

INSPECTION REPORT

**BARR'S HILL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103727

Headteacher: Mr R R Brabban

Reporting inspector: Mr Ian Thompson
12271

Dates of inspection: 9 - 13 December 2002

Inspection number: 249839

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Radford Road
Coventry

Postcode: CV1 4BU

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Sybil Hanson

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12271	Ian Thompson	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9724	Brigid Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector	Educational Inclusion	<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
19913	Roger Garrett	Team inspector	English	
8341	William Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics	
2711	Alan Jarvis	Team inspector	Science Biology	
15051	Lynne Kauffman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
27368	Michael Merchant	Team inspector	Geography	
30427	Felicity Sufflebotham	Team inspector	History	
20412	Diane Shepherd	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
4757	David Morris	Team inspector	Music	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17709	Alan Giles	Team inspector	Physical education	
18261	Anthony Hill	Team inspector	Art; Special educational needs	The work of the special educational needs unit
19352	Kiran Campbell-Platt	Team Inspector	English as an additional language	
20716	Reg Grogan	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barr's Hill School and Community College is a much smaller than average 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school with a much smaller than average sixth form. There are 567 pupils on roll of whom 51 are in the sixth form. The school serves an urban area of west Coventry but many pupils come from other parts of the city. Pupils come from the full range of social and economic backgrounds but a high proportion are from areas of considerable deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average and rising. Almost half of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds – mainly Indian and Pakistani; 213 pupils come from homes where the first language is other than English and 37, a high proportion, are at an early stage of learning English. Almost 80 pupils are refugees. A well above average number of pupils join the school at other than the usual times, many of whom have had difficulties in their education elsewhere. The school's tests show that pupils' standards when they join the school are well below average overall and for many attainment is very low. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is well above average as is the proportion with statements of special educational need, most of which refer to emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition, the school has a unit for pupils with special educational needs in speech or communication.

The school has been identified as being in challenging circumstances and is involved in a number of local and national initiatives aimed at raising standards. Since the appointment of the headteacher three years ago, the school has gone through a period of restructuring with many changes of staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Although standards are very low, most pupils do at least as well as might be expected and many do better. Teaching is satisfactory. Leadership and management are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership provides very clear educational direction and management is good.
- Relationships are good and contribute to a pleasant atmosphere in the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- Careers and vocational education are very good.
- The school's links with the community make a very good contribution to learning.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- Good standards of care support pupils' academic and personal development.

What could be improved

- Although improving, attendance is unsatisfactory and slows progress.
- Standards are well below average.
- The use and teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is inadequate in many subjects and does not meet statutory requirements.
- Insufficient time is allocated for teaching humanities and modern foreign languages in Years 7-9, adversely affecting standards.
- The teaching of citizenship through subjects across the curriculum is not co-ordinated well enough to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met in Years 10 and 11.
- Resources for learning are unsatisfactory in art and design, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in November, 1996. Leadership and management have improved. The quality of teaching is better, leading to better achievement, although standards remain very low. Attendance has improved but is still unsatisfactory. Curriculum provision has improved but statutory requirements are not met in respect of ICT across the curriculum.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E*	E*	E
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E		

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

very low E*

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

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are very low and in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Results at A-level and AS-level are well below average. The school came close to meeting its demanding targets in 2002 but results are improving at a slower rate than the national trend. Nevertheless, most pupils do at least as well as might be expected, and many do better, in relation to their standards when they join the school. The gap between boys' and girls' standards when they join the school is maintained in all years and overall, girls do much better than boys.

Results are well below average in relation to those of similar schools but this is a comparison based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and does not take account of

the combination of factors faced by this school that adversely affect results. This is a small school in which a few pupils can make a significant difference to percentage figures. Overall figures are affected by the high proportion of pupils who arrive in the school at other than the usual times. Many of these pupils have little or no English and are not taught in the usual groups for their age. The great majority do very well but their results are not included in overall calculations. Results are further affected by the relatively high number of pupils who join the school having had difficulties in their education elsewhere, many of whom continue to have poor attendance records and so do not do as well as they should.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are well below average.

Standards in work seen

	Years 7-9	Years 10 and 11	Years 12 and 13
Average	Art and design; music; physical education	Art and design; music; physical education	Art and design; ICT; mathematics
Below average	Design and technology; English, ICT	Design and technology; English, ICT; religious education	English
Well below average	Geography, history, mathematics; modern foreign languages; religious education; science	Geography; history; mathematics; modern foreign languages; science	Biology

Achievement (progress over time)

	Years 7-9	Years 10 and 11	Years 12 and 13
Good	Art and design; design and technology; English; ICT; music; physical education	Art and design; English; ICT; music; physical education; religious education	Art and design; ICT; mathematics
Satisfactory	Geography; history; mathematics; modern foreign languages; religious education; science	Design and technology; geography; history; mathematics; modern foreign languages; science	English; biology

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory in the main school. Students in the sixth form bring good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall, in and out of classrooms. A few pupils are ready to disrupt lessons if they are not managed firmly. The rate of exclusions is high as a result of the school's determination to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour.

Aspect (continued)	Comment (continued)
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships are good between pupils and staff - making a positive contribution to learning. Relationships between pupils are good and the school is racially harmonious. Pupils learn from working with others from diverse backgrounds. Although some pupils are able to work independently, this is not a consistent feature across the main school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory but improving. Attendance in the sixth form is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in all subjects, with consistently good teaching in English, art and design, ICT, music and physical education. Some good teaching was seen in all subjects and some excellent teaching was seen in English, French, ICT, mathematics and physical education. This high quality teaching gives the school strengths on which to manage further improvement. Excellent support work was also seen for pupils with English as an additional language and with special educational needs. When teaching was judged to be less than satisfactory, the common feature was that planning did not meet the needs of pupils well enough to ensure that they made adequate progress – particularly important in a school where pupils in each class have such a wide range of needs and are from a diversity of backgrounds.

Teaching in the sixth form is better because students' attitudes are good so that teachers are able to make full use of the time available. Teachers use good knowledge of their subjects to plan interesting lessons that meet students' needs so that they learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory in Years 7-9 because of low time allocations to humanities and modern foreign languages, which affect standards. Requirements for teaching ICT are not met in many subjects in Years 7-11. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good; careers and vocational education are very good. The school's links with the community make a very good contribution to learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school meets pupils' diverse needs well.

Aspect (continued)	Comment (continued)
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and are supported by the very good arrangements made by the language development department to meet their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Arrangements to promote pupils' spiritual development are satisfactory. Provision for moral and cultural development is good and for social development very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good standards of care – the staff have particularly good knowledge of pupils and their individual needs.
Partnership with parents	Satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and is well supported by the complementary strengths of the deputy headteachers. The school is well managed overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a good working knowledge of school and hold it to account effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Assessment data are used well. Curriculum reviews and direct observation of classroom standards all contribute to realistic overview of performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school manages its finances well. Additional funds are used well to support learning and the school's priorities for development. Expenditure is checked for best value.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has sufficient staff for its needs. Accommodation is satisfactory. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory in art and design, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils like the school.• The majority of pupils do well.• Pupils are expected to work hard.• The school is approachable and welcoming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour in the school.

Very few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and a relatively small number returned the questionnaire. Those who did expressed very positive views. Inspectors agree that the school is approachable and welcoming, that pupils like the school and are expected to work hard. Most pupils do at least as well as they should. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and misbehaviour is generally well managed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is much smaller than in most schools nationally. Currently there are 19 students in Year 12 and 32 in Year 13, a total of 51, of whom 21 are male and 30 female. The proportion of students who continue after GCSE into the sixth form is well below average, but has remained steady in relation to numbers in Year 11 over the last four years. About two thirds of students are white and about one third come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is above the average for all sixth forms nationally; 61 per cent receive an educational maintenance allowance and 11 per cent receive support from the Access Fund. A small number of students in Year 12 have English as an additional language. Generally, students began the sixth form with below average levels of attainment. Students can follow an adequate range of subjects and courses at GCSE, GNVQ, AS and A2 levels all of which have suitable requirements for entry. The school plans to join a consortium consisting of City College and other Coventry schools to expand sixth form provision in September 2003.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Sixth form provision is good overall. Despite its small size, the sixth form is cost-effective because students are achieving at least as well as should be expected, given their earlier attainments, and its costs are less than its income. There is a sufficient range of courses for students to make appropriate choices for study. Teaching is good overall. The school's leadership is providing a clear direction for the sixth form's future.

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall, and students learn well as a result.
- Students like the sixth form: they appreciate the good relationships between teachers and students and the support they receive.
- Leadership and management provide a clear sense of direction, a strong focus on support for the individual and flexibility in meeting the varied needs of the students.

What could be improved

- Timetabling arrangements affect the continuity of teaching and learning in biology.
- Too little time is allocated for teaching mathematics.

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	Satisfactory. Students' very positive attitudes and good teaching enable them to achieve well. Lack of time and other factors prevent provision being better than satisfactory.
Biology	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. Students achieve as well as should be expected. Timetabling difficulties and other problems prevent provision being better than satisfactory.
Information and communication technology	Good. Students' good achievement results from good teaching, their very good attitudes and effective leadership of the department. Standards are improving.
Art and design	Good. Teaching is good, and students are very committed to their work. As a result, current Year 12 students are achieving well.
English	Satisfactory. Students are achieving as well as should be expected. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good features such as the supportive relationships between teachers and students and the active nature of the learning.

In other subjects, work was sampled. In lessons observed in general studies, design and technology, health and social care and in business education, teaching was at least satisfactory and usually good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good. Students receive a good quality of guidance and support. Teachers prepare students carefully for entry to the sixth form. They match the choice of courses suitably to students' aspirations and potential. Teachers check students' progress closely and frequently. They provide good support throughout the courses that enables students to achieve success. Students receive good information and help about opportunities beyond school.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. Leadership and management of the sixth form play an important part in students' good achievement. There is a strong focus on care for the individual. Teachers provide suitably challenging targets for improvement. Leadership provides clear direction and there is effective management of both the existing sixth form provision and of the planning for the forthcoming consortium.

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">• They appreciate the good teaching.• They receive good support in their learning.• They can achieve well.• They value the guidance they get about careers and higher education.	Students raised no matters for improvement.

Inspectors agree with students' positive views.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- Standards are improving.
- Given their earlier attainments, the majority of pupils do at least as well as might be expected in Years 7-11 and do well in the sixth form.
- High standards of care support achievement.
- Pupils with English as an additional language are given good support and do well.
- Standards are adversely affected by the high proportions of pupils entering and leaving the school at other than the usual times.
- High rates of absence affect the continuity of learning for many pupils.
- Standards of literacy are below average; standards of numeracy are well below average.

1. Pupils join the school with well below average standards overall. Analysis of individual progress shows that by the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils who have been in the school from the beginning of Year 7 do at least as well as might be expected in relation to their standards when they joined the school. Of the remainder, roughly the same proportions of pupils do better and worse. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. Pupils do well in English; their achievement is satisfactory in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make similarly satisfactory progress to their classmates; pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. After a difficult period in the school's history, standards are now improving but at a slower rate than found nationally.
2. The school's detailed analysis of pupils' performance in GCSE examinations shows that there is no consistent pattern of differences in achievement by groups of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. There are differences from year to year but, because numbers are small, one or two pupils' results can have an exaggerated effect on statistics, making them unreliable for comparison. The detail of the school's analysis shows that of the pupils who achieved no passes in GCSE examinations in 2002, half were transient pupils who had poor attendance, some of whom did not attend for the examinations in which they were entered. Of the pupils who were admitted to the school in Year 7, only eight achieved no passes. Six of those eight pupils also had poor attendance records, despite the school's efforts which included arranging alternative courses. Overall, pupils did best in English, art and design, history and physical education.
3. Standards of literacy are below average and reflect the difficulties many pupils have with reading, writing and speaking English when they enter the school. These difficulties persist despite the often good support for pupils' various needs.
4. The overall standard of numeracy is well below average, although teachers in subjects across the school are working to improve them. For example, although pupils are encouraged to draw graphs in many subjects, graphical skills are not well developed for

most pupils. In science and design and technology, many pupils have difficulty with measuring accurately and using appropriate units of measurement. In geography some pupils are not able to use number and graphs well enough to convey the meaning of data.

5. The achievement of the many pupils who do well at the school is promoted by its high standards of care and by good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. Relationships in the school are good so that pupils have confidence in their teachers. Teachers know pupils well and generally match their teaching well to pupils' needs. The members of the senior management team keep a close check on the quality of teaching, provide clear guidance for improvement and match training to priorities for development.
6. Good assessment procedures are used to give early warning of pupils who are underachieving. These procedures are well designed to contribute to pupils' progress. However, although a wealth of data is collected and analysed carefully by senior managers, its use is not consistently as effective as it should be. This is because, first, the assessments from which departments provide data are not always sufficiently accurate and, second, because teachers do not always make effective use of data made available to them in planning lessons.
7. There are very high levels of transience (movement of pupils in and out of the school throughout the year). Although the school deals well with the challenge that this presents, overall standards are adversely affected. To illustrate the scale of movement, some 15 per cent of the pupils now at the school joined at different times last year, in addition to the normal intake, and the total turnover of pupils was close to one in five. The difficulties for teachers in managing continuity of learning for all pupils in these circumstances are clear. Many pupils arrive in the school with no English or at an early stage of learning English. They are supported well by the provision that the school makes for their needs and many do very well overall. However, many of these pupils are taught outside their age group so that, however well they do, their results do not count towards final statistics. Many pupils are also accepted into the school who have had difficulty in their education elsewhere. Some continue to behave badly, despite the support they receive, and as a group are disproportionately represented in both fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Some also maintain their poor attendance, with a consequent effect upon their achievement.
8. Although improving, low levels of attendance hinder the progress of too many pupils. Over recent years, higher than average proportions of teachers have left and joined the school. The high level of changes of teacher has affected the continuity of pupils' learning. Learning is also affected by lack of appropriate resources for learning in design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. An additional factor affecting standards is that insufficient time is allocated for teaching in humanities and modern foreign languages. This is a consequence of the school's decision to allocate higher than average amounts of time to English and mathematics, better to meet the needs of pupils who enter the school with very low levels of literacy and numeracy.

Sixth form

9. In 2001 the A/AS level average points score for both male and female students was well below average, though numbers were small in most subjects and national comparisons should therefore be treated with caution. Students obtained at least a pass grade in all A-level subjects they entered except in biology. Provisional results for 2002 show that the average points score per entry was again well below the national average. All students entered for A2 examinations in biology, chemistry and English literature obtained at least a pass grade. Two chemistry students were awarded A grades and a film studies student obtained grade B. The previous inspection in 1996 recorded that attainment was lower than local and national averages. The trend of results shows that standards have been maintained (albeit at a relatively low level) and that students achieved at least satisfactorily given their below or well below average attainment on entry to the sixth form.
10. In work seen in this inspection, standards of attainment are below average overall but achievement is good. The picture is improving compared with previous years. Standards are average in mathematics, ICT and art and design, below average in English and well below average in biology. Judgements in mathematics and art are based on standards in Year 12, because there is only one mathematics student in Year 13 and none in art. In all subjects, achievement is at least satisfactory in relation to students' prior attainment and the good achievement reported in mathematics, ICT and art reflects the consistently good quality of teaching in those subjects.
11. The standards of the very few students following the key skills course in communication as part of the personal and social education programme are in line with expectations. The school's policy ensures that provision for the key skills of application of number and ICT is available if required. The wider key skills of working with others, study skills and problem solving are covered in subject courses and teachers' attention to these contributes to students' achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils' attitudes to the school are mainly satisfactory in Years 7-11. They are most positive when teachers engage and involve them in lessons.• Attitudes in the sixth form are good.• Standards of behaviour have improved recently and are satisfactory.• Relationships in the school are good.• The way that pupils respond to the school's provision for their personal development is more variable, though still satisfactory.• Despite recent improvement, the rate of attendance has not yet reached a satisfactory level in Years 7-11. Attendance in the sixth form is good. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
12. On balance, pupils' attitudes to the school and to their studies are satisfactory. When teachers adopt a lively teaching style and stimulate them pupils respond well, show interest and make an effort to work hard. There was a good example of such teaching in a French lesson for Year 11 pupils where a combination of humour and brisk pace

encouraged pupils to join in and work hard. Many pupils readily join in school activities such as clubs and sport, but others are passive or show little interest.

13. Standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. They are friendly and helpful. However, there are a few pupils who can prove troublesome and are ready to disrupt lessons if they are not managed firmly; teachers generally manage these pupils well. Pupils interviewed considered that standards of behaviour have improved in the last couple of years and said that they welcomed stricter discipline. There are cases of bullying, but here again pupils consider there are fewer than previously and that those which do occur are dealt with well. The number of exclusions during the past academic year, both permanent and for a fixed term, was high for a school of this size. Most exclusions were imposed as a result of assault and aggressive behaviour. The number of permanent exclusions this year has remained high. There have been fewer fixed-term exclusions since the learning support centre opened in September, though the total is still above average. A significant number of the pupils excluded had joined the school after having problems in other schools.
14. The quality of relationships between pupils and members of staff is good. This helps pupils to develop a greater interest in their work and learn more effectively. Relationships among pupils are also generally good. The varied groups within the school mix harmoniously. In discussion, many pupils say they feel that they learn from working with others from diverse backgrounds. On the whole, the pupils' response to the provision for their personal development is satisfactory. Examples of this include older pupils helping younger ones and responsible decision-making in the school council. Pupils also react well to local community and social initiatives such as the community gardening scheme and the successful litter 'blitz'. Most show respect for other pupils' feelings, but not all are aware of the effect of their own actions on others. Although some pupils are able to work independently, this is not a consistent feature across the main school.
15. The overall rate of attendance at the school for the year 2001/2002 was 90.1 per cent. Authorised absence was 9.3 per cent with unauthorised absence 0.6 per cent. Although below the average level for attendance nationally (90.9 per cent), this is a considerable improvement on the previous year's figure of 86.2 per cent. The amount of unauthorised absence has fallen from 5.6 per cent in 1998/1999 to its current level, below the national rate of 1.1 per cent. However, higher levels of absence than these figures suggest were noted in several lessons observed during the inspection. Not all pupils arrive promptly at the start of the school day or to individual lessons. Low attendance and unpunctuality inevitably have an adverse effect on the standards which pupils attain and their overall achievement. As a result of the school's efforts, attendance is improving but there is a substantial group of pupils who are persistent absentees. It is proving difficult for the school to manage improvement among these pupils.
16. Since the previous inspection, standards of behaviour have improved and the level of attendance has risen.

Sixth form

17. Sixth form students have good attitudes and want to achieve well. They appreciate the good teaching and the good support they receive. Students in ICT, mathematics and Year 12 art and design are particularly well motivated in lessons and show excellent commitment and effort. In other subjects attitudes are usually at least good.
18. Personal development and relationships are good. Subject teachers provide opportunities for developing independent learning, improving study skills and working together. Relationships between teachers and students, and among students themselves, are supportive and friendly. Students can and do involve themselves in the School Council, in helping in the library and supporting younger pupils with reading. They are also involved in mentoring work with younger pupils, in association with Coventry City Football Club. There is a good programme of lessons in personal and social education.
19. Attendance is good. Teachers check attendance regularly, but the fact that absence is low speaks well for the way students take personal responsibility for their learning and reinforces the positive judgement about their attitudes.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7-11 and good in the sixth form.
- The majority of teachers plan lessons well to meet pupils' and students' needs.
- Good support is provided for pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
- Relationships are good and contribute to an effective climate for learning.

20. Teaching in Years 7-11 is at least satisfactory in all subjects and, as a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons overall. Teaching is good in art and design, English, ICT, music and physical education. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, much less is unsatisfactory and more is of high quality. Some good teaching was seen in all other subjects, which gives the school strengths on which to build further improvement in all departments. Teachers have to work hard in this school to meet the great variety of individual pupils' needs that can be found in most classes, particularly those associated with the high proportion of pupils who arrive in the school throughout the year with little or no English. In the last year, more than 70 pupils joined the school at other than the usual times – accounting for more than ten per cent of the school's population. Over recent years, some pupils have arrived speaking very little English and have done well in examinations after less than two years in the school. This is an indication of how well teachers across the school deal with the challenges that face them. There are examples of teachers' support throughout the subject section of this report.
21. Effective planning of lessons is the key to meeting pupils' needs and this is the principal strength of the good teaching. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that have variety to capture and maintain pupils' interest so that lessons proceed at a good pace and learning is secure. Because teachers know their pupils well, they are able to build upon good relationships to manage their classes so that little time

is wasted in dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Understanding pupils' needs, they provide appropriate support themselves and work well with additional support staff. Planning with the teaching assistants and ensuring that work is aimed at the individual needs of pupils is a particularly strong feature of teaching in the English, physical education and music departments. This very good practice could be shared more widely and effectively throughout the school. All that is best in teaching and learning at the school came together in a very good Year 8 art and design lesson on optical art. The teacher planned a sequence of tasks that extended pupils' knowledge of different materials and media. In addition, good attention was paid to pupils' numeracy skills of measurement and counting. The teacher's very good personal skills enabled effective demonstrations that made pupils think about ways to develop their own work. Firm, confident classroom management that was based on very good relationships resulted in excellent attitudes from the pupils. A newly arrived pupil (literally ten minutes into the lesson) with English as an additional language was well received, given support to settle in, by both the teacher and by other pupils who worked hard to communicate. Along with others in the class, the newly arrived pupil made very good progress as a result of the teacher's flexible and good humoured approach to a very well-planned lesson.

22. About one in 20 of the lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor. These were occasional lessons in a few departments. The common feature of these lessons was that they were not planned well enough to meet pupils' needs and, in one or two, planning did not take enough account of the available support so that it was not as effective as it usually is. Common features of otherwise satisfactory lessons would be relatively easy to rectify and are missed opportunities. For example, teachers do not consistently take the opportunity to support the school's wider aims beyond their subject, such as improving literacy and numeracy or contributing to pupils' spiritual development. Despite the school's adoption of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy, some teachers do not allow sufficient time at the end of lessons to check what pupils have learned or to consolidate learning. In addition, although the school has a wealth of data on pupils' performance that is meticulously analysed and made available to departments, it is not always used as well as it could be to support planning.
23. Teachers who staff the range of provision made for pupils with special educational needs work hard to enable the pupils they work with to overcome the barriers to their learning and to gain full access to the National Curriculum. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. The support given by teaching assistants is at least good and valued by staff, pupils and parents alike. Staff know pupils well and use their individual education and behaviour plans to focus the pupils on the targets set for them. A strength of teaching and support is the relationships that are developed within lessons and in withdrawal groups. These create a positive and pleasant environment for learning, which increases the self-confidence and self-esteem of the pupils, spurring them to greater effort and more rapid progress than they would otherwise make in their subjects.
24. In most departments, resources and tasks are matched well to the needs of the many pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers provide a range of learning resources to help pupils to understand and complete class work, for example, through a discussion on key words and the use of writing guidelines, so that pupils have

an appropriate level of guidance in completing written work. This is supported by the effective arrangements for teachers in the language development department to share good practice and develop teaching resources with subject departments. However, this work has yet to be developed fully. In some subjects, for example science and mathematics, teachers do not always take enough note of pupils' additional language needs in their planning. Language development teachers and teaching assistants provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills; they encourage and support pupils to take an active part in lessons.

Sixth form

25. Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and a high proportion (almost 70 per cent) was good or better. This is an improvement compared with the previous inspection.
26. A strong feature of the good teaching is teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They use these effectively to guide students' learning. This is apparent in mathematics, for example, where teachers show very good knowledge in their questioning and explanations and in the tasks they set so that students can confidently come to solutions. It is also the case in art and design, where teachers' very good subject knowledge enables students to relate their work to studies of major artists. Teachers' effective demonstrations of skills and processes ensure progress in handling painting, modelling and casting techniques. Similar subject expertise benefited students in a sampled lesson in business education, where the teacher used personal knowledge of office communication to reinforce the teaching point.
27. Teachers combine their good subject knowledge with well-planned lessons and a variety of activities that effectively meet the needs of their students. In an excellent statistics lesson, for example, the teacher organised the pupils well, and by using class and individual discussions and a 'matching cards' activity helped students gain a much better understanding of an important mathematical relationship. In a Year 13 English lesson the teacher used 'word cards' so that students could create a 'mind map' on paper: they were learning visually as well as theoretically as a result. In good biology lessons teachers use a wide variety of time-limited tasks and challenging interventions to enhance learning and check on progress. Teachers also support students with English as an additional language well in their lessons.
28. These attributes of good teaching are reinforced by good relationships between teachers and students and among students themselves. As a result, most students have good attitudes to their work and achieve well. Students in ICT, mathematics and art and design are particularly keenly motivated in lessons and show excellent concentration, effort and pride in their work. In other subjects attitudes are usually at least good.
29. Teaching is not so effective when opportunities for further discussion are missed or when instructions are unclear. These occasions are, however, rare. More significant obstacles to effective teaching arise from the way that mathematics and biology are timetabled, so that in the one case there is insufficient time to cover the syllabus

requirements and in the other teachers cannot adequately support students in two different year groups.

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

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is good.
- Connexions (the careers and advice service) provides an excellent guidance service.
- Careers and vocational education are very good.
- The school has good relationships with its partner institutions and benefits greatly from its links with the community.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Sixth form students have some opportunities for additional enrichment of their basic curriculum.
- Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9 because not enough time is spent on history, geography and French.
- Statutory requirements are not met because ICT is not adequately taught and used in subjects across the curriculum.
- Provision for personal development is good, and provision for social development is very good.

31. The curriculum is broad and balanced but does not meet statutory requirements because ICT is not taught in all subjects across the curriculum. In Years 7-9, it contains all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. However, provision is unsatisfactory because not enough time is spent on history, geography and French and this is adversely affecting the standards reached by pupils in these subjects. The lack of time for foundation subjects was an issue in the previous report. This is the result of the school's decision to allocate a higher than average proportion of time to teaching English in order to meet pupils' needs, which is a contributory factor to good achievement in English. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils follow a core curriculum, with further options to provide breadth, including GCSE business studies and child development. All pupils follow a GNVQ course in ICT as well as short courses in design and technology and religious education. About one in five pupils follows an alternative curriculum in Years 10 and 11. This is tailored well to the needs of individual pupils and for many pupils in Year 10 involves part-time courses at City College. Other pupils have work placements for all or part of the time. There are exciting plans to expand the number of vocational courses, in conjunction with City College.
32. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs, in a number of ways. The Individual Needs Service (INS) is the hub of the provision. It is directly managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo), who also oversees all other aspects of the school's special educational needs provision. She is assisted by two part time learning support teachers, both subject teachers, and five experienced and qualified teaching assistants. Teaching assistants, who are assigned to departments, or to individual pupils whose statement of special educational need indicates a need for support, deliver the major part of the INS work in mainstream classes. Teaching

assistants attend subject department meetings to exchange information on special educational needs pupils, as appropriate. All pupils on the special needs register have an individual education plan (IEP) that sets out strategic targets for each pupil. Subject departments can then evaluate their skills and resources against the targets and develop appropriate programmes and strategies to respond to them. They may also add their own specific targets to the plans. The link between subject departments and the special educational needs provision is variable. The link with the English department is strong and results in very good work being planned and delivered by teachers who know the pupils very well. The link with the mathematics department is weak and its provision for special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Teachers who work with the lower ability sets, which contain a large proportion of special educational needs pupils, do not always plan effectively enough for the individual needs of those pupils with a consequent effect on their progress. In other departments, the provision is good and improving as links strengthen. All annual reviews of statements are held appropriately, although it has proved difficult to persuade some parents of older pupils to attend, in spite of the many efforts to encourage them. The SENCo attends Year 6 annual reviews and meets with primary school SENCos to discuss statemented pupils and to start individual profiles on them, to ease their transition to secondary school.

33. The Learning Support Centre (LSC) is an inclusion unit that works with school-phobic pupils and those at risk of permanent exclusion. It was set up at the beginning of the current school year as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. Very good and well-resourced accommodation has been provided, which is staffed by a centre manager, who is an experienced special educational needs teacher, and a teacher assistant. It is currently working with seven pupils from Years 7-9 who have been identified as at risk of exclusion. Poor attendance that has been a feature of some pupils, remains a problem at this early stage in the life of the centre. Good links with parents are maintained by letter and telephone in an effort to keep them in touch with the work of their children. It is expected that the school's newly acquired independent learning programme will be networked to the excellent suite of computers in the centre, to add to the learning software that is currently used to motivate pupils to learn. The manager also co-ordinates and teaches two programmes of vocational study, the ASDAN Bronze Youth Award and the Edexcel 'Skills for Working Life' certificate. Both are co-ordinated in conjunction with the City College for Years 10 and 11. The manager has drawn up a sound one-year action plan that will be reviewed at the end of the year.
34. The speech and language provision is managed by the deputy head of the local education authority's secondary phase speech and language service and an assistant teacher, both very well qualified in speech and language and autism spectrum disorders. Both are employed by the local authority's speech and language service and work with seven statemented pupils in Years 7-11. They work on an individual withdrawal basis for booster language sessions, as well as giving them in-class support, as appropriate. The staff have good links across departments. Parents are able to consult with the speech and language teachers at parents' evenings and are contacted at home or by telephone at least once a term. They manage the annual reviews of the pupils they work with and work hard to ensure that parents are able to attend them. The Connexions service works closely with the unit, in particular through the transition review of pupils. The speech and language therapist visits twice a week to test and evaluate the expressive and receptive language skills of the pupils.

35. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have full access to the subject curriculum. This is supported by the very good arrangements made by the language development department to provide a broad range of support to meet their needs. These include induction lessons for newly arrived pupils, language development lessons for pupils in Years 9 and 10, a good range of in-class support to match pupils' first language, in-class support from teachers and support for subject departments in developing additional materials and methods for meeting pupils' needs. Although the needs of beginners and those at early stages of language development are met through the additional support, the language development department is aware of the need to support more fluent pupils whose written language skills are not as developed as their spoken language. The school has sound plans to review the effectiveness of its provision across the school, following an analysis of needs.
36. The school makes satisfactory provision for the teaching of literacy overall, though it is inconsistent across departments. Good practice is evident in design and technology where teachers use 'word walls', displays, glossaries and writing frames effectively to support pupils' writing. Often materials are specifically directed towards pupils at an early stage of learning English. In religious education, there is strong emphasis on the correct use of special terms and on developing note-taking skills. Pupils are encouraged to write at length about situations that require understanding of and sympathy for the moral dilemmas that people face. Some lessons in personal and social education provide very good opportunities for speaking and listening through group discussion and sharing ideas. In other subjects literacy skills are less well developed. Science, for example, offers some good examples of the use of challenging reading materials, but teachers do not consistently refer to important subject vocabulary and only occasionally provide support for writing either as an activity or through marking. In modern foreign languages pupils encounter too academic and, therefore, unsuitable reading material, and do not have sufficient opportunities for reading aloud or practising writing. In history, teachers use 'frames' to support pupils' writing and provide opportunities for discussion in group or paired work, but they do not consistently pick up how pupils use language or provide sufficiently for extended writing. There has been training for staff on the development of literacy skills, but the literacy co-ordinator lacks time to monitor practice across the school so that, at present, the strategies for developing literacy skills are only satisfactorily effective.
37. The school makes satisfactory provision for teaching numeracy in departments across the school. There is a good policy to guide the development of pupils' numeracy skills in mathematics and other subjects. All staff are aware of how numeracy fits in with their subject and what they should do to assist pupils within lessons. As a result, most subjects are making a satisfactory contribution to improving standards as pupils move through the school.
38. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum. There is a wide range of sporting and musical activities, as well as homework clubs, booster classes and recreational activities. There is a tradition of annual educational visits to France for pupils in Years 7-11. Very strong links with the community enable pupils to take part in competitions, such as public speaking and role-playing in the magistrates' court. Connexions provides an excellent service to the pupils, contributing to the work experience programme for all Year 10 pupils and

fulfilling a wider role in counselling and partnership with a range of outside agencies. Pupils speak highly of the service they provide. The school has good relationships with its partner primary schools. There are some curriculum links that help promote improved standards, but not all departments liaise closely. This was mentioned in the last report and has not been dealt with. Strong links with City College make a good contribution to pupils' learning, and continue to develop.

39. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There is a one-hour lesson each week for all pupils. It includes careers from Year 8 on. The programme is carefully planned by the co-ordinator and taught by tutors with frequent use of professional speakers in lessons on sex, relationships and drugs education. An example seen during the inspection was a lesson for Year 11 on drink-driving. Twice a year, a whole day is given to covering a single topic in greater detail, such as the outdoor environment or community awareness. This is a good feature of the course. The programme is monitored and evaluated by senior staff so that it can be revised where necessary. Citizenship lessons have been incorporated in the personal, social and health education programme and in humanities to meet satisfactorily the requirements for citizenship education in Years 7-9. In Years 10 and 11, some elements of citizenship are taught in personal, social and health education but the co-ordination of contributions from other subjects is not good enough to ensure that all pupils receive a common curriculum.
40. The school's links with the community are a particular strength. These are used – very effectively – for the benefit of pupils from all backgrounds. Joint programmes with City College have recently started which allow pupils in Years 10 and 11 (mainly boys) to study painting, decorating, carpentry and plumbing. The school draws on the facilities available at partnership centres in the community to broaden pupils' skills. Contact with local business and industry also extends the curricular opportunities for pupils, for example, in contributing to vocational education and providing work experience. Good use is also made of the immediate environment, for example, in geography field studies. The school's wide range of contacts and support was evident in the large number of representatives of local organisations who met inspectors informally to discuss their links with the school during the inspection.
41. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Assemblies provide a good forum for pupils to gather together and teachers take the opportunity to reinforce positive attitudes and actions. Significant religious festivals are recognised and pupils show respect towards the beliefs of their fellow pupils. Opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth are not consistent, however, and there is no general practice of an act of worship during the assembly.
42. Provision for pupils' spiritual development across the school is satisfactory. Good opportunities are found in religious education where they are able to explore the values and beliefs of the major faiths and the way that they influence the lives of believers. During a lesson exploring the effects of bereavement, a teacher provided opportunities for pupils to share their experiences and so voice their feelings, in an effective way. During the study of Buddhism, pupils are able to experience the practice of meditation that gives them some insight into its effects. In history they are encouraged to consider the feelings of the people from the past, such as the child workers in factories, or the

soldiers going to the front in the First World War. Through their art and music, pupils have good opportunities for self-expression. Pupils respond well to opportunities for reflection and this could be extended to all areas of the curriculum in order to promote greater awareness of themselves and the wonder of the world about them.

43. Provision for moral development is good. Very good opportunities for development exist but they have yet to have a full impact on the attitudes of all pupils. The school has established very clear codes of conduct that are supported by a well-understood system of rewards and sanctions. The work of outside agencies, such as the School Intervention Project (designed to support pupils in danger of exclusion), and the range of both adult and pupil mentors available to support pupils, are promoting the positive attitudes and behaviour the school stands for. Good opportunities to discuss moral issues take place in several subjects such as history, religious education, geography and science. In mathematics and physical education pupils are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and strive to improve. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their surroundings and the headmaster leads by example in his drive to improve the environment of the school. Teachers are good role models and pupils are encouraged to respect each other's views and opinions.
44. Provision for the social development of the pupils is very good. The school is a racially harmonious environment where pupils generally treat each other with respect. This is apparent in the successful integrated group and paired work that takes place in many lessons. The range of extra-curricular activities encourages pupils to work together and the programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils understanding of the need for co-operation in relationships. The school provides opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions through the School Council and they contributed to the development of the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils in Year 11 support the work of the school as prefects and as mentors for pupils in Year 7. Year 7 have begun their own newsletter that enables them to work as a team, become involved with each other and have a voice within the year group. Smaller groups of pupils are encouraged to become socially responsible through participation in activities such as the Coventry Youth Council, the decoration of a nearby crèche and the window box planting that supports the local community.
45. Opportunities for the cultural development of pupils have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Teachers in some areas draw on the diverse cultural backgrounds of pupils and in religious education, art and design and music a range of cultures is well represented. For example, in art and design pupils are encouraged to consider a mix of Islamic design and western style that is apparent in Britain today. There is insufficient use of cross-curricular links, however, to reinforce these opportunities for pupils to become aware of the contribution of the range of cultures represented in the school. Pupils have the opportunity to study for a GCSE in several community languages through the use of the school by outside agencies and they achieve considerable success. Pupils have the opportunity to study the culture of their area through visits to the places of worship of the major faiths represented in Coventry and through their study of the watch making industry that was once so important to the locality of their homes. The school recognises the need for pupils to be proud of their past as well as their future and in their writing pupils show understanding of the great changes that many have had to face on arrival in England.

Sixth form

46. The sixth form provides a suitable range of academic and vocational courses for students. The vocational courses in ICT, business education and health and social care are popular and meet students' needs and local circumstances well. There is a key skills course in communication and courses on the key skills of application of number and ICT can be provided if students wish to choose them. Students in Year 12 also take a general studies course and follow a programme of personal and social education alongside Year 13 students. The provision of film studies and drama in 'twilight sessions' is a good indication of the way the sixth form accommodates students' choices.
47. Students are very effectively prepared for work and higher education through the personal and social education programme, careers advice both locally and in school, and from subject teachers. Students acknowledge and appreciate the support they receive in these respects.
48. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students in the sixth form is good. The school provides their statutory right to a religious education and opportunities for discussion and social interaction are good. The attractive sixth form area encourages them to take a pride in their position as senior members of the school and students feel themselves to be role models for the younger pupils. Sixth form students act as lunch-time supervisors for which they are paid, and this reinforces their role as responsible members of the school. Members of the sixth form trained as mentors for pupils involved in the School Intervention Project and accompanied them to Bavaria; many act as mentors and 'buddies' in classes in the main school. They are represented on the School Council, although they do not have a particular role to play and there is no sixth form council through which they can debate concerns or plan activities. One student plays a significant role in supporting younger pupils in sport; however, there is generally no significant contribution by the sixth form in the extra-curricular clubs for the main school. Students appreciated the termly social events but felt that they would appreciate more opportunity to travel abroad.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are good.
- Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good.
- The overall quality of educational and personal support and guidance is good.
- Arrangements to record pupils' attainment and set them targets are very good.
- The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are good.
- The advice, support and guidance given to students in the sixth form are good.

49. Tutors and heads of year stay with their groups throughout their time in the main school. This arrangement, and the relatively small size of the school, means that they come to know pupils well. Frequent briefing meetings ensure that information about pupils is shared and used to help them. These briefings are important because of the numbers of pupils from diverse backgrounds, for example refugees and asylum seekers, who join the school at short notice. Informal knowledge is supplemented by thorough

records. Good child protection procedures are in place with appropriate guidance and training for members of staff, including induction for teachers who are new to the school.

50. The school's procedures to promote good behaviour and enforce discipline have a deliberately high profile. Rules and the consequences of infringing them are made clear to all pupils. They are enforced consistently. Teachers generally manage pupils well and lessons proceed with minimal disruption. Pupils interviewed think that behaviour is better since the introduction of these procedures and approve of the stricter discipline. They also consider there is less bullying and oppressive behaviour as a result. The high level of exclusions is a consequence of the policy to improve standards of behaviour. The number has dropped since the opening of the Learning Support Centre in September which helps those pupils at risk of exclusion for reasons of poor behaviour.
51. There are good procedures to monitor and improve attendance. They have led to significantly better rates of attendance. Money from the Excellence in Cities initiative has paid for extra staff to check attendance. Electronic registration in every lesson enables attendance to be monitored in detail every day. Parents are contacted if their children are not in school. As a result, there had been a marked drop in unauthorised absence and truancy. Levels of authorised absence have also fallen, though the overall rate of attendance has still to reach the average for schools nationally. In this, the school receives good support from the Education Welfare Service.
52. The school knows that praise, when deserved, is appreciated and is quick to acknowledge when pupils have done well, or improved, through a series of awards assemblies. The overall quality of educational and personal support and guidance is good. The programme of tutorial reviews brings together the monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress. Pupils interviewed said they find these reviews helpful.
53. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good. Very good arrangements are in place to record pupils' attainment and set them targets. Year 6 national test results, and other nationally recognised tests, are combined to build up a clear picture of pupils' attainment when they arrive at the school. This information is collated and made available to teachers so that they know the standards of the pupils they are teaching and can plan accordingly. The information is added to as pupils move through the school. The assessment policy provides clear guidelines for assessment that result in a consistent approach across the school. Most subjects have good procedures to assess pupils against national standards. In some, for example physical education and design and technology, very good systems help pupils to improve their standards. In some others, however, national levels are not used effectively and, as a result, the procedures do not produce an accurate picture of pupils' attainment.
54. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are good. The school has a very good system for reviewing and checking on progress. All teachers are involved in the process and the results are used well to review targets for pupils and subjects. The results are regularly discussed with pupils so that they know what they need to do to improve their standards and reach their targets. The results of this process, however, are not yet being used as effectively as they could be. For example,

in geography, the information is not being used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. In modern foreign languages, pupils are not sure of how well they are doing and consequently do not know what they have to do to improve.

55. While routine procedures for pupils' safety are effective, the main entrance to the school does cause concern. Pupils and vehicles have to come in through a single gate. There is no separate pedestrian access. The gate is narrow and gives onto a busy road with fast-moving traffic and has very limited visibility to one side.
56. There has been considerable improvement in procedures to improve attendance and behaviour since the previous inspection.

Sixth form

Assessment

57. The use of assessment to promote students' learning is good. Under existing arrangements the school guides students in their choice of courses so that there is a good match between courses and students' aspirations and potential. Students have a target grade to aim for and this helps them to achieve well. They know what is expected of them. Heads of department also receive this information so that students' progress can be checked, and this is done regularly and recorded on each individual's 'Yellow Card'. Teachers' assessments too are helpful, both in relation to marking of essays or assignments and to feedback to students in lessons. Teachers are good at diagnosing individual learning needs and provide for them well. Reports give good information about students' progress.

Advice, support and guidance

58. The advice, support and guidance given to students in the sixth form are good. There is a strong focus on care for the individual and flexibility in meeting students' needs. Individual interviews take place before joining the sixth form, tutors meet students individually on a weekly basis, there are regular progress reviews and students have very good advice about careers and higher education opportunities. Their private study time is usefully spent in the library and their work there is monitored and supported by the librarian. Teachers are approachable and helpful – inspectors particularly noticed this in relation to the good support for students with English as an additional language. Students value the good support they receive.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- The school has good links with parents and works hard to maintain and strengthen them.
- Parents get good general information about the school and the progress their children make.
- Parents' own involvement in the school and their contribution to learning are satisfactory.

59. Although the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire and/or attended the parents' meeting strongly support the school, they represent only a small proportion of all parents: the rate of return was low. Those parents who did return the questionnaire think very highly of the school. They consider that their children like the school, work hard there and do well. These parents say that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. Some of these parents have concerns about standards of behaviour. Inspectors agree with parents that pupils make appropriate progress but consider that behaviour in the school is satisfactory.
60. The school has good links with parents and works hard to maintain them. There is a good range of helpful information about the school, for example, in the prospectus and the parents' handbook. The programme of tutorial reviews and the subject consultation evening gives parents the opportunity to discuss their children's progress each term. The two progress reports and the full annual report are timed to coincide with this programme. They combine to give parents a clear view of the progress that their children make. However, comments in the full report vary too much in the level of subject detail that they give parents: the best have precise suggestions for improvement, while others merely comment on attitudes. The school is also quick to contact parents with praise or when concerns arise. The school's links with the parents of children with special educational needs and its arrangements for communicating with those who have English as an additional language are particularly good. The level of parents' involvement in the school and their contribution to learning are satisfactory overall. Some parents are very supportive and take an active interest in their children's education, but others have little contact. This is reflected in the small number of questionnaires returned (most of which praised the school) and parents' limited use of pupils' diaries.
61. Parents receive more information about progress now than at the time of the previous inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The school is well led and managed.
- Educational direction is very clear.
- The school has the capacity for further improvement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well.
- Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is managed very well.
- Financial management is good.
- The governors support the school well.
- The provision of learning resources is unsatisfactory overall.

62. Leadership and management are good; they have improved since the previous inspection. The school has been through a period of decline. However, the changes in structure, staff and systems managed by the headteacher over the three years since his appointment, with the able support of the senior management team, have established a position where standards are beginning to improve and there is capacity for sustained improvement. An issue of the previous inspection report was for the school to develop

leadership that ensured an appropriate balance of development and evaluation, providing support for middle managers and enabling them to plan more effectively and to monitor the quality of provision. This issue has been resolved by the headteacher's very strong leadership and his vision for the school's development. He provides very clear educational direction and, together with his deputy headteachers, is translating vision into reality. Together, the members of the senior management team ensure that the school's aims and values are well understood by pupils and staff so that they are reflected in all aspects of its work. The result is that the school is a harmonious community in which there is a clear focus on individual achievement. A strong feature of planning for the school's improvement is the relationships that have been generated within the community and with fellow professionals across the local education authority, many of whom came to the school during the inspection to show their support. Planned improvement to curriculum provision in conjunction with City College is a clear example of the value of such relationships. The senior management team lead by example, providing a highly visible presence around the school, during and outside lesson time, which contributes to maintaining an effective climate for learning in the school.

63. Within the school, a planned and rigorous programme of evaluating classroom standards of teaching – by both senior staff and middle managers – has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Linkage between academic and pastoral management is contributing to improving pupils' standards. However, although the quality of middle management is satisfactory overall with some strengths, notably in English, some middle managers give more attention to day-to-day management issues and not enough to the strategic development of their departments. During the inspection, the provision of resources for learning in some departments was identified as being unsatisfactory, for example, in art and design and design and technology. However, although funds are available for improvement, heads of department have not been identifying their departments' need well enough or making the case for additional allocations in reviews with senior managers.
64. A key factor supporting improvement in standards is the collection and analysis of assessment data by senior managers. The analysed results are fed back to departmental and pastoral staff so that any underachievement by pupils can be identified at an early stage and steps taken to deal with it. The system of data collection works well. The analysis of data by senior managers is of high quality, providing clear information on individual progress – of great importance in a school whose pupils arrive with such a diversity of needs from many different backgrounds and at irregular times. However, the management and use of the products of analysis for planning to meet pupils' needs are not yet consistently as good as they should be in departments.
65. The governing body supports the school well while holding it properly to account for standards and progress towards its targets. Governors have a good working knowledge of the school and the targets they set show their understanding of the stage that the school has reached in its improvement; they are realistic but sufficiently ambitious. The school benefits from governors' strong links with the community and a range of professional expertise that they bring to their work. This is evident in the way that the governing body has been restructured in order to improve its contribution to the school's management and helping shape its direction. Although governors discharge

most of their responsibilities well, they do not meet their statutory obligations in respect of ICT across the curriculum in Years 7-11.

66. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and has efficient administrative support. Financial management is good; spending is well controlled and targeted appropriately to the school's development plans. Contingency planning is good. In the last financial year an above average proportion of the budget was carried forward in anticipation of having to repay capitation to the local education authority because numbers joining the school were lower than projected. The school makes good use of additional funds to support special initiatives. A good example is the School Intervention Project, funded by the regeneration budget, which is having a positive effect on the behaviour of pupils in danger of exclusion.
67. The school has good systems in place for judging the effectiveness of provision for pupils with English as an additional language and its impact on the progress made by pupils and students, for example, through records of the progress made over their school career. The school's co-ordinator of the language development department provides very good management of the wide range of provision, support for teachers, learning support assistants and the community outreach workers. Although good progress has been made since the previous inspection in providing support for the development of inclusive planning and teaching strategies for pupils with English as an additional language across subject departments, this remains a key area for development so that teaching resources are deployed more effectively in establishing good practice across the school to support pupils' progress.
68. The special educational needs co-ordinator leads a strong team of support staff in a good and improving provision for pupils with special educational needs. Staff work hard in all areas of the service and their success is reflected in the good progress being made by their target pupils in most subject departments. There is a need to develop the service in a way that enables the very good practice in some departments to be shared more widely throughout the school, to strengthen the overall inclusive provision that the school makes for its pupils and students.
69. The support and professional development of both newly qualified and newly appointed staff is good. There is a well thought of programme of induction covering both categories of teachers new to the school, and this is followed systematically. The good level of support that this programme provides and the effort that colleagues are prepared to put into their support are appreciated by the newly qualified teachers. There are good arrangements to ensure that teachers who receive in-service training have the opportunity to pass their expertise on to their colleagues. The school's strategy for the performance management of teaching staff is satisfactory.
70. Accommodation is satisfactory and is in sufficiently good condition to support the demands of the subjects of the curriculum. The site is well maintained and reflects the strong ethos of care of the school. Corridors are used well by teachers to display interesting and stimulating images, which create a very pleasant ambiance. The refurbished science rooms provide good learning spaces, as do the suited rooms in history, geography and religious education. The indoor sports facilities are very good but outdoor facilities are poor. Teaching rooms in design and technology are also poor.

and are soon to be extensively modernised. In the mathematics area rooms are used by pupils during lunch-time and this, together with partitions between classrooms, prevents teachers developing these rooms into suitable bases for learning. The school's entrance gives serious cause for concern for the safety of its users because it is shared by pedestrian and vehicular traffic and there is poor visibility for vehicles entering and leaving the site.

71. Learning resources are inadequate overall. Some subjects (notably the core subjects of English, mathematics and science) have enough equipment and materials, but there is a shortage of appropriate books and other resources in several major curriculum areas, including design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. These shortages are creating obstacles to raising standards. The library is too small for the school's needs but is a good, valuable learning resource, providing a place for pupils to study, and is used well. The stock is being slowly replenished and includes a satisfactory mix of fiction and non-fiction books, as well as books specific to particular topics. Funds are now available and a major refurbishment is planned.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

72. The sixth form is led and managed effectively. Students follow courses that suit their aspirations and potential and are achieving well because leadership ensures good teaching overall. There is a strong focus on support for the individual and flexibility in meeting students' choices. Students appreciate this approach and are pleased with their decision to stay on into the sixth form. There is a clear direction for the sixth form's future in partnership with City College and other Coventry schools.

Resources

73. The provision of learning resources for the sixth form is satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) continue efforts to improve attendance; *(see paragraphs 8, 15)*
- (2) continue efforts to raise standards across the curriculum, particularly by making more effective use of available assessment data to identify underachievement in all subjects; *(see paragraphs 6, 22, 53, 54, 63, 121, 145, 160)*
- (3) improve the quality of curriculum provision by:
 - meeting statutory requirements for teaching ICT across the curriculum in Years 7-11;
 - improving the allocation and distribution of time for teaching humanities and modern foreign languages and
 - co-ordinating the teaching of citizenship in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are fully met;*(see paragraphs 8, 31, 65, 109, 119, 122, 133, 142, 145, 149, 151, 154, 157)*
- (4) improve the provision of resources for learning in art and design, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages. *(see paragraphs 8, 63, 71, 115, 131, 138, 145, 157, 161, 163)*

The following should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improvement to the entrance to the school so that pedestrians and vehicles can enter and leave safely. *(see paragraphs 55, 70)*

Sixth form

- (1) Review timetabling arrangements in biology to ensure continuity of teaching and learning. *(see paragraphs 9, 192)*
- (2) Review the time allocated to mathematics to ensure adequate coverage of syllabus requirements. *(see paragraph 187)*

THE WORK OF THE LEARNING SCHOOL INTERVENTION PROJECT

75. The School Intervention Project (SIP) was set up under the Home Office to tackle the increasing problems related to crime and bullying in schools. The Barr's Hill project is now running independently, funded from the school's secondary regeneration budget. The budget is secure until March 2004. It is a very effective project that is managed by two tutor teachers who work with a small number of pupils from Years 7-10 on an eight week initial programme. Pupils are selected on the basis of either their experience of being bullied, or their more general behavioural and problems with social relationships that act as a barrier to their learning, as well as an impediment to the progress of others.

76. Pupils are referred to the SIP through the pastoral and special educational needs networks of the school. Their parents or carers are involved at the outset of the programme. They are asked to fill in a questionnaire that leads to them being invited to the first session of the programme and the final evaluation session, where they are able to take part and discuss the programme and its outcome for their child. Pupils evaluate their own performance and its outcomes throughout the programme and this acts as a feedback on both pupils' progress and the effectiveness of the programmes.
77. Tutors make very good use of a programme devised by the local education authority's child and adolescent mental health service, to tackle issues of bullying in a safe and supportive setting. They have also designed their own excellent format for working with pupils whose social and personal communication skills are poorly developed, leading them into serious difficulties in the classroom, or to school phobia. These approaches have enabled tutors to manage the development of pupils' personal and social skills well. With the valued co-operation of parents and school staff, the programme is proving very positive and beneficial to all involved.
78. The quality of teaching and learning in the project is very good overall and sometimes excellent enabling pupils to make very good progress towards social and behavioural targets set through the programme. One pupil who has suffered severe school phobia for more than a year has been drawn into the Learning Support Centre (LSC) and is now included on the SIP programme. This pupil is building up friendships and gaining in confidence as this pupil works in classes that present considerable challenges to personal and social learning. Pupils value the programmes and enjoy taking part in the discussions, evaluations and practical activities.
79. The very good work of the SIP is on limited funding and it is important that the many lessons learned from the programme are fed back to the mainstream school, so that the impetus for tackling some key behavioural issues is not lost, but can benefit the school as a whole.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	106
	Sixth form	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	5	17	47	30	5	1	0
Percentage	5	16	44	28	5	1	0
Sixth form							
Number	1	3	9	5	0	0	0
Percentage	6	17	50	28	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	516	51
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	232	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	115	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	213

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	75
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.3
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	46	59	105

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	34	27	23
	Total	50	43	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (28)	41 (34)	38 (31)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (4)	15 (11)	6 (9)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	7	18	12
	Girls	16	16	22
	Total	23	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	22 (23)	32 (34)	32 (30)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	8 (4)	3 (21)	4 (4)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	34	48	82

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	4	21	26
	Girls	14	31	40
	Total	18	52	66
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	22 (19)	63 (67)	81 (82)
	National	51 (48)	89 (91)	95 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	22 (22)
	National	39 (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	N/A
	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	5	8	13
	Average point score per candidate	9.6 (8.3)	11.9 (11.0)	11.0 (10.0)
National	Average point score per candidate	* (16.9)	* (17.9)	* (17.4)

		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	5	8	13	0	0	0
	Average point score per candidate	9.6 (8.3)	11.9 (11.0)	11.0 (10.0)	0	0	0
National	Average point score per candidate	* (16.9)	* (17.9)	* (17.4)	N/a	N/a	(5.5)

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

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

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	322	133	7
White – Irish	2	1	0
White – any other White background	34	8	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	17	12	0
Mixed – White and Black African	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	73	11	1
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	27	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	26	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	0	0
Black or Black British – African	15	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	38.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	34
Total aggregate hours worked per week	564

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

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

Key Stage 3	18.6
Key Stage 4	18.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	19
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.8
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	2,434,488
Total expenditure	2,450,925
Expenditure per pupil	4400
Balance brought forward from previous year	211,033
Balance carried forward to next year	-194,596

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

567

Number of questionnaires returned

54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	44	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	57	7	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	43	0	4	2
The teaching is good.	57	39	0	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	30	6	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	24	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	54	39	4	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	41	50	4	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	37	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	6	2	11

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well as a result.
- Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, and there is good capacity to improve further.
- The head of department provides good leadership and effective management. As a result the department has a clear sense of direction and works purposefully for the benefit of its pupils.

Area for improvement

- Boys' standards of attainment require continuing attention in order to reduce the gap between their performance and that of girls.

80. In 2002, pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 9 was well below average, but average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Their performance in English was better than in mathematics and science. Girls did much better than boys, and the difference between them was greater than nationally. Pupils' results have fluctuated year by year but the trend over five years is a rising one. Given pupils' well below average attainment on entry to the school, the picture is one of at least good achievement by many pupils and reflects the good provision for lower attainers, for those with special educational needs and particularly for those with English as an additional language. Performance was much improved on 2001 and the department exceeded the school's target.
81. GCSE English results for A*-C grades in 2002 were significantly below average, below average for A*-G grades, and lower than they were in 2001. In English literature, results were better than in 2001 but still below average. Girls did much better than boys in both subjects. Compared with their standards at the end of Year 9, pupils' results indicate that they achieved at least as well as should be expected. The department met the school's target for grades in the range A*-C.
82. The proportion of pupils who can be entered for tests and examinations in English is dictated to a considerable extent by attendance problems and the movement of pupils into and out of the school. The department copes well with these difficulties and ensures that pupils achieve well overall as evidenced by improved performance in national tests and by work seen during the inspection. Although standards are below average at the end of Years 9 and 11, achievement is good given pupils' well below average attainment on entry to the school and (for Year 11) the well below average scores in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001.

83. Standards of attainment and achievement are as high as they are because the department has implemented the national strategy for teaching English in Year 7 effectively. In addition, improvements in the assessment system have brought much better analysis of and planning for the needs of individuals. The progress of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and gifted and talented pupils as well as those with special education needs is tracked carefully. Pupils are set suitable targets from the beginning of Year 8. The attainment of boys has been reviewed and their progress is monitored, particularly successfully when done in partnership with parents. Though boys are not underachieving, their standards of attainment continue to differ markedly from girls' standards. Pupils with English as an additional language receive very good classroom support from educational assistants and make very good progress as a result. The effects are apparent in pupils' writing about their experience of coming to a strange country in the collection called 'Origins' – a very good example of giving these pupils a 'voice' and a place to use it. More generally, the effects are apparent in well-planned work that enables pupils to develop their reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills at a good rate during Years 7-11. The written work of middle and lower attainers benefits from the carefully structured 'frameworks' provided by teachers. Higher attainers show thorough knowledge of set texts and write about them with interest and some personal response. Pupils' standards, particularly boys', remain below average overall because of continuing difficulties with spelling, sentence punctuation, and expressing clearly what they want to say in speech and writing, but many have achieved well to reach this standard given their starting point.
84. The quality of teaching in English is good overall, and pupils learn well as a result. Teachers manage pupils well through a combination of good humour, knowledge of the needs of individual pupils and praise for their efforts. As a result pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Well-planned lessons and carefully structured activities contribute much to pupils' progress. Teachers provide well presented, stimulating extracts, worksheets and other materials which help pupils to understand their learning and make an appropriate written response. Teachers usually make effective use of a variety of methods to encourage and reinforce learning, including short tasks, question and answer sessions, and paired and group work. In two very good lessons in Years 9 and 10 the teachers ensured pupils' concentration and close attention by reading aloud very well from stimulating short stories. As a result, pupils learned a great deal about attending to the detail of a text and reading for understanding and all were involved in the learning at some point in the lessons. The Year 10 class went on to write their own ending to the story using features of the author's style. An example of the very good support for pupils with English as an additional language occurred in a Year 8 class. The teacher gave a pupil, who had recently joined the school with no English, a method of tackling new words by breaking them down into syllables. By the end of the lesson, after very good additional support from an education assistant, the pupil was able to speak a sentence to the class giving the result of his library research. Occasionally, teaching is less effective because a teacher's instructions are unclear or explanations confusing, creating uncertainty among pupils about their learning. The pace of learning slows while misunderstandings are sorted out. Nevertheless, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed on this inspection and teaching is now more consistently good or better than at the previous inspection in 1996.

85. There have been other good improvements since the previous inspection, for example, in pupils' achievement, in standards of attainment by the end of Year 9, in the planning of pupils' work and in tracking pupils' progress. Good leadership and management by the head of department provide clear direction and a firm grip on procedures so that teachers work effectively as a team on behalf of their pupils. The department has good capacity to improve further.

Drama

86. Drama is part of the curriculum in Years 7-9 and is offered as an option for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Only limited observation was possible in this inspection, but it was clear that teaching and learning are good and pupils' standards of attainment are at least average, representing good or very good achievement considering that many encounter the subject for the first time on entry to the school. Pupils in a Year 8 class responded very well to the teacher's effective ways of introducing how to use space on stage and learned sufficiently well to be able to perform a short piece demonstrating their newly acquired skills by the end of the lesson. In a very good Year 9 lesson, pupils reached above average standards of performance because of the teacher's very well chosen activity (the 'Box Challenge'). She obtained the active involvement of all the pupils (particularly those with English as an additional language) and provided very good support for and control of the learning. Pupils in a good Year 11 lesson attained average standards overall when exploring and explaining important themes and aspects of character in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* because of the teacher's earlier preparation and the opportunities she provided for independent learning through research and presentation. In these lessons the attitudes and behaviour of pupils were at least very good and on one occasion excellent. These responses reflect not just the enthusiasm pupils have for drama but also the way that teaching ensures that all pupils are included in the work and have the chance to succeed.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them explain skills and concepts clearly.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure pupils usually work hard.
- Improving results in national tests at the end of Year 9.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 7 to 11.
- The achievement of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Better use of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Strategies for developing pupils' literacy skills through mathematics need improving.
- The use of computers in lessons so that pupils can use them to help their learning.

97. When pupils enter the school their overall standards are well below average. Standards are greatly affected by the large number of pupils, many with low levels of attainment,

who enter the school at different times of the year. Pupils' make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and as a result their achievement is satisfactory.

98. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were very low in comparison with the national average. This was a slight improvement on those of previous years when results had been falling. Teachers' assessment of pupils' standards did not match their test results. A significant number of pupils did better than expected. Results were similar to those in English but not as good as in science.
99. In the 2002 GCSE examinations the proportions of pupils gaining grades A*-C, and grades A*-G, were well below average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. These results are greatly affected by the number of pupils who begin their courses late and, as a result, are not able to cope with the demands of the examination. In addition, the results do not include those pupils who were successful but over the normal age of entry. Pupils did not do as well in mathematics as they did in their other subjects. Results have fluctuated around their present level since the previous inspection.
100. Standards in work seen at the end of Year 9 are well below average. Achievement is satisfactory. Only higher attaining pupils handle numbers confidently in mental and oral activities. Lower attaining pupils still do not recall their tables easily. Average attaining pupils in Year 9 still have difficulty with the concept of probability. Algebraic skills are not well developed for most pupils. Problem-solving skills are weak; many pupils having difficulty with the language used in questions. However, most pupils can find patterns and establish rules and some can use formulae.
101. In work seen, by the end of Year 11 standards are well below average. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their earlier learning. Number skills are still weak for many pupils; most still do not handle mental calculations confidently although they use calculators accurately. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 understand and use Pythagoras' Theorem confidently and, in Year 11, use the sine rule accurately in trigonometry. Algebraic skills are still not well developed. Problem-solving skills are improving; pupils find rules, use formulae, predict and test results.
102. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a result, learning and achievement are satisfactory. The good subject knowledge of teachers ensures they are able to explain new skills and concepts clearly, which helps pupils to understand them better. Good relationships between pupils and their teachers ensure that pupils usually work well on their tasks. Pupils usually listen well during discussions and behave well because teachers manage pupils well. Occasionally classroom management is weak; this results in pupils not applying themselves well enough and leads to poor progress in the lesson. Generally teachers plan lessons well to meet pupils' needs. However, this is not always the case for lessons with lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Not enough attention is given to ensuring that the activities maintain pupils' interest and help them overcome their difficulties. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, the teacher did not plan well enough to deal with the wide range of attainment within the group and the different stages of language development of pupils who had English as an additional language. As a result, progress in this lesson was unsatisfactory; pupils were not able to carry out the tasks quickly or with any confidence. Although teachers are

using the National Numeracy Strategy in their planning, they are not using it well enough in lessons. Objectives are displayed but they are too general and do not clearly focus on learning in different parts of the lesson. Starter activities and the review time at the end of lessons are not used well enough; pupils' previous knowledge is not reinforced sufficiently and they are not given time to think about what they have learnt. In addition, pupils' literacy skills are not given a clear enough focus in lessons to help pupils overcome their language difficulties. Support staff are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that they make similar progress to other pupils. Occasionally, these pupils make better progress than others because of the good support they receive. Insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to use computers to help with their learning.

103. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. A number of initiatives have recently been introduced in an attempt to raise standards. Years 7 and 9 are now following new schemes of work and GCSE pupils now follow a modular GCSE course. Although these provide a good basis for improvement, they have not yet had time to make an impact on standards or results. Insufficient direction is being provided by management at the moment for the development of the subject. The subject's development plan is not targeted well enough at raising standards and improving teaching. Improvements since the previous inspection have been satisfactory. The use of some of the subject's accommodation as a dining area at break and lunchtime results in teachers being unable to create an effective learning environment for the pupils.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Teacher's knowledge of individual pupils and the progress they are making.
- Good subject knowledge which teachers use well in lessons to promote learning.
- Close adherence to GCSE course requirements helps pupils prepare for examinations.
- Teachers make good use of support staff, particularly in speech and language, to help pupils' make progress.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- The emphasis given to scientific enquiry.
- The use of ICT in pupils' learning.

104. Overall, standards are well below average as they were at the last inspection. However, all groups of pupils throughout Years 7-11, except poor attenders, do as well as might be expected in relation to their earlier learning. The reason why achievement is satisfactory is that teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. However, standards, especially in Years 10 and 11 are adversely affected by poor attendance of some pupils and this is the main barrier to higher standards.

105. In 2002, standards in the Year 9 national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average for all schools but average in relation to pupils' prior attainment at the

end of Year 6. They continue the rise in standards seen over the previous two years. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were also well below average but average in relation to similar schools. Close analysis shows that some pupils in the middle attaining groups underachieved due to staffing and teaching difficulties, which have now been resolved.

106. In work seen during the inspection, standards reached by the end of Year 9 remain well below average. This is because many pupils have difficulty in recalling key facts, in understanding the new ideas which are presented and in planning and carrying out investigations. However, pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes reflects the wide range of ability, prior attainment and learning needs of the pupils. Higher attainers reach the expected standard or better and know, for example, the difference between weight and mass, how to measure voltage in series and parallel circuits and how to write simple word equations. However, average and lower attaining pupils have an insecure knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied. Pupils undertake an adequate range of practical work and handle equipment safely. However, standards in scientific enquiry could be higher because investigative skills are not systematically developed and insufficient numbers of whole investigations are done. The language of investigations is not emphasised sufficiently in lessons or in written work and pupils lack confidence in planning their own fair tests and too often are unable to reach a logical conclusion without prompting from their teacher. Written work is neat and well presented and the growing emphasis on the use of key words in lessons is helping pupils to use the correct scientific terminology in their writing.
107. In work seen by the end of Year 11, standards are well below average overall but, again, there is a wide variation. The minority of pupils in Year 11 who are higher attainers are reaching or exceeding average standards because they have developed a secure understanding in the topics they have studied and undertake their practical work with confidence. For example, they demonstrated high levels of independence and productivity when preparing a class presentation on how Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution. Their work in books confirms that they have understanding of how chemicals react, how the properties of radioactive particles influence how they move in a magnetic field and the way food chains are described quantitatively using the idea of a pyramid of biomass. GCSE coursework shows that they are better at planning and obtaining evidence in investigations than in analysing and evaluating the data they obtain. The majority of pupils, who are average and lower attaining, ought to be able to recall and understand the science they have been taught better than they can and plan and carry out investigations with more precision. For example, in a Year 11 lesson pupils knew too few names of simple chemical substances and the graphs they drew contained some errors; few could use the graphs to say that the reaction they saw happening went faster as the concentration of the acid they used was increased.
108. Most pupils behave reasonably well in lessons, settle down quickly to their work and have good relationships with their teachers. Some examples were seen, especially in the top sets, of pupils being very keen to do well and working with high levels of independence as a result of teaching that fosters an enquiry approach. In most lower attaining groups pupils sensibly got on with the tasks which were set and listened attentively to their teachers. However, in a minority of lessons learning suffered

because of the unsatisfactory behaviour and a resistance to participate by a minority of pupils. Absence and lateness to some lessons are fragmenting the learning of some pupils, especially those in the lower attaining classes.

109. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with the result that standards are showing some improvement and achievement is satisfactory. Lessons are generally well pitched to the level of each class. Special educational needs and language support staff are present in many lessons and are effective in helping pupils to engage with the subject matter. Those from the speech and language service are particularly effective. Some pupils who joined the school in Year 10 without the ability to speak English and with little science knowledge have made excellent progress in their learning through the support that has been given and as their confidence in their ability to speak and write English has improved. All teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to good effect in explaining key facts and increasingly difficult ideas well. They also have a good knowledge of the wide range of learning needs of the pupils they teach and can accurately describe pupils' achievement well, indicating good assessment of pupils' performance. In most lessons teachers use a range of methods, highlight key words to help focus learning and manage learning satisfactorily. As a result, pupils make sound gains in knowledge and understanding and work at a satisfactory pace. However, in the better lessons a wider variety of methods and activities adds more interest and helps maintain a good pace; questioning is more probing and so challenges and includes more pupils; the summaries at the end of the lessons are more effective in putting in a nutshell the key points which have been learned. Consequently pupils make stronger gains and have a clearer idea of how well they are doing. Although general lesson aims are evident in most lessons, a weakness is that lesson objectives do not indicate what different groups of pupils might learn by the end of each lesson. In addition, insufficient use is made of ICT to help develop pupils' learning, although a small number are using their own computers to help prepare GCSE coursework. The main reasons for learning being unsatisfactory in a Year 7 lesson were that planning was unclear and the strategies used for behaviour management were ineffective. There is scope to raise the overall quality of teaching to a consistently good level, but this will require lesson objectives to be made clearer in language the pupils understand, the starts and ends of lessons to be strengthened, a greater emphasis to be placed on scientific enquiry in Years 7 - 9 and homework to be set more consistently.
110. Departmental leadership and management are satisfactory and sustain the satisfactory achievement of the diverse range of pupils. Satisfactory teaching and learning have also been maintained and some recent weaknesses have been successfully overcome. However, the time for effective management is reduced because the head of department and other key staff have additional wider school duties which deflect them from effectively leading the department and focusing on further, important, improvements to provision and standards. Exceptionally clear and accurate external annual reviews are providing management with a clear agenda for improvement. The laboratories have been refurbished and present an attractive learning environment and there are now no major weaknesses in the level of practical resources. Thus, overall, progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The leadership of the department that has brought it successfully through recent difficulties.
- The appropriately high standards expected of pupils, enabling them to work to the best of their ability.
- The provision for the social and cultural development of pupils.
- The sensitive reception and management of newly arrived pupils who have little understanding of the English language.

Areas for improvement

- Planning for sessions at the end of lessons to develop pupils' critical thinking skills.
- Resources to improve and extend the curriculum, in particular the provision of computers and appropriate art software.
- The badly designed accommodation, which creates difficulties for classroom management.
- The performance of boys in GCSE examinations.

111. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in GCSE examinations in 2002 was broadly in line with the national average and a significant improvement on the previous year. It was the well above average score of the girls that raised the overall picture, since the proportion of boys gaining the higher grades was well below their national averages. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate a generally below average standard. However, work seen during the inspection in Year 10 shows the impact of good and very good teaching and as a result standards are now broadly average. Standards in Year 7 are rising as teachers work from the revised schemes of work and get to grips with the national Key Stage 3 Strategy (teaching methods and lesson design aimed at better consolidation of learning). Many of the pupils who are newly arrived and have limited command of the English language nonetheless show an aptitude for art and design that ensures that they are able to work to the same standards as other pupils in their classes. They are sensitively received into lessons, by both teachers and pupils, and soon settle to artwork, learning to use English effectively in the relaxed and sociable classes.

112. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 9, standards are average. Achievement is good in relation to pupils' standards when they joined the school. Pupils use a wide range of constructional techniques to build their masks, having studied masks from Africa, India, South America and elsewhere. Higher attaining pupils are imaginative in their use of adornments, such as unravelled coir rope and cut card shapes to render their mask more fearsome. They use powerful colours to embellish them. Sketchbook evidence indicates some weaknesses in observational drawing skills, although pupils have a satisfactory understanding of perspective, which they put to good use in architectural drawing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 show a natural talent for drawing that is well exploited by well-informed and skilful teaching. They produce well-finished observational sketches, noting linear patterns and tonal

shading as they draw. Lower attaining pupils have little sense of colour when blending. They tend to work in a messy, undeveloped way. Pupils in Year 8 take good notes on artists they study and begin to annotate their work effectively, using the language of art and design well. Their written work is not effectively marked to enable them to learn fully from the otherwise very good provision for literacy in their work. Overall the pupils make good progress in lessons and over time, responding positively to the good teaching.

113. In work seen at the end of Year 11, standards remain broadly average. The colours and patterns of their own cultural backgrounds stimulate many pupils, who produce colourful and vibrant individual compositions. One higher attaining pupil was observed working meticulously on Arabic repeat motifs to border her Western style self-portrait. Lower attaining pupils do not fully explore the work of artists they study and are unclear on such concepts as 'distortion' in the work of Francis Bacon. In Year 10, newly arrived pupils with little English, use their own culture as a stimulus to work on an architectural module designed by their teaching assistant. They enjoy exploring the multi-cultural religious and secular buildings from their own countries, working towards a group construction in strong cardboard. They make very good progress in their lessons, improving their usage of English as well as their art and design skills. Higher attaining pupils undertake thorough research into their architectural studies, annotating their work on the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome and adding good quality drawings to their personal studies. Pupils on the special educational needs register are well known to teachers and do not experience many barriers to their learning. As a result they progress at the same rate as their peers.
114. The quality of teaching is good and leads to good learning. Lessons are planned well in a way that ensures that pupils build on their skills as they explore different media and processes. Newly arrived pupils with little English benefit from specialist support in some of their lessons and enjoy working together. Teachers use their very good command of their subject to introduce pupils to a broad range of influences, although there are limitations imposed by the lack of resources for some areas of learning. In lessons where the teacher uses the national Key Stage 3 Strategy effectively, pupils are engaged interactively in the opening and closing whole class sessions. They contribute effectively, gaining in self-confidence and learning to apply critical thinking skills to their own work, as well as that of artists they study. The low level disruption in some lessons in Years 7 and 9 is not always managed effectively and time is lost in dealing with pupils who find difficulty in settling to work. A strength of teaching lies in the expectation that pupils should develop as independent learners, managing the resources and developing their own ideas. On occasion, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their practical work and do not set their sights on the high standard that their ability suggests they should.
115. The department benefits from good leadership that has served to restore stability following a difficult year. Standards are rising and pupils are making generally good progress in lessons. The department makes a very good contribution to the social and cultural provision for pupils by using the multi-cultural make up of the classes in a positive and sensitive way. The department is comprehensively monitored, including the quality of teaching and learning. Although the accommodation is cramped and difficult to work in, plans for the school include an upgrading of the accommodation

and improved resources for the subject. At present, the unsatisfactory computer resources restrict the opportunities for pupils to explore digital art.

116. The department has made a good improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and relationships are often very good, helping to establish a positive climate for learning. Schemes of work have been re-written and there is now sufficient curriculum time for the subject.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Good opportunities for involving pupils in Years 7-9 in community projects support learning on aspects of citizenship.
- Effective strategies for teaching the subject through personal and social education in all years and through humanities in Years 7-9.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring that all pupils receive a common curriculum in citizenship in Years 10 and 11.
- Schemes of work need to highlight lessons that have a citizenship focus and make this clear to pupils.
- There are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the subject.
- A system for effectively co-ordinating and monitoring the teaching of the subject has yet to be devised.

117. The school launched its citizenship curriculum at the beginning of term and, at this stage, it is too early for any objective measure of pupils' attainment in the subject. As yet, there is no formal system for assessing pupils' progress in citizenship by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The indications are that pupils are working towards average standards in Years 7-9, but this is less certain in Years 10 and 11, where learning depends more on the contributions of subjects across the curriculum. By virtue of the multi-racial character of the school, all pupils have first hand experience of the diversity of identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding. Equally, the community college status of the school means that community groups are involved in the life of the school and this dimension to education is seen to be important.
118. Pupils in Year 9 have already benefited from a number of community projects to increase awareness of local democracy. The ten week democracy project in Year 7 empowers pupils to take part in community action, by making their own survey of local amenities and presenting their ideas for improvement to councillors, in a final exhibition of their work. Some pupils have used desk top publishing to produce highly professional booklets of their findings. Environmental days in summer mobilise all pupils in Years 7-9 on improvement projects both on the school site and in the local community. The school holds the local education authority's award for the best-kept site and is bidding for eco-school status. Pupils have a highly responsible attitude towards maintaining a litter free environment. All Year 9 pupils take part in a well-

organised conference on crime and social behaviour and those Year 8 pupils who take part in the mock trials competition gain a valuable insight into the workings of the magistrate's court. The Year 9 pupils involved in a special project, which takes them behind the scenes of local government services, share their experience in a presentation to the rest of the year, with the help of the project team.

119. There is not the same enrichment of the citizenship curriculum through special projects in Years 10 and 11. The Year 11 curriculum of personal, health and social education has been redesigned to include citizenship units on politics, voluntary services, crime and conflict resolution, to cover the basic requirements of the citizenship curriculum. Beyond this basic provision, the contributions of other subjects vary, depending on the subjects pupils choose to study. At present, there is no guarantee that all pupils will receive their entitlement to a common citizenship curriculum beyond age 14.
120. All pupils have the opportunity to practise democracy through the election of the school council, which is ably supported by a youth worker, and given training to fulfil its responsibilities. Year 11 pupils have the opportunity to act as 'good citizens' to Year 7 pupils on the paired reading scheme, which benefits both groups.
121. There were few opportunities to see the subject being taught during the inspection. Two good lessons were observed within personal and social education, but the fact that the teaching across the curriculum is incidental, rather than designated as citizenship, makes teaching overall no better than satisfactory at present. In a Year 11 lesson on voluntary work, led by a representative of a voluntary agency and the group tutor, effective use of a range of group activities helped pupils explore the nature and benefits of service to the community. In Year 7, pupils were being well prepared for the St. John's Young Lifesaver Award, learning how to unblock air passages and check circulation. Skills of participation and communication allied to citizenship are being taught in a number of subjects. For example, in Year 9 drama lessons, stimulating teaching produced creative negotiation of ideas and roles on the theme of left luggage.
122. Management of the subject is satisfactory. A basic audit of provision has been carried out and the school's strategy for implementing the statutory requirements has been carefully planned after consultation with staff and the local education authority's advisory service. Teaching of the subject has been concentrated on personal and social education and humanities, with all subjects developing pupils' skills of enquiry and communication. There is a lot still to be done to co-ordinate provision for the subject across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. In all years, humanities and other subjects have yet to highlight specific lessons with a citizenship focus and possible assessment opportunities, so that pupils are clear about what they are learning. Staff training to support this initiative has been fairly minimal so far and there is no system for monitoring the quality of teaching of citizenship across the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good quality teaching leads to good learning.
- Improved designing in Years 7 and 8 helps to raise standards.
- Pupils' relationships and enthusiasm for practical work contributes to a good learning atmosphere.
- Detailed assessment at all levels starting with baseline assessment in Year 7 supports achievement.

Areas for improvement

- The review and replacement of resources to provide effective support for learning.
- Standardisation of marking in Years 7-9 so that pupils are clear as to how well they are doing.
- Upgrading of the workshops, studios and food preparation areas so that they match curriculum needs.
- Development of appropriate ICT facilities to support learning.

123. Pupils enter the school with well below average standards. Standards are below average by the end of Year 9, representing good achievement in relation to pupils' earlier learning. Staffing difficulties in recent years have led to some discontinuity of learning but this is being tackled by the department so that standards in Years 7 and 8 are improving with the emphasis being put on design development.
124. In 2002, GCSE examination results were below average in the two areas studied - resistant materials and child development. Although results were below average they show that the department adds good value to learning because overall pupils performed well in relation to their prior learning.
125. In work seen during the inspection, standards are improving in Years 7-9 and achievement is good. The good work in designing, restructured as a result of the previous inspection and the local education authority's review, is having a positive impact on standards. Literacy has improved through the use of a good policy and use of technical language. Improving aspects of designing such as primary research, annotation of working drawings and flow planning are helping to raise standards. Lack of access to computers and work in control impedes learning. In Year 8 textiles classes, pupils developed good designs for their 'secret pockets'. They could select a final idea from several initial designs and used good working drawings. In practical work pupils have a clear idea of quality. They select correct tools and materials, although the quality of the equipment spoils the finish, for example, old blunt scissors. Good jigs made by the technician and used in Year 9 help pupils to develop the principles of gears and pulleys before moving on to their toy design.
126. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 11 are below average, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. Pupils have had a range of teachers over their time in design and technology; some

for a short period. This has had an impact on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding, which can be seen in both design work and practical making. The new teaching team has reviewed past results and developed plans for an earlier start to final projects and closer monitoring of pupils' design portfolios. Errors such as failing to use fine construction lines, missing annotation to describe modifications of work, inaccurate use of design conventions such as dimensions and the use of millimetres are all indications of skills that have been affected by the high turnover of teachers in the department.

127. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is similar to that of their peers in Years 7-11. Careful use of individual education plans helps to meet pupils' needs. Excellent work done by language support staff in collaboration with the teaching team is having very good results. Working together is having an all round impact, ensuring that work set by teachers matches pupils' needs. For example, design sheets have a range of different prompts that enable them to be used by pupils at three different attainment levels.
128. Pupils' attitudes are good. In Years 10 and 11, many pupils attend a 'catch-up' club to help them with their examination work. Behaviour is good because teachers' expectations are clear. Unfortunately a minority of immature pupils in Year 10 disrupt others' learning. Personal development is good because pupils are taught how to enhance their personal skills, for example, working in groups and role play.
129. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, more than half the teaching seen was very good and about one lesson in ten was very good. Lesson planning is very good. Teachers plan to meet the needs of high attainers as well as supporting those experiencing difficulty. All staff have very good knowledge of their subjects and are supported well by a skilled technician in resistant materials. Technical support in food technology contributes effectively to learning. Good, skilled demonstrations by teachers, for example, in working on heavy machinery in resistant materials, have a positive impact on quality. High expectations of work and behaviour ensure that pupils make the best use of their limited curriculum time. Lessons are conducted with pace and enthusiasm. Assessment is used productively and marking is clear about what pupils must do to improve, although some pupils said that they do not read the comments and were only interested in the grade.
130. Leadership of the department is good because the manager builds on the specific skills of the team. Policies reflect school policies but are adapted to departmental needs. Folders that record minutes of meetings, assessment and professional development, are useful management tools. All reviews from external agencies and internal reviews by senior managers are responded to effectively and the department has been highlighted as an area of good practice in several instances.
131. Accommodation is not good enough. Rooms are dark, cramped and outdated; they restrict opportunities for independent learning.
132. Since the previous inspection, issues raised have been tackled but standards have not yet been brought up to national averages. A very good link with the City College that provides a highly successful painting, decorating, carpentry and plumbing course is

already indicating the value of vocational/alternative curricular opportunities as an appropriate way forward for pupils for whom more academic courses are not appropriate.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teachers treat their pupils with respect and relationships are good, creating a good climate for learning.
- Classroom management is very good and pupils behave well so that little time is wasted.
- Good use is made of fieldwork to develop geographic skills and promote learning.
- Good strategies are in place to encourage pupils' use of speaking, listening and writing.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not always offer their pupils a wide enough variety of teaching methods to meet their individual learning needs with the result that they do not make the progress they should.
- Pupils' skills in evaluating, analysing and interpreting geographic information are not developed well enough.
- There is insufficient time to cover the National Curriculum programme of study in Years 7-9, which affects learning.
- The position of geography as part of humanities in Years 7 and 8 holds back the progressive development of knowledge and skills.

133. On entry to the school, standards are very low and many pupils join classes throughout the year. Teachers work hard to meet the needs of all their pupils and they challenge their charges relentlessly yet realistically, but many pupils face real obstacles to learning. Overall, they achieve satisfactorily but standards remain well below average at the end of Year 9. Although progress in lessons is often good, achievement over time is no better than satisfactory because:

- There is insufficient time to cover the National Curriculum programme of study in Years 7-9.
- Geography is taught as part of humanities in Years 7 and 8. The way in which time is allocated between the subjects limits the depth of study and holds back the progressive development of geographic knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Although attendance is improving, progress suffers because too many pupils are absent from school.
- Many pupils join the school part way through the school year.

134. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 are generally accurate and show that standards overall are well below average. Girls attain higher standards than boys and Asian girls do better than those of white British origin. Work seen during the inspection confirms this picture. Pupils have a superficial knowledge and understanding of the topics under consideration but higher attaining pupils are developing a good sense of place and can describe processes, such as the work of rivers,

well. This was well seen in a good Year 8 lesson, where higher attaining pupils accurately identified the pertinent features of river basins. However, in all years, the development of geographic skills, especially of map work and evaluation of evidence, is weak. Standards overall are affected by the lower than usual time allocation, particularly in Years 7 and 8, and the way that humanities teaching is organised means pupils in those years may have a two term gap in their learning of geography. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others, but make good progress when classroom support is provided.

135. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average overall. Girls outperformed boys and Asian girls did better than pupils of other ethnic groups. Results fluctuate from year to year, but are lower than those of 2001. Attainment is not as high as at the last inspection.
136. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below average, although there are some examples of work, very often extended writing following personal research, that is of a much higher quality. A minority of pupils are beginning to see that geography involves thinking and making decisions. Pupils generally, however, have not acquired enough knowledge in Years 7-9, or sufficient skills of interpreting and evaluating information, to make good progress in Years 10 and 11. Achievement of most is no better than satisfactory as a result. As in Years 7-9, girls do better than boys and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
137. Pupils often find the work difficult but are supported well by teachers with resources to challenge them realistically. The emphasis on literacy and on the accurate use of geographic terminology is a strong feature of the work of the department. Teachers treat their pupils with the utmost dignity; classroom management is very good and pupils respond positively by behaving well, showing real interest in lessons. Teachers are very good role models who encourage their pupils to learn with and from each other. However, because teachers do not use a wide enough range of teaching methods, the individual learning needs of all their pupils are not always fully met. This was well illustrated in an unsatisfactory Year 11 lesson where higher attaining pupils carried out identical work to that given to pupils with special educational needs. Furthermore, because teachers do not introduce geographic skills in a consistent fashion, higher-attaining pupils in particular are not challenged to think more deeply. During the inspection, teaching and learning were satisfactory overall and good in just under a half of all lessons seen.
138. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The department has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection in the monitoring of performance and in the assessment of pupils' work. Lesson planning is of high quality but marking, although regular and detailed, does not always offer pupils advice as to how to improve. Weaknesses still exist in the organisation of geography in Years 7 and 8 and more time needs to be found to enable the programme of study to be taught in sufficient depth. Resources remain inadequate, especially in Years 10 and 11, where pupils do not have their own textbook.

139. Committed, industrious teachers, who care deeply for the progress, both academic and social, of their pupils, staff the department. It is, therefore, well placed for future development.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good relationships encourage confidence and participation.
- Very good knowledge and understanding of their subject enable teachers to provide clear support for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Opportunities for group and paired work support the development of pupils' oral skills.
- Teachers encourage pupils to develop their responses by additional questioning.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of history in Years 7-9.
- Assessment is not regular enough to support the monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Marking provides insufficient advice to pupils.
- There are insufficient resources to support pupils' learning.

140. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Standards are well below average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their prior attainment and the limited time allocation in Years 7-9. Teachers' assessments indicate that girls' standards are much higher than the boys'.
141. Results in the GCSE examination in 2002 were just above the national average for the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades; all pupils achieved at least a pass. This was a significant improvement on the results for the previous year. Pupils achieved well in comparison with their other subjects. Achievement over the last three years has been satisfactory given pupils' prior attainment.
142. Standards by the end of Year 9 are well below average. Pupils are developing a satisfactory overview of the main features of the period studied in Year 9. They are aware that social conditions changed in the 19th century and that towns grew as a result of the development of industry. They are aware that people held different views of the developments, such as work in factories, but many find it difficult to recognise that both may be valid. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to analyse information, but the majority take information at its face value. Pupils achieve higher standards in their oral work when teachers encourage them to develop their responses through the use of supplementary questions. Pupils' recall is weak however, and written work does not reflect this level of understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress when they receive additional support. Progress is just satisfactory when there is no additional support. Standards overall are affected by the limited time allocation, particularly in Years 7 and 8, and the arrangement that means pupils in those years may have a two term gap in their learning

of history. Teachers work hard with Year 9, to make up for lost time in developing skills, but they are not sufficiently developed. Understanding of analysis is at an early stage.

143. Standards by the end of Year 11 are well below average but pupils' coursework displays higher standards. Achievement is satisfactory in relation to pupils' earlier learning. Their study of the clock industry in Coventry demonstrates care and observation. Written work is well planned and supported by photographs that display understanding. Pupils identify changes over time through their study of the developments in medicine and identify the factors leading to these developments. Higher attaining pupils make links between them and some can evaluate their contribution. Lower attaining pupils record information, but do not identify how the factors relate to each other. Pupils use sources with confidence to select and extract information in response to questions. Evaluation of sources is limited however, and the level of pupils' skills of analysis is affected by the lack of development in Years 7-9. In response to written questions, pupils identify relevant facts but do not always use them to respond to the question in the title. Support for lower attaining pupils enables them to make satisfactory progress and the use of group and paired work supports the understanding of pupils with lower levels of English. Pupils following the GCSE course do not have a textbook to use at home. As a result, they are unable to review, reinforce or prepare for their lesson. The use of information sheets instead of books restricts the opportunities for homework and limits the development of pupils' research skills and independent learning opportunities.
144. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. No lessons in history took place during the inspection in Years 7 and 8. Lessons take place in an atmosphere of order and calm. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage pupils to become involved in their lessons and to develop confidence in their abilities. Lessons are well managed and this enables teachers to involve pupils actively in their learning. A very good lesson was observed where pupils in Year 9 took the roles of the tribunal assessing the appeals of men wanting exemption from war service in 1914. As a result of this activity, pupils developed a clear understanding of the issues. The good use of group and paired work encourages pupils to learn from each other and supports the development of their oral skills and the levels of understanding in pupils for whom English is an additional language. The most effective lessons take place when teachers use a variety of methods to enable pupils to use the information they gain to explain developments in the period they study. Lessons are less effective when there is insufficient support for pupils with limited levels of English, and vocabulary is not supported in order to be accessible to all. In response to very good questioning by the teacher, pupils develop their responses orally and extend their explanations. However, there is insufficient written work to enable teachers to assess pupils' understanding. Although pupils receive advice orally from their teachers, marking is generally superficial and does not inform them about how to improve their work.
145. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Non-specialist teachers for pupils in Years 7 and 8 are well supported by the subject specialist co-ordinator, and the teachers of the humanities faculty work as a team to teach all humanities subjects. Schemes of work have been developed but there is insufficient identification of assessment in order to monitor pupils' progress towards the National Curriculum

attainment targets, or to reach a secure assessment of their standards. The faculty has introduced a humanities course at GCSE level which enables pupils who develop their knowledge and understanding during the humanities entry level course to achieve a higher qualification. The department has correctly identified the use of ICT as an area for development. There is some good support for the development of oral English through discussion, role-play and the use of a variety of written sources.

146. There are insufficient resources to support pupils' learning, with a consequent effect upon progress. Good use is made of the locality to enable pupils to investigate at first hand evidence of the local industries and additional evidence is being compiled using ICT.

147. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' enthusiasm and commitment help them to learn well.
- Good use of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) units of work promotes progress.
- Improved computer hardware and software support learning.

Areas for improvement.

- Link with primary schools to help raise standards.
- Ensuring that pupils know how well they are doing.
- Contact with parents over acceptable use of the Internet.
- Extending accreditation opportunities to meet pupils needs better.

148. Pupils join the school with well below average standards. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average, representing good achievement in relation to pupils' earlier learning.

149. Pupils enter the short course GCSE with below average attainment in ICT. Inconsistency in staffing and limited access to equipment over the period leading up to the 2002 GCSE examinations led to results being well below average and have had a negative impact on standards overall. Lack of opportunity to use ICT in other areas of the curriculum restricts pupils' practice of their general computer skills. Recently, since the appointment of new teachers, standards are showing improvement on prior attainment. The poor attendance of some pupils and a lack of urgency in meeting deadlines depress standards.

150. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below average overall by the end of Year 9. Pupils' skills are of a broadly average standard in using ICT for exchanging and sharing information and finding things out. These skills include using email, use of the Internet, word processing and using spreadsheets and data bases. The development

of these skills shows good progress in relation to pupils' earlier learning. The aspect of the national programme in which progress is slower is in developing ideas and making things happen - such as controlling, measuring and modelling skills. These skills are taught in timetabled ICT lessons, but not consistently applied in subjects such as science and design and technology. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's accredited units of work are strengthening the teaching of specific skills and raising standards. Independent application of skills in the wider curriculum is unsatisfactory because the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is not co-ordinated, or managed, so that good practice may be recorded and shared.

151. In work seen during the inspection at the end of Year 11, standards are below average but represent good achievement in relation to pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. Earlier difficulties in staffing ICT meant that pupils' learning was disrupted with the result that their competence has suffered. For example, pupils are slow when entering data and text because their keyboard skills are inefficient and they lack confidence. Consequently, they are too dependent on teachers during practical work; this is particularly the case for those with limited language skills. Use of data and formulae for spreadsheets and work on databases are now improving because of the application of ICT in business studies. The variety of needs in the classroom is met effectively by the collaboration between teachers and the support departments for language and special educational needs, which is helping to raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language match the progress of their peers because of detailed planning. Gifted and talented pupils also have the opportunity to extend their skills through additional computer clubs throughout the school week.
152. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Computers across the school are used regularly at lunchtime. Good after-school clubs for Years 10 and 11 are helping pupils to develop their skills and to bring their work up to examination standards. 'Information busters' is a club supported most enthusiastically by lower school pupils and the use of ICT in the production of School Council meetings minutes is proving a great success.
153. Teaching is good overall. Teachers are enthusiastic and help pupils' to develop confidence. Planning is very good. Learning has been enhanced in Years 7-9 by the improvement in schemes of work and the close collaboration with both support departments. Marking and feedback on how to improve are good. Teachers capitalise on opportunities to introduce technical language and provide guides for writing or reporting. Speaking and listening are strong skills in Years 7-9; they make a very positive contribution to learning. Teachers use a wide range of different teaching methods to engage pupils as partners in their learning, as seen in the Year 7 newspaper project. Numeracy skills do not have such a clear focus. Homework is given where appropriate but pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not take it seriously enough, which is having an impact on course work. This issue has been targeted for improvement in the department's development planning.
154. The department has a well-established manager whose role includes business education. Assessment development is very good and includes a pilot scheme for pupils' self-assessment, which has made pupils take more responsibility for themselves and their learning. Resources have been improved in the ICT department. However, resources to

support learning across the school are limited, making access difficult and impeding the opportunity for students to apply their skills across a range of subjects.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Relationships are good and contribute to a good climate for learning.
- Newly arrived pupils who take French or Spanish achieve very well.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough time for French in Years 7-9, which affects standards.
- Resources and accommodation are unsatisfactory, which affects learning.

155. In 2002, teachers assessed pupils as working well below average by the end of Year 9. The situation was the same in 2001. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve as well as might be expected, given their earlier attainments and literacy standards. Pupils with English as an additional language often achieve better than other pupils because their skills in learning languages are well developed.
156. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average for the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in French and Spanish, but in line at grades A*-G. The proportion of pupils gaining higher grades in both languages is distorted by the fact that some newly-arrived pupils took their examination earlier, and others a year later, than the rest of their year group. Consequently their results are not included in the statistics. This is unfortunate because generally they achieve very well. Boys and girls do better in French than in their other subjects.
157. In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 7-9 are working well below the average standard. They show limited understanding of spoken French and lack the confidence to speak it. However, teachers do not all use French as their main means of communication in class and opportunities for pupils to listen to the spoken language are not taken in every lesson. In a Year 9 lesson, standards of speaking were poor because the teacher spoke little French in class and no use was made of taped material or video. Frequent staffing changes have left some pupils feeling insecure in their knowledge. The textbook used in Years 7-9 is not well matched to pupils' needs and is infrequently used by teachers because much of the work is too difficult. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are starting to develop a grasp of grammar but they are hindered by the fact that the amount of time allocated to language learning is below average and work is not always geared closely to their needs. The scheme of work is only designed to reach level 5 and does not give higher attaining pupils the chance to reach higher levels through the widespread use of tenses and extended writing. Also, the lack of time means that the ICT strand of the National Curriculum cannot be taught. Despite the problems there have been in the department, mainly related to persistent staffing difficulties, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Better progress is made in lessons than over time. The school's management is aware of this and the issue is being considered, with a view to curriculum changes in September.

158. In work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11, standards are well below average. This is partly because pupils have an insecure foundation on which to build, and partly because of the way in which the timetable is planned. Certificate French is set against GCSE Spanish and this has meant that pupils joining the school have been placed in the Spanish group despite having little or no prior knowledge of the language. Consequently, there is a very broad range of ability and experience within one class. Higher attaining pupils are well motivated and are now making progress, after a substantial period without a language teacher in earlier years. In a Year 11 GCSE French lesson, pupils were able to accurately identify the floors in a department store and say what was on sale there. This is because they were given plenty of practice before starting the task and were confident about it. The teacher used a variety of techniques to encourage pupils to participate actively in the lesson and the aims of the lesson were very well met. Although speaking has been identified as the strongest skill at GCSE, in lessons seen pupils were often reluctant to speak and lacked confidence in their ability to do so. Again, this is a consequence of the staffing turmoil that has beset the department in recent years. Writing is the weakest examination skill, and this was confirmed in work seen by the lack of structured writing and practice in writing for examinations.
159. Most pupils show interest in their work and have a positive attitude to it. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. When teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide interesting and relevant work, this leads to good progress. There are some opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning, through games and role-play, and they respond well to them.
160. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are characterised by a pleasant working atmosphere and good relationships between pupils and teachers. Some lessons are well planned to take into account the needs of individual pupils, including those on the special educational needs register. The best lessons have a range of activities, which cover the four attainment targets of listening, speaking, reading and writing. An excellent lesson in Year 11 enabled pupils to make excellent progress in their learning because it was carefully planned and the teacher had very high expectations of the pupils, both in terms of their behaviour and their full participation in all the activities. Good use was made of resources, including the overhead projector, tape player, whiteboard and textbook. Pupils' attention was focused from the start, and repetition of the vocabulary led to very good pronunciation. The teacher's sense of humour was appreciated by the pupils, who were led through the tasks at a brisk pace. They worked well in pairs and individually. At the end of the lesson they were able to recall what they had learned and used full sentences accurately in spoken French. In a less successful lesson, slower progress was made because pupils were unclear what they had to do. The same was expected of pupils of different ability. Pupils were not motivated to work as well as they could. Teachers use assessment at the end of each unit of work to judge the progress their pupils are making. Teacher changes have meant that in practice this is not always done and is not routinely used to guide planning. Although these tests are linked to National Curriculum levels, many pupils are currently unaware of the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to reach the next one. Opportunities to use ICT to support learning are highlighted in the scheme of work, but the low time allocation rarely allows for this to happen. Homework is limited by the

lack of resources, particularly in Years 7-9. Work is not always marked, because of teacher changes, and comments for improvement are rare.

161. The quality of learning is satisfactory in lessons. Staffing difficulties and the lack of time for teaching have affected pupils' progress over time. Where there has been continuity of staffing, pupils have made appropriate progress. The inappropriate textbook also affects standards, as does the lack of basic equipment – there is only one overhead projector in the department. Where there are shared classes, teachers liaise well now.
162. The head of department remains the only constant in the department. He ensures that supply teachers have basic lesson plans and monitors their work. He organises an annual educational visit to France for pupils throughout the school. He has a clear educational direction, but cannot move the subject forward on his own. The appointment of a permanent qualified teacher is essential to further progress.
163. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils gaining higher grades at GCSE has improved, although standards still remain low. Teaching has improved and progress in lessons is generally at least satisfactory. Progress over time is hindered by staffing changes, low time allocation and a lack of appropriate resources. Pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language make better progress than others, although this is not reflected in examination results because they often take these out of their year group. Spanish is now being phased out – it is only taught in Year 11. Overall, progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to good learning.
- Pupils achieve well.

Area for improvement

- Provide support for learning through the use of ICT.

164. Standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 are average, representing good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment.
165. Teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed the proportion of boys and girls attaining at Level 5 and above to be broadly in line with national standards. No pupils have been entered for GCSE examinations in music for several years.
166. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are average. Pupils' compositions range from work recorded in graphic score (making use of a wide range of sounds shown pictorially) to 12 bar blues using the basic chord sequence and written in standard notation. Such pieces show average understanding of the style and

generally satisfactory writing standards. Pupils are able to perform their pieces on keyboards satisfactorily and with understanding of the functions available on electronic instruments relating, for example, to speed, types of sound, major/minor chords and pre-set rhythms. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of styles, including some from non-European cultures such as the gamelan (Indonesia) and raga (India), and know a broad range of musical terms, and works by a representative selection of composers, for example Frank Bridge and Benjamin Britten.

167. Some 125 pupils (about one quarter of the main school) enhance their musical attainment with additional instrumental lessons, principally the guitar, but in the case of 57 or so, steel pans - a very popular activity.
168. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 are average. This year, for the first time in a very long while, there is a GCSE course. Compositions include satisfactory work developed on computers and group compositions developed in guitar groups. Pupils devise song lyrics and appropriate melodies and accompaniments. Both the quality of these and the standard of performance, while including some good pieces such as mid-European folk dances, or a nicely sung performance of 'Where are you to hold my hand?', are generally average. Pupils' knowledge of musical theory, styles and composers is satisfactory and written work is well presented. Predicted grades are in the range B-D with the majority gaining C, which confirms inspection findings.
169. The quality of teaching is good in all years. The teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and musical skills. Basic skills are well taught and planning and methods are good. For example, a Year 7 lesson to perform a graphic score followed carefully thought out steps, beginning with clearly stated aims then listening to a well chosen example of 'storm music' by Frank Bridge, with pupils identifying main features. They rehearsed their individual parts, then the complete piece with the teacher calling out the time and finally with just silent direction from the teacher. Because of this very good build up and orderly presentation of the lesson in clear stages, everyone knew what was expected and what to do and the result was a very good performance by pupils who a short while ago would have been judged as well below average. The routine learning of keywords which are checked at the beginning of the next lesson is a good feature contributing to good progress. Assessment is good and well understood by pupils. Pupils are well behaved and attentive and acquire their skills and knowledge well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils, who often move ahead quickly, are given tasks matched to their needs and make good progress. ICT is used, but although the keyboards available have been well looked after and are satisfactory for many purposes, there is only one instrument with a musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) available, limiting development of ICT in the subject. Funds available for the subject are inadequate for further development of this important aspect. The subject is well led with good documentation and subject planning. Extra-curricular work is well managed and the termly concerts involving the various groups are much appreciated.
170. All of the criticisms in the previous report have been dealt with effectively, though more remains to be done in the field of technology. It is good that a GCSE class is

established in Year 11 and a good number are taking the subject in Year 10. There has been good improvement since the previous report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to good learning.
- Achievement is good.
- Good attitudes and pupils' support for each other contribute to learning.
- Leadership provides clear direction for development.

Areas for improvement

- Girls do not achieve as well as boys.
- Outdoor accommodation is poor and does not support development of the subject.

171. In 2002, teachers assessed pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 as broadly average with a significant number of boys achieving higher levels than girls. This matches inspection findings. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in the 2002 GCSE examination was just below the national average. These results are good when compared to schools in similar contexts. They are also good when compared to students' achievements in other subjects. Poor literacy skills inhibit progress in GCSE theoretical studies and assessments in this aspect of examination work are significantly lower than for practical areas of the course.

172. In work seen during the inspection, standards are average overall by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and represent good achievement in relation to pupils' earlier learning. Boys' standards are significantly higher than girls throughout all years. In many cases girls' standards are lower than they should be because they are not always taught by specialist staff. When girls do have appropriate provision the standards achieved are as high as the boys'. Boys achieve well in badminton during the first three years in school. They apply techniques to hit long or short shots and improve fluency in rallying. There are high expectations of them to select their shots depending on the circumstances in the game. Similar aged girls have poor control during net games. In volleyball they lack the skills to keep the ball in play. They do not maintain enough focus to practise crucial techniques, especially the level of force they apply to dig and volley shots. Standards in basketball are above average. In lessons, high attaining Year 10 boys show a very good understanding of zone defence and take up marking positions intelligently. They use tactical screens and expert running angles to create space when attacking. Lower attaining boys make equally impressive progress in these lessons by modelling their play on the gifted students. Success is founded on their ability to perform the basic skills of passing, dribbling and shooting well. Year 10 girls also make good progress in basketball. Knowledgeable teaching improves the basic skills of the game. However, their tactical awareness is far less refined than that of the boys because of inconsistency of provision over the years. A group of Year 11 girls have responded well to additional extra-curricular coaching provided by the department and have achieved considerable success in regional competitions.

173. Pupils have generally good attitudes to learning. When they make good progress in lessons, their ability to plan and organise their practices is a key feature of their work. In an excellent Year 9 badminton lesson, more able pupils supported classmates with special education needs and those with English as an additional language. Such arrangements have a positive impact on learning in many lessons. Year 9 girls do not show the same level of maturity. Although they show respect for their teacher, they lack the concentration to practice and refine their skills. There is also a higher incidence of girls excusing themselves from practical participation.
174. Overall standards of teaching are good overall and promote good learning. This is because teachers have very good subject knowledge and they focus on the development of fundamental skills in each area of study. Pupils learn effectively how to change the racket grip in badminton to play different strokes. In basketball they improve dribbling with both hands. Very good refinement of shooting techniques is a critical factor in the progress achieved in basketball. Less qualified staff do not always manage or organise lessons sufficiently to achieve this level of success. Permanent teachers have a very good understanding of the different abilities of their pupils. Tasks are varied to challenge all levels of ability. Often pupils with low attainment are matched with more able pupils and respond very well to the challenges set. At other times they will observe these pupils playing and apply their levels of skill to similarly planned exercises. Teachers adapt their teaching particularly well with students who have very little understanding of English. Other pupils are used effectively as interpreters and visual demonstrations are used very well to give them access to the next steps in learning. They immediately copy these routines, often making speedy progress. Learning is less effective when pupils are not required to evaluate what has been learnt at different stages of the lesson. Plenary observations are often too late to rectify or improve on previous learning.
175. The head of department has a very good vision for future requirements. With good support from the school's senior management and the local education authority's adviser, he produces clear and relevant plans for improvement. He provides very good support for temporary staff in an attempt to maintain the momentum of learning in the department. Schemes of work and very good assessment procedures also aid the planning for staff who make part-time contributions to the department.
176. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. There have been notable successes with pupils achieving high GCSE grades in recent years. Developing practices of using ICT to improve literacy skills in theory lessons are improving these even further. Extra-curricular provision and challenging fixtures continue to raise standards, with many pupils gaining regional sporting honours. Team performances in football and basketball, for boys and girls, brings considerable distinction to the school. However, strategies employed by the school, including seeking the support of the local education authority, have yet to resolve the imbalance in staffing. This is limiting further improvement. There is still a low time allocation in Years 10 and 11. This reduces the potential to introduce Certificate of Achievement courses and to further extend the good progress made in earlier years. Outdoor accommodation for the subject is poor and has deteriorated since the previous inspection. This affects the breadth and balance of activities that can be offered to pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Successful introduction of the GCSE short course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Positive attitudes towards the subject and respect for different religions in this multi-faith school create a good climate for learning.
- Good working relationships between teachers and pupils support learning.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the variety of learning styles, to enable pupils to engage with religious beliefs and practices and express their own views.
- Provide more opportunities for independent learning, using reference books and information on computer.
- Improve the accuracy of assessment in Years 7-9 by basing it on the subject criteria in the Local Agreed Syllabus.

177. 2002 was the first year that the school entered Year 11 pupils for the GCSE short course in religious education. Results were well below average but matched the standards of similar schools, where pupils' prior attainment is well below average. Most pupils achieved the results expected of them and some lower attaining pupils performed particularly well. Girls did better than boys at grades A* to C.

178. In work seen during the inspection, by the end of Year 9 standards are well below average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given their low level of attainment on joining the school. Low levels of literacy adversely affect the quality of pupils' work. Girls' writing is generally better than boys in their use of dialogues and stories to illustrate religious ideas. In scripted interviews about the conversion of Zacchaeus, most pupils tended to focus on the story, without relating it to the key ideas of repentance and justice on which they were being assessed. Few Year 9 pupils are responding to Buddhist teachings about suffering and death with any real reflection on the implications for their own views on these ultimate questions in life. In lessons on Buddhist meditation, pupils showed good understanding of its benefits for relaxation but not of its potential for spiritual enlightenment. Their notes show satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the influence of Christians who have campaigned for justice in society, but pupils' ability to recall this information from earlier in the term is more limited. They are not developing the skills of independent enquiry, partly because they have not had much opportunity to find out information for themselves. Lesson materials are adapted appropriately, with an emphasis placed on explaining religious terms, so that pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language are able to make satisfactory progress.

179. By the end of Year 11, in work seen during the inspection, standards are just below average, which represents good achievement over the two years and compares favourably with similar schools. The well-structured GCSE course for all pupils and the purposeful approach to teaching are having a significant effect on raising standards. Girls are achieving higher standards than boys overall. Pupils keep good note records of topics studied, which are a useful basis for revision. Balanced teaching equips them

with a sound knowledge of Christian and Muslim teachings about God, moral issues on the sanctity of life and beliefs about death. In lessons on Christian and Muslim funeral ceremonies, pupils were able to compare their teachings on life after death and express their own beliefs. There is not much difference between the work of higher and middle attainers, which indicates insufficient challenge in what is expected of the most capable pupils. Setting arrangements allow smaller groups for lower attainers and pupils at an early stage in learning English, who are effectively assisted by support staff to make good progress. Examination technique and practice tend to be added onto the end of the course, rather than developed as it goes along, so pupils have difficulty evaluating different views on moral issues and substantiating their own conclusions.

180. Pupils show positive attitudes towards the subject throughout the school. The multi-faith composition of classes promotes respect for each other's beliefs and receptivity towards spiritual matters. In a particularly moving lesson in Year 11, teachers and pupils were able to share painful memories of bereavement and talk openly about their feelings. Behaviour is good and there is a sense of purpose in lessons, as pupils act on teachers' instructions and apply themselves to the tasks set. For example, Year 9 pupils co-operated well in a short meditation exercise to give them a better understanding of Buddhist practice.
181. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11, where there is a sharper focus on subject skills and assessment criteria, as required by the GCSE examination. Thorough teaching to clear aims is achieving higher standards at this level. In Years 7-9, pupils' work is carefully checked and targets set but comments tend to be general, relating to effort, rather than specific to the subject and based on criteria for attainment set down in the Coventry Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' learning is not guided by a clear enough diagnosis of what they have to do to reach expected levels of attainment. In all years, teachers give particular attention to developing pupils' literacy and subject vocabulary, catering well for pupils at different levels of language acquisition, except that opportunities are sometimes missed to read aloud from texts. In general, lessons are strongly teacher directed, giving only limited opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways, such as using ICT, so that they can develop skills for independent enquiry. Discussion techniques tend to be limited to whole class question and answer sessions, which restrict the numbers involved and the level of their responses. Teachers manage their pupils well and establish the right relationships for exchanging views and sharing ideas and experiences, which promoted good learning in lessons on Buddhist meditation and Christian teaching on life after death.
182. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The humanities team, in the absence of a specialist teacher, has worked hard to develop the subject's position in the curriculum, channelling the necessary planning time and resources into the successful implementation of the GCSE short course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teaching has improved significantly and is now at least satisfactory and good overall. Consequently, standards are much higher by Year 11 than at the time of the previous inspection. Religious education now has the same allocation of time as other humanities subjects. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have also improved, as they have come to appreciate the subject's relevance to their lives and its value as an extra qualification.

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

In the inspection, five subjects 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 tables below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001. (National comparative figures for the 2002 examinations were not available at the time of inspection.)

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
2001							
Art and Design	2	0	83	0	23	0.0	2.3
Other Social Studies	3	67	74	0	11	1.7	1.5

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
2001							
Chemistry	3	100	90	33	43	6.0	5.9
Biology	5	40	88	0	34	2.4	5.2
Physics	1	100	88	0	40	6.0	5.7
Sports/PE Studies	1	100	92	0	25	2.0	5.1
Art and Design	4	100	96	25	46	6.5	6.6
Geography	1	100	92	0	38	4.0	5.7
Sociology	2	100	86	0	35	4.0	5.3
Other Social Studies	3	100	87	33	34	6.0	5.3
English Literature	4	100	95	0	37	2.0	5.9
Communication Studies	3	100	93	0	37	5.3	5.5

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus in this inspection was on mathematics and biology.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, and teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good.
- Students' positive attitudes help them achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient time is allocated to teach the AS and A2 level courses adequately.

183. In the 2001 GCE AS and A-level examinations no student was entered for the final examinations. Only one student was entered for the AS level examination in 2002 and two for the A2 examination; none of the students were successful.
184. At present there is only one student in Year 13 who is following the AS level course. No students are working towards A2 level. The standard of the current Year 13 student is well below average. Only two modules have been completed so far, neither of them successfully. The student started the course with well below average standards and to this extent achievement is satisfactory.
185. In Year 12, nine students are presently following the AS level course. This number is higher than in previous years. These students are making good progress in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. Standards are average. In a pure mathematics lesson students understood well the idea of using radians to find the lengths of arcs and areas of circles. In a statistics lesson they were confidently using Venn diagrams to solve problems on probability. Overall, students' achievement is good as a result of good teaching that helps them overcome linguistic obstacles to their understanding (one-third of the students have English as an additional language).
186. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are carefully planned and have clear aims. Teachers structure lessons well and provide appropriate approaches to help students learn. For example, in an excellent statistics lesson the teacher organised the students well, using class and individual discussions, together with a card activity where students had to match up Venn diagrams with an appropriate probability notation, so that students gained a much better understanding of the relationship between them. Teachers show a very good knowledge of mathematics in their questioning and explanations and in the tasks they set.
187. Students show very positive attitudes and work hard. They make considerable efforts to understand the work they are doing even though some have language difficulties. As a result, students' learning is good and they are achieving well. However, the time

allocated to the subject is unsatisfactory. Insufficient time is available for teaching the AS and A2 examination syllabus. The number of topics covered and the quantity of work students in Year 12 have been able to produce since starting the course are much less than is normally found at this stage.

188. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers are deployed well so that their specialist knowledge can be utilised effectively. The teachers are enthusiastic and committed to bringing about improvement. The systems for monitoring and evaluating students' progress are effective; students are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and clear explanations.
- Good use of assessment to provide feedback to students on their progress.
- Regular setting of homework.
- Students' positive attitudes and perseverance in the face of difficulties.

Areas for improvement

- Timetabling arrangements to ensure more time and better continuity for learning.
- The use of ICT to enhance learning and develop students' independence.
- Development planning and the use of high quality schemes of work.

189. Over recent years most students who have successfully completed the two-year course have generally gained grades in the range C to E, although occasionally some have gained an A or B grade. Standards at AS level in 2002 were well below average with only two out of nine students reaching a pass grade. In order to keep up numbers on the biology course, entry requirements have been relaxed in recent years. This lenience has widened opportunity but some students have struggled. As a result achievement has been unsatisfactory with too many students failing to reach their expected grade. Standards have not been as high as at the previous inspection.
190. Standards seen in Year 13 continue to be well below average. However, achievement is better than last year and broadly satisfactory. The students have persevered with their studies and through extra effort and support they are making up some lost time. In lessons seen, they showed that they have a basic understanding of how cells divide and pass on information to new generations of cells and they can describe how external characteristics of organisms are passed on from one generation to the next. However, there are some important gaps in their understanding and their learning is impaired because they are too reluctant to ask questions or participate in discussion.
191. The current Year 12 class is much larger with some able students with high GCSE grades, some who are retaking the AS level course and two who have GNVQ qualifications. Overall standards in Year 12 remain well below average. Achievement is again broadly satisfactory and strongest among those students who have good GCSE

science qualifications. They are currently being taught the core principles of biology. In particular, they are studying digestion in humans. The higher attaining students could devise a test to show if the enzyme lipase worked more efficiently in the presence of bile to break down fats (lipids) and could explain how the acidity of the mixture would change as the fats were broken down into glycerol and fatty acids. They showed good gains from GCSE in knowledge of enzymes and their actions and the structure and function of various parts of the digestive system. Lower attaining students and those who are retaking AS level were less sure of the subject matter, but worked well in practical sessions.

192. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. As a result they hold the students' interest and establish an effective pace for learning. In good lessons teachers use a wide variety of time-limited tasks and challenging interventions such as quick quizzes, or ask students to explain to the class or describe points at the chalkboard. Good use of field trips helps students to learn and investigate biological concepts in the natural environment. A major obstacle to teaching effectiveness is that the Year 12 and 13 classes are combined for the practical session. This arrangement divides the teacher's attention and students do not always receive the close support and challenge they need to master difficult ideas. Also, two teachers teach each year group; this arrangement impairs learning and standards because the teaching is fragmented. The amount of time for teaching remains tight, as it was at the previous inspection.
193. Students speak well of their teachers and have a positive attitude towards the subject. The more able students are relishing the challenge of advanced level work and developing their independent learning skills well. Many students with lower prior attainment know they have to work hard and sometimes find it hard to cope. However, many of these show a good determination to overcome setbacks and, as a result, gradually see some success. Independent study time is generally used well. All students have up to date biology textbooks and make good use of these and other reference books in their work. However, there are very few opportunities to use computers for research and data analysis and students lack equipment to gather experimental data in practical work. To their credit, some students show initiative by using their own equipment for presentation of work and research on the Internet. The notebooks of the more able students are organised well and contain detailed biological illustrations, though those of some other students are less well set out and sometimes work is not up to date. Homework is regularly set and most students meet the deadlines which are clearly set. Regular assessments, thorough comments on assignments and set questions give students good feedback on what they do well and pointers on how mistakes arose.
194. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Course requirements are followed closely, and students are well prepared for coursework and examinations. However, the schemes of work are not yet complete for all modules or complemented with sufficient worksheets to suit the needs of the different students. As yet, there is no plan for developing the subject, and provision is not subject to periodic review as science is in Years 7-11.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Subjects in this curriculum area are not currently part of the sixth form curriculum.

BUSINESS

195. Subjects in this curriculum area were not a focus for the inspection, but lessons in business studies were sampled. Teaching was good overall, particularly because of the teacher's good subject knowledge and the opportunities for students to take part in discussion and clarify their thinking. In one lesson students worked very well as a team, but in another some lacked confidence and relied heavily on the teacher. Nevertheless, learning was good overall and students were achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus for this inspection was on the AVCE course in information and communication technology.

Information and communication technology

Overall, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching that supports independent learning well.
- Students are enthusiastic about their work. They benefit from and appreciate the good working relationships that exist between teachers and students and among the students themselves.

Areas for improvement

- Links between the department and the local business community are limited.
- The department lacks an interactive whiteboard.

204. Because only a very small number of students took examinations in ICT in 2002, direct comparison of their results with national figures is not meaningful. Nevertheless, results for these candidates were very low, with only one of the three obtaining a pass grade. The position now is much stronger. Numbers have risen substantially in both year groups, and the course is attracting students without previous ICT examination experience. Standards of attainment and achievement have also improved.

205. In work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment in Years 12 and 13 are average. Students' achievement is good. Some students in Year 12, particularly those taking ICT as a new subject, have found it difficult to manage their learning effectively because their knowledge is limited and they still lack confidence. Nevertheless, they are starting to take responsibility for their learning and are developing time management skills. They are achieving well in units of work completed to date. Year 13 students can produce multimedia presentations and design very good databases. They evaluate each other's work in a critical but friendly way so that it can be improved further, and set themselves serious targets. They work well together in pairs and as a

team. External moderation of units of work completed so far is positive, and the moderator's comments have already influenced planning to raise standards further.

206. Teaching is good, and learning is good as a result. Teachers have a wide range of skill and experience and students benefit from their expertise. Teachers plan their time with students effectively so that students encountering problems or those who lack prior experience receive good support. Teachers' commitment and enthusiasm are infectious: students respond to their lively approach by having good attitudes to learning, as shown by the willingness of most students to make additional use of the ICT suite whenever possible. Many also use their own equipment at home to prepare or continue work such as presentations. They enjoy the opportunities for discussion and debate on, for example, the ethical issues surrounding the use of ICT. Teachers also provide good feedback to students on their progress so that they know what to do to improve. They mark and annotate students' work clearly, and in doing so provide a good model for students' own annotation of testing and modification procedures. Teachers provide good resources for learning, including an effective textbook that encourages independent research, recommended web sites and access to the local library. On the other hand, links with the local business community are limited so there are few opportunities for students to test their projects, first hand, on businesses. The effectiveness of teaching is limited by the lack of an interactive whiteboard, now usually regarded as essential equipment for ICT examinations at this level.
207. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Leadership provides clear direction for the department's work, including the possibility of alternative examination courses and links with the local college for technical training. Management of the subject and of the work of the strong teaching team is good. The department's hardware resources are improving thanks to consistent review and monitoring of equipment by the technician. Although there were few references to ICT in the previous report, it is clear that improvement since that time has been at least satisfactory.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Subjects in this curriculum area are not currently part of the sixth form curriculum.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

208. The course in health and social care was not a focus for this inspection, but a lesson was sampled in which students were preparing a 'support pack' to help others access the health and social care system. Teaching was good because students were encouraged to work independently and develop their own ideas and opinions. The teacher provided good materials and suggestions, and students worked enthusiastically and well on their project as a result.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus for this inspection was on art and design.

Art and design

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

Strengths

- The leadership of the department ensures a good and improving climate for learning.
- Confident and well-informed teaching leads to effective learning and good progress in lessons.
- The positive attitudes of the students to their work and the very good relationships within the class contribute to the relaxed, but purposeful atmosphere in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The resources for learning, in particular those used for research, do not cover a sufficiently wide range of artists and art movements.
- There is no separate studio accommodation for students and insufficient storage space for their work.
- There are no dedicated computers for art and design in the department and this restricts the possibilities for exploring digital imaging.

209. Very few candidates have been entered for A-level examinations over the past few years and it is not possible to judge standards against national averages or to comment on trends in results. There are no students taking the A2 examination this year, but there are seven students taking the AS examination at the end of Year 12 and it is expected that the majority will go on to the A2 course for examination in 2004. With the return of the head of department following a prolonged illness, and the appointment of a newly qualified and enthusiastic part-time art teacher, the fortunes of the department are improving. Standards are broadly average in Year 12, representing good achievement in relation to standards at the end of Year 11. The department has added good value to students' achievements over that time.

210. The good teaching seen during the inspection promotes good learning. It encourages independent thinking that results in a wide variety of creative work being undertaken. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables students to relate their work to studies of artists as diverse as Gormley, Moore, Goldsworthy, Giger, O'Keefe and Rousseau. Effective demonstrations of skills and processes ensure rapid progress in handling painting, modelling and casting techniques. Students learn a range of three-dimensional skills, including some metal working skills that require the valued support of the design and technology department. Students demonstrate a very good understanding of the concepts they explore, such as natural decay, contrasting surfaces or the contrast between safe and hostile environments. Higher attaining students research and annotate their work well, showing good depth and range in their investigations. All students achieve well. They take advantage of the independence they are given and work along their own lines of exploration and research. They have a very good attitude to their

work, demonstrating a high level of commitment to their studies, which has a positive effect on their learning.

211. The head of department has worked hard to stabilise the department under his good leadership. He is very clear about how he wishes the department to develop and expects considerable benefit from the plans to rebuild the design and technology and art and design departments. Current accommodation is unsatisfactory, in that there is no separate studio area for the sixth form and storage and display spaces are very limited, leading to organisational complications that take time and effort away from teaching and learning. The two outdated computers in the department are not networked and are wholly inadequate for digital imaging and research. Although there is a good range of art books in the school library, many are outdated and there are too few that give good quality information on the work of artists and art movements. Resources overall are unsatisfactory. Some, such as the ceramics resources, are little used and in need of review, others, such as those for printmaking, are lacking in most respects.
212. The previous inspection report gives insufficient information to judge the improvement made in the sixth form since then, but the department is clearly improving and is well placed to continue to do so.

HUMANITIES

Subjects in this curriculum area were not a focus for this inspection. Lessons were not sampled because of timetabling constraints.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus for this inspection was on the course in English language and literature.

English

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

Strengths

- Some aspects of teaching are good. Students benefit from teachers' choice of activities, helpful support and the good relationships between teachers and students.
- Students have good attitudes to their work and recognise the gains they have made in personal confidence.

Areas for improvement

- Encourage and develop students' wider reading to enhance the background knowledge that they can bring to their studies.

213. Most students taking English in recent years have obtained at least a pass grade and this was also the case for the four students examined in 2001 and the two students examined in 2002. The small number of candidates means that direct comparisons with national averages are not possible. In relation to their GCSE results, students in 2002 achieved as well as should be expected.

214. Currently there are three female students in Year 13, all of whom have continued from Year 12. Their AS results in 2002 were disappointing because of poor performance in one module of their examination. Standards of work are below average overall, but students are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their GCSE performance. All are expected to obtain at least a pass grade in the forthcoming A2 examinations. Their written work reveals a range of attainment from potential grade C to E. In the classroom, students find it difficult to cope with unfamiliar writing (for example, the style of newspaper obituaries) because they lack wider reading experience. They also have difficulty in recognising and remembering key vocabulary and in establishing the kinds of writing the vocabulary describes. Nevertheless, in the lessons seen they were making satisfactory progress in acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills as a result of teachers' good choice of learning activities and supporting material.
215. The three Year 12 students (one male and two females) are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their GCSE performance at this relatively early stage of their course. In the lesson seen they learned that it was possible to 'translate' unfamiliar writing from Johnson's *Rasselas* into modern prose using clues from the passage and their own knowledge and experience. One higher attaining student managed the translation well and helped the others by taking a lead in the group's discussion and presentation. One student with English as an additional language was supported well by the teacher by appropriate questioning and help with the spelling of 'technical' language.
216. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features, and learning is at least satisfactory as a result. Teachers choose activities that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and they provide good supporting material. They develop good relationships with students so that they can learn in a friendly working atmosphere. These qualities were particularly evident in a Year 12 lesson where the teacher provided 'word cards' so that students could physically sort words into their decade of origin. In a Year 13 lesson the teacher used a similar technique so that students could create a 'mind map' on paper of the various categories and sub-categories of 'Talk'. In both the result was that all students were actively involved in the learning and confidently enjoyed the discussion and debate that naturally took place. In addition, Year 13 students had the benefit of a good textbook to support the sorting process. In another Year 13 class, the teacher used good examples to illustrate the style of writing used in obituaries so that students were eventually able to identify key points and gain understanding of the social and historical context of the writing. On occasions teaching is not always so effective. In a Year 12 lesson, the teacher missed an opportunity to further discuss or refine the learning from a lesson's main activity and moved on to another activity in limited time instead. In a Year 13 lesson, the teacher's instructions lacked clarity so that students' uncertainty and subsequent lengthy preparations for the main activity affected the rate of learning.
217. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although the previous report made few references to sixth form work in English, sufficient was said to judge that satisfactory improvement has been made since then.