the outcomes. Students receive individual advice about appropriate courses to study and about their progress. The tutorial programme covers a good range of relevant issues, and in Year 13 there tends to be

more targeted support to individuals and smaller groups. Only 44 percent of those responding to the questionnaire were happy with the careers advice received. Further questioning reveals that this is not to do with the quality of careers advice, which is said to be high, but with the ease and frequency with which it can be obtained. The sixth-form has very good procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its students.

67. While there are appropriate procedures to promote, monitor and improve attendance, it is not yet high enough, with several tutor groups having attendance of less than 90 percent. This is due in part to the complexities of students having to travel between sites. Further strategies are being introduced to improve attendance, such as a swipe card system, which it is hoped will help to keep track of students across each site. Some problems with punctuality occur due to the late arrival of buses, but other unpunctuality lies with the students themselves.
68. The support provided is successful because it is based on the teachers' detailed knowledge of individual students and their needs. Early warnings of difficulties are taken and dealt with quickly. Students are able to raise, with confidence, any worries or concerns as a result of personal circumstances.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS?

69. The vast majority of parents and carers have very positive views of the school. The school has a very good and well-deserved reputation within the community. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of what the school and sixth-form provides and achieves.
70. The school provides parents with good information about the school and the sixth form generally and about students' progress. There is good contact with parents when necessary and appropriate. Parents say that teachers are very accessible and that any queries and concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school benefits from parental involvement in a range of activities. The school is seeking to improve its communication with parents further, such as through developing its web-site to act as an information source.
71. Some parents feel that they are not well enough informed about their children's progress when they are taught for part of their time at the partner school. However, the formal reporting procedures across both schools are identical. The concern may reflect the fact that there are fewer opportunities for informal contact between students and staff in this situation, but such dialogue would be unlikely to be routinely reported to parents. Some parents also report there to be some differences in the quality of provision across the two schools, especially in regard to some teaching. The school is working hard to ensure consistency in quality of practice and is actively monitoring the provision.
72. The majority of students have positive views of the sixth-form, and overall students are very satisfied with the provision made for them. Inspection evidence supports these views. The only area where there was not a positive response overall was in relation to careers advice. They felt that the quality of it was good, but they would like to have more access to it.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent. The strategy of establishing joint arrangements with the partner school has been effective as seen in the broader curriculum being delivered more cost-effectively, and the mixed provision being a factor contributing to the increasing popularity of the sixth form. Much hard work continues to take place to ensure the arrangements are effective at both a strategic and operational level. This necessitates much co-ordination and liaison involving many staff. The headteacher regularly meets with her counterpart to discuss overall developments. Senior managers have regular meetings with senior staff from the other school to discuss further details. Where possible, the organisation of the sixth form is common across both schools; for example, the arrangements for assessing students and reporting to them on their progress are identical. The head of the sixth form does a very good job of managing the sixth form on a day-to-day basis. Documentation outlining expectations, procedures and practice is thorough. Students report her to be friendly, approachable, efficient and effective. She knows students very well and plays a strong part in trying to ensure that their academic and personal needs are met. She has high expectations of them and their progress is closely monitored. Heads of department meet to discuss the detail of course planning and individual teachers, especially where the teaching of courses is shared, meet to discuss matters of implementation. Some constraints and issues result from the joint arrangements, such as the dynamics of students travelling between sites, the lack of informal opportunities for dialogue between students and staff, the need to ensure consistency of practice and the issue of monitoring and evaluating of quality of practice. These issues have been clearly identified and are being acted upon, but continued liaison needs to take place to ensure that they are dealt with appropriately.

Resources

74. Overall quality of provision for staffing is very good. All departments in the sixth form are fully staffed by appropriately qualified and trained teachers with a wide range of experience. There has been significant investment in staff training, for example, on the techniques of self evaluation and the use of ICT. Staff are very committed to the school and the students and work as a happy and cohesive team. Although there are difficulties with recruitment in some areas, the school manages the situation so there is no adverse effect on learning. A notable feature of staff management is the way in which the school has reduced the administrative load on teachers by allocating such responsibilities to administrative staff and by good use of ICT, making for more effective working.
75. The quality of accommodation is good. The school is situated on a very pleasant site and has good facilities for teaching in and outside of classrooms. Teaching rooms are well decorated with appropriate displays and the building is clean and well maintained. Provision for private study for sixth form students is limited.
76. Overall the quality of resources is good. All departments have sufficient resources with relevant equipment, hardware, text books, support materials and consumable items. There is adequate provision of ICT equipment for use in lessons, which is effectively used. However, there is limited access to ICT for students for independent study. Although students can use ICT facilities in the ICT rooms and the library when they are not in use by other classes, these arrangements do not ensure sufficient access. The library does not currently have an appropriate range of books for research, though a three year improvement plan designed to address this issue is in place.

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.

* National comparison data for AS/A level results in 2002 are not available yet.

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	16	68	*	25	*	2.1	*
Chemistry	16	56	*	0	*	1.0	*
Biology	22	59	*	13	*	1.7	*
Physics	15	100	*	46	*	3.3	*
Business Studies	3	100	*	33	*	3.3	*
Business VCE	10	90	*	10	*	1.4	*
Health and Social Care	8	100	*	0	*	2.0	*
Art and Design	4	100	*	0	*	1.8	*
Music	2	100	*	50	*	2.5	*
Media Studies	6	100	*	33	*	2.4	*
Geography	20	70	*	15	*	1.6	*
European Studies	8	75	*	25	*	2.8	*
History	6	83	*	0	*	0.8	*
Sociology	9	66	*	0	*	1.1	*
Psychology	16	93	*	25	*	2.5	*
Critical Thinking	3	100	*	0	*	1.3	*
English Language/Literature	11	72	*	18	*	1.9	*
English Literature	5	80	*	20	*	3.0	*
French	4	75	*	0	*	2.3	*
German	2	100	*	0	*	1.5	*
Japanese	2	50	*	50	*	3.0	*
Spanish	3	100	*	0	*	2.0	*

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	8	75	*	37	*	5.2	*
Chemistry	5	100	*	60	*	6.8	*
Biology	2	100	*	0	*	3.0	*
Physics	2	100	*	100	*	10.0	*
Design and technology	7	100	*	25	*	6.0	*
Business Studies	8	100	*	37	*	6.7	*
Business VQ	6	100	*	0	*	3.6	*
ICT	10	100	*	30	*	5.0	*
Health and social care VQ	9	100	*	11	*	4.3	*
Art and design	8	100	*	50	*	6.2	*
Performance Studies	7	100	*	43	*	6.0	*
Media Studies	12	100	*	58	*	7.0	*
Geography	13	85	*	23	*	4.4	*
History	14	79	*	21	*	3.8	*
Sociology	7	100	*	71	*	8.0	*
Psychology	7	100	*	29	*	6.2	*
English language and literature	12	100	*	17	*	4.5	*
English literature	17	100	*	59	*	7.2	*
French	1	100	*	0	*	6.0	*
German	2	100	*	0	*	5.0	*
Panjabi	1	100	*	0	*	6.0	*
Spanish	3	100	*	100	*	8.6	*

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
ICT - GNVQ full award	2	2	n/a	2	n/a	0	n/a

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics and physics were inspected. Lessons in biology and chemistry were sampled. Teaching and learning in the biology lesson were good, and were satisfactory in chemistry.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Academic support for students is effective.

Areas for improvement

- To further develop schemes of work in Years 12 and 13 so that they incorporate opportunities for independent study.
- To formulate policy and practice for student follow up of work after marking.

76. At the end of Year 13 in 2001 A level results were well above the national average. In 2002, the results were lower. This was mainly due to the introduction of the new A/AS level modular structure and syllabus specification. The 2002 results were out of line with a trend of above and well above average attainment sustained over several years with a high proportion of students gaining A and B grades.
77. The standard of work in year 13 seen on inspection is above the national average. Students had secure algebra skills. They were able to differentiate a wide range of different types of functions including products, quotients and partial fractions. They were able to recall earlier work and use differentiation to solve a wide range of problems in pure and applied mathematics. Students were confident in expressing mathematical ideas orally. Many were able to reflect on the appropriateness of their methods and a few used higher order thinking skills to look for and use an alternative solution. They undertake some independent study but this is less good.
78. In AS examinations in 2002, two thirds of students in year 12 who sat this exam attained a pass grade with one fifth attaining A or B grades. There is no data available to compare these results with national trends.
79. Standards of work seen on inspection in year 12 were in line with the expectation of the specification at an early stage in the A/AS level course. Students had recently completed a statistics 1 module and were confident in using statistical terminology in context and explaining its meaning. The issue relating to independent study is also relevant to year 12 students.
80. Students, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in mathematics in the sixth form.
81. Teaching in the sixth form is good overall with some very good features. Students' learning as a result of this teaching is also good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding. In lessons there is good pace and teachers communicate their high expectations to students. Good planning and the structuring of teaching in such a way that learning is broken down into small manageable steps,

contributes strongly to effectiveness. Students also respond well when they are challenged to discuss and reflect mathematical ideas and think about their solutions. This broadens their understanding of the subject and improves their techniques for solving problems. Generally students make considerable effort to improve the standard of their work and attain the best results possible.

82. The provision of academic guidance and support for sixth form students is a strength. Extra help is available for individuals outside of lessons who experience difficulty in understanding their work or require further clarification. Students are also aware of their predicted grades and progress against this is constantly monitored by teachers.
83. The mathematics department is well led and managed. Resources are well organized. There is a very good departmental handbook and well written schemes of work are in place for year 12 and 13 teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic and are committed to attaining the best results for the sixth formers they teach. They self-evaluate the provision and look for areas where improvement can be sustained under the effective leadership of the head of department.
84. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in A level results attained in the subject.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Leadership is very effectively focussed on raising standards and providing support to students.
- Assessment procedures are used very effectively to inform students about their achievements.
- Aspects of teaching, particularly very effective marking and preparation for examinations, ensure that standards are well above average.
- Students' attitudes to physics are very positive so that their learning is very good.

Areas for improvement

- To make better use of time in some lessons.
- To increase opportunities for independent learning.

85. A level examination results have improved greatly since 1998. No pupils entered for A level in 2001, but in 2000 the results were well above the national average. Results in 2002 were very high; although only two students entered the examination, both gained an A grade. The standard of work seen during the inspection is well above average overall. There is greater variation in standard than in 2002, and this is because a greater number of students are taking the subject, but there are still a significant number of students whose work is equivalent to grades A and B. In Year 13, students have a high degree of knowledge and understanding across all parts of the course. For example, they understand the concept of gravitational energy very well and can carry out related calculations with accuracy. Students' very good numeracy skills enable them to cope with the mathematic elements of the course very well. Calculations generally, such as those relating to the magnifying power of lenses, are accurate, and result in students developing a greater understanding of the laws of physics and their practical applications. Graphs produced by students on the deflection of alpha particles demonstrated a good understanding of the underlying concepts.

86. All of the students taking the AS level examination in 2002 gained a pass grade and nearly half were awarded a grade A or B. The standard of work seen in Year 12 during the inspection was well above average. Students' practical skills are excellent. They can measure the angles of light rays passing through perspex with precision, and clearly understand the calculations associated with these measurements. Coursework, such as that about the electrical resistance of wires, is of a high standard, much at grade A or B, and is written fluently and accurately. Students' standards of literacy as demonstrated through physics are very good.
87. Students achieve well in physics, with many students exceeding the predictions made for them. All students who started physics courses recently have completed them successfully, because teaching and support for students is very good. Students who speak English as an additional language do as well as other students.
88. Teaching in physics is very good, and, as a consequence, students' learning is very good. Teachers have a very detailed knowledge of their subject. They explain concepts very clearly, and give precise instructions so that during practical and written tasks students know exactly what to do, and this increases their success. Question and answer sessions, for example, in a lesson about medical physics, were used well to review and build on what had already been learned. In one lesson, excellent use was made of a reading task about forces and particles in which students were skilfully helped to identify and categorise information so their research skills improved and their learning was very good. Teachers make very good use of past examination papers to test students' knowledge and prepare them in examination techniques. These are marked very thoroughly with informative and supportive comments that help students to improve. Relationships are very good. Students are encouraged and given credit for their efforts so that they are always very willing to answer questions. They are interested in learning physics. They work very hard for long periods and take pride in their work. In the lessons seen, there were not enough opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning through research or decision making activities. More time could have been made available for this in lessons by expecting some of the written questions set being completed for homework or in individual study time.
89. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Curriculum and teaching plans are well organised and are regularly evaluated and improved. ICT is used very well to support students' learning in lessons. Students' attainment and progress are assessed thoroughly, and very good use is made of information gained to ensure that their learning does not falter. Teachers provide students with excellent support in the form of information sheets and guidance about coursework, and good information is available to students on the school Intranet. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good and is reflected in the very steady rise in examination results.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No subjects were inspected or sampled.

BUSINESS

No subjects were inspected or sampled.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT was inspected.

ICT

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- There is good support for individual students.
- Good resources including ICT, textbooks and worksheets.

Areas for improvement

- To continue the development of support to improve examination results.
- To consider the range of courses available including AVCE.

90. In 2001, standards in the GCE A level Information Technology examination were well above the national average, although it was a very small entry of two. Standards in 2002 were well below those of 2001, with two thirds of the ten candidates entered gaining less than a grade C.
91. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are average and in line with the requirements of the syllabus. Students make extensive notes on the theory aspects of the syllabus, but do not fully annotate them with reference to situations in which ICT is used. They complete set assignments and demonstrate a wide knowledge of the applications of ICT. They competently explain the structure of computer systems, but are less competent in explaining how a computer system is applied in given situations such as medicine or manufacturing. They identify the legal requirements for users of ICT but are less confident in using these requirements to make decisions in challenging circumstances. For their course work, students have identified problems, but some are so simplistic that students may not be able to demonstrate an appropriate range of ICT skills in their designed solution. They analyse these problems and consider a wide range of issue such as user needs, training issues and performance criteria.
92. In the 2002 AS level half of the candidates obtained a grade C or B with a quarter obtaining an unclassified grade.
93. Standards of work seen in year 12 students are average and in line with the expectations of the syllabus. Year 12 students have a broad knowledge of the use of ICT in a range of applications. They write about the impact and issues involved in using ICT, though they do not always provide a full critical evaluation of the issues. They have begun work on a minor project, analysing the problem and identifying the relevant factors in a solution. They create testing plans identifying four levels of testing and three types of data. They explain why testing is necessary and generate test data which they insert into their own projects to ensure the outcome matches the design. However, they do not always recognise the different types of data nor appreciate the range of validation routines required in their own projects.
94. Standards observed represent a good level of achievement. Although the school obtains above average results at GCSE, the higher attaining pupils do not choose to take ICT in the sixth form and those who do have generally obtained average or below average results. They achieve in line with those GCSE results, but just over a third improves on them. There have also been some issues with moderation that may have

an effect on the standards. There is no difference between the ethnic groups and all students make similar progress including those who speak English as an additional language.

95. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teacher prepares well for lessons providing good guidance about the topics. A good knowledge of the subject instils confidence in the students, with high standards being set. The teacher uses technology to provide constructive examples from which the students can extend their knowledge and skills. Careful management of lessons impacts significantly on the students, who respond by extending their understanding of ICT as well as their knowledge and skills in the use of ICT. The teacher provides beneficial individual support setting challenging assignments for the theory aspects of the course. These are marked positively with constructive comments and suggestions for improvement.
96. Students show commitment to their ICT course and exhibit a very good attitude. There is a productive relationship between the teacher and the students and they respond positively to the good teaching. They generally work independently and complete assignments fully, but are also willing to co-operate with and assist each other. They value their work and take every opportunity to enhance their own progress.
97. The subject is managed effectively with regular monitoring and evaluation of performance. There is constant in-class assessment of student progress and constructive individual support is provided. There is a desire to ensure that students improve their own performance and considerations are given to departmental improvements. The provision for ICT is good with well resourced teaching rooms and an appropriate syllabus.
98. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in terms of resources and facilities and an increase in the numbers taking ICT in the sixth form.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No subjects were inspected or sampled.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The focus of the inspection was AVCE Health and Social Care. The one year GNVQ Intermediate course in Health and Social Care was also sampled in Year 12. There were few opportunities to see students in AVCE lessons because they were either in examinations or the lessons were not timetabled during the days of the inspection. A greater than usual range of written evidence was considered to establish judgements of levels of attainment and teaching.

Health and social care

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

Strengths

- Students achieve very well with all obtaining higher standards than expected.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students.
- The department benefits from strong leadership and management.
- The quality of monitoring of the individual progress of students and the overall performance in the subject is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Access to ICT resources for students to work on course assignments.

99. Results of AVCE examinations in Health and Social Care were broadly average in 2001. Provisional results for 2002 were slightly lower. Results have fluctuated in recent years but all students have gained pass grades and all have exceeded their individual targets because of very good teaching and close monitoring of their progress together with their high levels of motivation. In 2001, students all gained pass grades in the units of work they studied in Year 12. Provisional results for Year 12 in 2002 showed a continuing trend for all students to pass units of work and to exceed their targets.
100. In work seen, standards of attainment are below average overall, but students are attaining higher standards than predicted at the start of the course. Their work shows strengths in the organisation and presentation of work and in the quality of coursework assignments. Students' commitment and hard work and their willingness to follow guidance from teachers have enabled them to reach the highest standards of which they are capable. When writing up assignments on visits to care homes, for example, higher attaining students show an insight into the feelings of elderly people. Students have good awareness that positive body language can put people at ease and that anxieties can be generated in vulnerable people by poor communication. With suitable guidance from teachers, lower attaining students succeed in completing assignments but their research lacks depth and writing about issues is superficial.
101. Standards of work seen in Year 12 are below average, although all students are exceeding expectations. In their study of human development, students are able to describe the stages of physical growth and they observe characteristics of emotional growth. However, their understanding of concepts such as how socio-economic circumstances affect, for example, language development is weak. Lower attaining students have difficulty in explaining fully what they know and understand and the presentation of some students' work is adversely affected by insufficient access to computers which prevents them from drafting and redrafting work efficiently. Students have a satisfactory understanding of the physical aspects of health such as the respiratory system and the effects of smoking.
102. Students' achievement is very good when compared with prior attainment because they are very well taught and highly motivated. Attainment and progress is also very good for students who speak English as an additional language. Students adjust to the demands of advanced level work well and quickly learn to organise their work. They learn the value of keeping good notes which help them to organise their thoughts and revise for tests. They make very good progress with managing coursework assignments and, because they take very good account of teachers' comments on

their work, they improve consistently as they proceed through the course. Students demonstrate positive and mature attitudes to learning. Students in Year 12 are making particularly enthusiastic responses to the teaching methods used in the GNVQ course. They are gaining a good knowledge of life stages and the development of personal relationships.

103. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations of students and use teaching methods which are highly motivating and provide students with confidence. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the success of students is enhanced by the range of expertise contributed by the Health and Social Care team. Students' high achievement is particularly the result of teachers' high quality of marking, monitoring of progress and providing guidance, which students act upon, to improve their work. Lessons are conducted with variety and pace which result in students' very good levels of concentration and sustained interest. Students have very good individual feedback about their work. However, teachers do not always succeed with some students, in developing a clear understanding of the concepts which they find difficult.
104. The department benefits from excellent leadership and management which are resulting in students making maximum gains from their courses. High levels of achievement match the school's aim for students. There are excellent relationships and cooperation between staff which lead to sharing of good practice in pursuit of high standards. The very good monitoring programme, which is efficiently managed, enables the department to act on emerging issues and to develop the subject and the performance of students.
105. The subject was not specifically reported on in the previous inspection but in recent years there has been very good improvement, particularly to the development of the subject and the current assessment and monitoring systems.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Theatre studies was inspected and lessons in art and music were sampled. The teaching and learning in both of these lessons were good.

Theatre studies

Overall, the quality of provision in theatre studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- The classroom management of students is good and conducive to good learning.
- Students enjoy the work and, through it, enhance their personal and presentational skills.
- Students acquire self-discipline and an understanding of the importance of working as part of a team.

Areas for improvement

- To place a greater degree of emphasis on the development of the full range of drama skills.
- To encourage a more rapid pace of work.
- To provide a higher degree of challenge for students of all levels of attainment.
- To improve assessment and its use to monitor students' progress.

106. Since the subject has not previously been offered at A-level, there are no results from previous years by which to compare current students' attainment. Until 2001, Performance Arts was the A level containing drama modules offered by the school. The drama and theatre studies course has only been in place since September, 2002, so that students have studied in Year 12 for only one term and there are no students currently in Year 13. Two-thirds of the course is taught at Tile Hill Wood School and the rest at the partner school.
107. Overall, attainment at this early stage is below average, but is likely to lead to results which are in line with expectations by the end of the course. Students have begun to understand the teamwork and trust which is involved in drama activities and demonstrated this in a lunchtime club run by four Year 12 students for a large group of Year 7 pupils. They are learning the importance of speech and register in the way they present themselves to other people. However, students have as yet little knowledge of performance skills, playwrights, genres and dramatic conventions. They are able to study a text with understanding of its literal meaning, but few are able to interpret the sub-text, as observed in their attempts to come to terms with the characters and nuances of an extract from 'Vinegar Tom'. They have not yet appreciated **the** need to combine different skills at the same time, such as speech and movement, or to understand fully the need to interpret for an audience. They find it difficult to improvise. Their written work reflects this narrow range of skills. Students' folders contain many notes on theatrical practitioners, such as Stanislavski and Brecht, and on the terms of physical theatre, but there is little personal, creative or evaluative writing, beyond some diary-style accounts of work. Levels of literacy, both in speech and writing, vary greatly, but are satisfactory overall.
108. Students' achievement is satisfactory. All students learn from the course and work with enthusiasm and interest. However, sometimes the slow pace and lack of challenge limits achievement. In a lesson observed students were studying ways of presenting the characters in 'Vinegar Tom'. The lesson afforded them good opportunities to look for subtleties of characterisation and to capture an atmosphere of tension with empathy and response. However, the slow pace of work and exercises that were allowed to continue for too long, reduced the time for more challenging work. A few of the lower attaining students were diffident and slow to be drawn into the spirit of the group work and thus did not lose their inhibition and embarrassment. Initial laughter and chatter were never replaced with a real involvement with the characters and the focus of the scene. Two higher attaining students were offered too little challenge to help them to develop their potential to the full.
109. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. The teacher has good knowledge of the subject and so is able to guide pupils in developing their skills and understanding. The teacher's management of the students, who are very mixed in personality, is sympathetic and encourages good rapport and willingness to work and learn together, as in the early part of the lesson seen, when students were using contact exercises to prepare them for later work. The planning of lessons, however, does not allow for activities to be sufficiently varied across the different areas for study. As a result, pace is allowed to slacken and not all students remain involved. This was evident in the observed lesson, as a great deal of time was allocated to physical warm-up and some groups received a disproportionate amount of attention in their group work, leaving other groups aimless and a little disaffected by the end of the lesson. There was also little feedback at the end of the lesson, by which the lower attaining students might have seen what could be achieved through the example of the higher attaining students. Not enough challenge is offered to the higher attaining students to stretch them to their full potential; working as a pair on the lesson, the higher attaining students were not encouraged to carry exploration of speech further into improvisation

and stage dynamics. Assessment of students' work is not yet sufficiently advanced to be used to set targets for them, to aid the teacher's planning and to show each student exactly how to improve.

110. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Accommodation for the teaching of the subject within the school is good. Staffing and other resources are adequate, except to access to ICT in lessons. The course is well supplemented by visits to theatres and other dramatic links, such as those with the Warwick Arts Centre and the Stratford 'Playback' project.

HUMANITIES

Geography and psychology were inspected. A lesson in history was sampled. The teaching and learning in this lesson was very good.

Geography

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

Strengths

- The very mature attitudes of students who are well organised and focused on their work.
- The good subject knowledge of committed and enthusiastic teachers whose clear explanations increase students' understanding of the subject.
- The well-planned lessons in which teachers use a variety of resources to engage students' interest.

Areas for improvement

- To improve AS and A Level examination results so that they reflect students' potential based on their attainment at the end of Year 11.
- To evaluate new approaches to coursework and refine them in order to maximise students' marks at AS level.

111. In 2001, results at A Level were slightly below the national average although all of the small group of students entered gained a pass grade. This is greater than the proportion that do so nationally. These results were in line with expectations for the group of students concerned, given their attainment at GCSE. In 2002 school data indicates that results were lower than in 2001. This follows a steady increase in results over the previous three years and was partly due to a small number of girls who experienced difficulties with the work and pulled down the overall results. Nevertheless, over three quarters of students achieved a pass grade and almost a quarter of students gained the higher A/B grades. In work seen during the inspection students' attainment in Year 13 was average. This improvement from last year is partly due to students applying themselves better to their work than the previous group. Higher attaining students can select information well to illustrate the impact that trading blocs are having on the quality of life of the people living in countries that belong to them. Lower attaining students can identify links between the socio-economic factors affecting less economically developed countries. Not all students have yet developed the analytical skills to explore geographical issues in depth with confidence.

112. In the AS level examinations in 2002 almost three quarters of students gained a pass grade and a sixth gained the higher A/B grades. These results were slightly below expectations when compared to the students' very good attainment at GCSE. Almost half of the students completing the AS Level course in 2002 went on to study the

subject at A Level. In work seen during the inspection students' attainment in Year 12 is above average. This improvement from last year is due to the mature and focused approach of this cohort of students who are very interested in the course and determined to succeed. Year 12 students have a clear understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the different solutions to problems of coastal erosion and the impact these have on the environment. These use specialist terminology well and can analyse a range of geographical resources in order to arrive at well-reasoned and valid conclusions. Some students are still over reliant on their teachers and have yet to become independent learners.

113. The standards of work seen currently indicate that students in geography are achieving well. In Year 13 and Year 12 the very mature attitudes of these groups of students means that they concentrate on their work and are acquiring the geographical skills necessary for them to succeed on this course. New approaches to coursework are helping to maximise students' examination marks. This work now needs to be evaluated and refined.
114. Overall the standard of teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and their good subject knowledge increases students' understanding of the subject. Teachers produce varied resources and make use of video programmes to enliven lessons and engage student's attention. In a Year 13 lesson the teacher gave students good advice on how to use the Internet efficiently for research so they were able to select relevant material on commercial whaling in the Southern Ocean. Teaching strategies which allow students to develop their thinking skills and ideas in depth are developing but, are as yet, underused within the department.
115. The leadership and management of the department are good. Departmental documentation is well organised and very thorough. Appropriate priorities have been identified in the departmental development plan and these are being tackled systematically. Monitoring of teaching and learning is effective and takes place regularly. Good use is made of prior attainment data to set targets for students and help them maximise their potential.
116. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Results at A Level improved steadily between 1999 and 2001 and the slight dip in standards in 2002 can be explained by a small number of students experiencing difficulties in meeting the demands of the course. The committed team of teachers within the department review and evaluate their work effectively and have the capacity to further improve examination results.

Psychology

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

Strengths

- There has been strong improvement over the last three years.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and produce good informational materials.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students have good attitudes towards the subject and their work.
- There is very good leadership, including support for colleagues and links with other schools and colleges.

Areas for improvement

- To use a wider range of strategies for active learning.
- To develop students' evaluative and statistical skills.

117. 'A' level results in 2001, the last year for which national figures are available, were above average, as were AS results. The standard was broadly maintained in 2002, although it fell at AS level reflecting some changes in the syllabus used. Students entered the sixth form below 'A' level expectations, but progressed to meet AS expectations in Year 12 and 'A' level expectations in Year 13. There has been marked improvement since the previous inspection from well below to above average. Over the same time period, value-added has progressed from being negative to positive.

118. Standards of the work seen mirror the results achieved. The first essays that students produce are conscientious but lacking in evaluative skills. Over time, student essays improve, for example, on abnormal psychology and child development. In Year 13, they are producing good essays, for example, on memory and doing work on the conceptually difficult topic of cognitive development, although they lack some critical insight which would be required for A and B grades (for example on Piaget's view on conservations). Students achieve well including those who speak English as an additional language.

119. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching materials show the commitment of staff and a good knowledge of the subject. The work done is well referenced to the specification, including the key research studies. Good use is made of the internet, as well as examination board, commercial and teacher-produced materials. Above average students show evidence of active processing of the teaching materials, for example, by highlighting and summaries, although this feature is less marked in lower attaining students who may need more help in study skills. Good use is made of word processing, which allows average attaining students to produce high quality essays, for example, on infant attachment and anorexia. Overall, Year 12 students have already progressed to meet the expectations of the course. The progress has been assisted by the quality of marking, which has clearly helped students to understand what is demanded of them. The same pattern was seen in the work of the current Year 13. Some of their essays had progressed to higher-grade levels. Their AS investigations from the previous year showed a growing understanding of research methods, although there is room for improvement in their analytic and evaluative skills. In both year groups, the standard of work rose from below average to meet expectations, although there was less evidence of the highest-grade performance. Nevertheless, the improvement amounts to good achievement. The teaching is strong on information although the work seen reflects a limited range of teaching strategies and there is room for development of more active learning such as independent research, group discussion, the preparation of presentations and directed evaluation of

research studies. Approaches to the ethical and social aspects of psychology are good, for example, in the way that parents are consulted before students are used as research subjects. In the lesson observed, there were some skill deficits. For example, students had a shaky understanding of statistical concepts (such as 'significance'), which they should have developed last year. Students did work actively in matching researchers with the area that they researched and the fundamental research methodology. Their learning was sound but could have been more rigorous in the way that the studies were approached and evaluated. It would be useful to develop writing frames to help students learn that they need to think critically rather than just describe research.

120. Students' attitudes to work and to the subject are good. Their notes are well organised and conscientious. The subject is growing in popularity. Currently, 10 girls are in Year 13 but 32 are studying in Year 12. Students, including those from minority ethnic groups, have very positive attitudes to psychology. In the lesson observed, all pupils were positive and some enthusiastic, with an ambition to take the subject further at university level.
121. The department is very well led and management is good. Accommodation is good and there is some access to useful resources, such as psychology journals, but there is also some scope for development of the library. There is good access to ICT. Monitoring of the students, who all have targets to aim for, is good. There are good links with other schools and with local universities, which enrich the curriculum and provide interest and motivation for students.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The combined English language and literature course and Spanish were inspected.

The school offers A Level courses in French, German, Spanish and Japanese, and beginners' courses in Italian and Japanese. The effects of the language college status of the school is working through to the sixth form; the number of students studying languages at A Level substantially increased in 2002 and standards are rising substantially. Teaching of French is shared with a local school. Lessons in German, Italian and Japanese were sampled. In these lessons, teaching and learning in Italian were excellent, in Japanese were very good and in German were satisfactory. Common to all the lessons seen was the excellent use of the foreign language by the teachers.

English language and literature

Overall, the quality of provision in combined English language and English literature is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers have high expectations of students and plan their lessons well.
- Good quality marking provides students with useful information on their achievement and what they need to do to improve.
- Students' positive attitudes towards the subject contribute to their good achievement.

Areas for improvement

- To develop strategies which promote students' confidence and independent learning.
- To monitor closely students' progress with coursework.
- To improve students' knowledge of grammatical and critical terms early in the course.

122. The combined course is new to the school and was first examined at A2 in 2002. All 12 students entered attained grades A-E but fewer gained grades A-B than in the literature only course run the previous year. Overall, these results were lower than predicted by the same students' grades at AS in 2001.
123. Standards of students' work seen are average in Year 13. Most students can communicate clearly in their discussions and writing, the knowledge, understanding and insights gained from the combination of literary and linguistic study and can use appropriate terminology. They can also respond appropriately to different kinds and styles of texts from different periods and consider how attitudes and values are created and conveyed in speech and writing. The higher attaining students have a good knowledge and understanding of the concepts which underlie the critical study of texts and they present thoughtful and convincing interpretations and judgements which show their appreciation of the influences of social, cultural and historical contexts. Their writing is fluent and well-organised and their argument supported by carefully selected textual evidence. However, many in this group are too tentative in their approaches because they lack confidence in their own opinions and analytical abilities: these students rely too much on critical frameworks, following them rigidly, and their work is therefore sometimes mechanical and lacks the fluency and cohesive style required for the higher grades. Occasionally, they are so concerned with analysing texts that they fail to see the wood for the critical trees. Most students are more secure with the literature component of the course than the language. Standards attained overall represent good achievement, given the AS grades attained by these students.
124. AS results at the end of Year 12 in 2002 were lower than in 2001 when they were above average. The highest grade was B and three students were unclassified. There was some inadequately prepared coursework and both AS and A2 grades were adversely affected by staffing problems.
125. The staffing problems referred to above have been resolved. Standards at AS have improved since 2002 and the work seen is now in line with expectations. The higher attaining students have quickly come to grips with the critical terminology and enjoy reading, developing their analytical skills and discussing texts, writers and themes. They also enjoy selecting and analysing their own materials, such as magazine articles. They are able to use the examination board's assessment criteria to ensure that their responses are appropriate and fulfil the requirements for the higher grades. Lower attaining students are unsure of the critical terminology: it does not come readily to them and they have to make frequent use of the glossary provided by their teachers. Yet, without it, they cannot write effectively. They have similar problems with their writing as students in Year 13 in that they lack confidence and are too dependent on their teachers' views. The overall standards represent good achievement, given the levels at which these students entered the sixth form. Students for whom English is an additional language achieve well because of their own determination and the sensitive support they receive from teachers and their peers.
126. Teaching is good overall and so is learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, know students well and have high expectations of them. This is helped considerably by students' positive attitudes to the subject and to each other and the high quality of teachers' marking which gives good guidance on what they need to do to improve. All lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of their students. In the best lessons, a variety of teaching strategies is used to involve students in their learning: they do personal research using the internet, give presentations, select and bring in materials for language analysis and have frequent opportunities to develop and refine their ideas through group work. However, many are reluctant to voice and

argue their own opinions strongly: they lack the confidence to make independent decisions and choices and prefer to echo their teacher's interpretations and opinions, both in discussions and writing.

127. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Responsibility for the sixth form course is appropriately delegated, schemes of work are thorough and teaching and marking well monitored. Much careful planning has gone into the successful implementation of this new course.
128. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Systems for tracking students' progress are now in place and the department is beginning to make effective use of examination data to set students' and departmental targets.

Spanish

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

Strengths

- Teachers have excellent language competence and use this effectively in lessons.
- Teachers use ICT expertly in lessons to develop students' language skills.
- Students receive excellent guidance and support on how to perform well in examinations.
- The students have very good relationships with their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- To give students more frequent opportunities to develop confidence in writing.
- Continuing to recruit increased numbers of students to A level courses, particularly the higher attaining linguists.

129. In 2001, the grades at A Level were below average, with 1 C and 3 E grades. In 2002, results at A level were considerably higher, with the 3 students gaining 1 A and 2 B grades. In the current Year 13, standards are below average overall. Scrutiny of students' files shows that the two students reach average standards in reading; they can understand and respond to authentic texts in Spanish and they can increasingly throughout the Year 13 course deduct the meaning of unfamiliar words. Standards of writing are well below average; the students are highly dependent on guidance sheets, errors in basic verb forms, agreements and spelling persist, and they do not frequently use language independently in extended sentences. These students, however, had low language competence on entry to the course.
130. In the AS examination in 2002, the two students gained a C and E grade respectively, which was in line with expectations for them. In the current Year 12, there is an increase in student numbers and standards are above expectations. Standards in listening and speaking skills are above average. Most students can understand the teachers' rapidly spoken Spanish and respond confidently with good pronunciation. Scrutiny of students' files showed that in reading, they can tackle the higher register language of examination topics. In writing, most students can successfully use authentic language and specialist vocabulary, and all can express them selves using a range of verb tenses and grammatical structures with reasonable accuracy. Although the two lower attaining students in the group continue to make basic errors in writing, they make good progress overall. The one student with English as an additional language, contributes well to lessons through her fluency in French and Spanish, and makes very good progress.

131. The achievement of students in Spanish is different in the two year groups. In Year 13, the results over the past few years have been based on small numbers and have represented the differing degrees of language competence of the students concerned. The achievement of the current group of students in Year 13 is satisfactory. However, the group currently in Year 12 reflect the impact that the Language College Status is having, and they are achieving very well.
132. The course contributes substantially to the development of students' key skills of communication, study skills, working with others, and using ICT. For example, students routinely use the Internet for further information on topics they study.
133. Teaching and learning are very good overall; in Year 12 teaching is excellent. Three Year 12 lessons were seen, of which one extended lesson was excellent and two were very good. Teaching in Year 13 is judged as good overall; as no lessons were seen in Year 13, the judgement on teaching is based mainly on the outcomes of reading and writing seen in the students' files, and on the fact that the same teachers deliver the course in both years. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge, being native or fluent speakers of Spanish; this gives students an excellent model to understand and copy in lessons. In Year 12, teachers' excellent lesson planning, good pace, and clear objectives well linked to examination requirements, enable all students to make very good progress over time. Teachers use resources very well, especially ICT, to enable students to make maximum progress. This was seen in an excellent Year 12 lesson in which the teacher skilfully used Power Point to display colour photographs of a recent environmental disaster, enabling students to describe the events and express their feelings in Spanish. Too few opportunities are incorporated into lesson planning in Year 13 for students to develop confidence and independence in writing, for example, in occasionally recording spoken language in written form.
134. Students have very good relationships with their teachers and warmly appreciate teachers' commitment to their examination success. Students in both years receive excellent support and guidance. Teachers mark regularly and thoroughly, and clearly link this to examination criteria so that students are fully aware of their progress.
135. Leadership and management are very good. The teacher responsible for Spanish leads by example in excellent teaching practice, the improved schemes of work in Year 12 are highly effective, and the organization of the language assistants and temporary teachers is very good. The higher standards and increased numbers of higher attaining linguists evident in Year 12 should be maintained and A Level results become at least consistently good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.