

INSPECTION REPORT

CARDINAL WISEMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Coventry, West Midlands

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103744

Headteacher: Mr Tony Riley

Lead inspector: Mrs Eveleen Gillmon

Dates of inspection: 11 – 15 October 2004

Inspection number: 268768

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1350
School address:	Potters Green Road Coventry West Midlands
Postcode:	CV2 2AJ
Telephone number:	02476 617 231
Fax number:	02476 602 572
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Garner
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cardinal Wiseman is a voluntary aided Catholic school for pupils aged 11-19 on the north-eastern outskirts of Coventry. It has recently been designated as a specialist Language College and is within an Education Action Zone (EAZ). Larger than average, it has 1381 pupils drawn from a wide area, including districts with high social disadvantage. There are 125 students in the sixth form. More than 90 per cent of the intake have catholic backgrounds and the school is oversubscribed. There are relatively few pupils of ethnic minority origins. The context from which school draws its pupils has declined in the period since the previous inspection and includes the ward with the highest unemployment statistics. The attainment of pupils on intake is close to the national average, but lower than that of the two other catholic schools in the city, and the number of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 has been significantly lower. There are 26 students with statements of special educational needs in the school, a proportion broadly in line with the national average. A further 65 students have some special educational needs met by individuals and agencies outside the school, a lower proportion than nationally. An additional 98 students have their special educational needs met entirely from the school's resources.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2774	Eveleen Gillmon	Lead inspector	
9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	Special educational needs
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History
19925	Margaret Price	Team inspector	Mathematics Mathematics Post-16
4829	Ian Waters	Team inspector	French Post-16 German Post-16
25743	Peter Butler	Team inspector	Science Chemistry Post-16
15606	Christine Hill	Team inspector	Art and design Art and design Post-16 Photography
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32115	John Foster	Team inspector	Modern Languages Spanish Post-16
1759	Geoffrey Edwards	Team inspector	Design and technology
10417	Kevin Lambert	Team inspector	Biology Post-16 Physics Post-16
12844	Michael Saunders	Team inspector	English English Post-16
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education
32324	Frances Buckler	Team inspector	Music
32340	Peter McKay	Team inspector	Geography
32229	Mary Comer	Team inspector	Citizenship Work related learning

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	11
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	16
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	24
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	27
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	54

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory education with some very good features. It is successful in its aim to provide maximum opportunity for all pupils while promoting Christian values of care, concern for others and mutual trust. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the contribution of unique features of the school to its curriculum (eg the rural dimension, photography facilities, the Phoenix Centre)
- a high level of care, concern and commitment to the pupils by governors and staff and excellent relationships
- mainly good teaching
- provision for information and communications technology (ICT) in Years 7-9 and for GCSE
- governors do not take a sufficiently pro-active and strategic role
- there are statutory curriculum infringements in relation to citizenship and religious education in the sixth form
- monitoring of responsibilities delegated by governors and the senior management team is inadequate
- provision for art, design and technology, and history is unsatisfactory.

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since its last inspection in 1999. The key issues raised have been addressed, and financial management has been strengthened considerably but there remain areas which require continued attention. Standards in design and technology are still unsatisfactory and the level of senior management monitoring and support has not yet had an impact on the raising of standards overall. The scope of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) has widened considerably to include behaviour modification, social inclusion and the establishment of the Phoenix Centre, but pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs), are still not all in place, a criticism contained in the last report.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	D	C
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	n/a	n/a	D	

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Standards attained at the end of Year 9 in 2003 and 2004 were broadly average, showing an upward trend in recent years. Based on below average attainment on entry, this represents good progress and achievement by pupils.

GCSE results in 2003 and 2004 were above average in ICT, religious education, science and Spanish, but below average in all other subjects and well below in design technology, history and art. Although well below the national average overall, they are broadly average when compared with other similar schools.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are generally good, although a small minority of pupils can be disruptive on occasion. The standards set for pupils are appropriate and behaviour management systems are well understood. Attendance and punctuality have improved and are now satisfactory. **Pupils respond well to teaching about spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues** and demonstrate mature attitudes.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and the curriculum provided by the school is good. Teaching observed during the inspection was mainly good and sometimes very good. Examples of excellent teaching were observed in English, music and photography. Examples of very effective teaching were also observed in economics, French, ICT, physical education, science, Spanish, and in the Foundation Studies area. There is a developing focus on pupils as individuals, and procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are generally satisfactory although not yet consistently applied in all subjects. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements with the exception of citizenship. Pupils have a good range of choices in Years 10 and 11 and the availability of alternative curriculum pathways enhances the overall provision as does the access to the rural dimension.

The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is good, and for care and welfare is satisfactory, although better co-ordination of health and safety arrangements is needed. Child protection procedures are secure and safety practice is good in practical and activity areas of the curriculum. Policies to prevent bullying are in place, and are implemented. Systems to consult pupils about their life in the school exist through year councils and a School Council, but a number of pupils do not feel that their views have any impact on school life and pupils in the sixth form considered that they were underused in this regard.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides clear direction linked to the school's published aims and leads the school with integrity and commitment. He is supported by a senior management team which has yet to develop and implement an effective approach to monitoring of delegated responsibilities in order to create an appropriate level of challenge and stimulate the higher standards of performance of which both staff and pupils may be capable. Day-to-day operations within the school are efficiently managed and with sensitivity to the needs of individuals. The quality of middle management is variable - it is mainly good, and occasionally very good. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school but lack the necessary focus on strategic development, and need to be more rigorous in ensuring that all statutory curricular requirements are met as the school is currently in breach of these. Financial management is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of the school. Of the small proportion of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire, the majority consider that the school is well led and managed. Concerns were expressed by some parents about standards, action taken to prevent bullying, homework, and information provided about pupils' progress. They also consider that the communication systems could be improved. The inspection team endorsed the concern about standards and about effectiveness of communication, but found no evidence to support the views about lack of response to bullying. Pupils are very positive about the school and recognize the high quality of care and teaching that they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- review the governing body committee structure with a view to securing effective procedures for strategic planning and monitoring of statutory requirements
- ensure that the senior management team systematically monitors pastoral and academic responsibilities delegated to middle managers
- take steps to improve the provision for art, design and technology and history; and, to meet statutory requirements:
- ensure that programmes of study in citizenship are in place and that progress of pupils is reported to parents;
- provide religious education for all pupils in Year 13;
- ensure that information issued to parents meets requirements.

SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 143 students, and is smaller than most other sixth forms. Approximately, 33 per cent of students from Year 11 progress into the sixth form. A small proportion of external students join the school at the beginning of Year 12. Fewer than two per cent of students have special educational needs. About five per cent of students are of minority ethnic origin, reflecting local demographics. In 2004, 83 per cent of students left the sixth form to continue their education at university.

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall, **provision in the sixth form is good**. It caters well for its current students by offering 4 vocational courses and 20 courses leading to AS and A2 levels. It also provides a positive environment for their personal and social development. Teaching in the sixth form is good and students' achievement, in relation to their standards on entry, is at least satisfactory. Standards of attainment are in line with the national average. The sixth form is cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the good quality of teaching, which is based on a good command of areas of learning and effective planning.
- the school provides a good range of courses. The curriculum is enriched by the consortium arrangements.
- sixth form managers are caring and provide a good level of leadership and organisation. They know their students well and work hard to support their social and academic development.
- the sixth form is a convivial community and relationships are secure.
- there is insufficient access to support and careers guidance for those students who are not aiming for university.
- there is scope to improve the breadth of the enrichment programme and the range of extra-curricular activities offered.
- there is scope for students to be more involved in the local community, especially as part of work experience programmes.
- the statutory requirements for religious education are not met because some students do not receive any tuition.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They 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	EVALUATION
English, languages and communication	English: Good. High standards of teaching and assessment lead to students' good progress and achievement in literature and media studies courses. French: Satisfactory. Students enter the sixth form with a wide range of attainment and make satisfactory progress. Average standards are attained at A2 level. Spanish: Good. Students enter the sixth form with average capability and make satisfactory progress. They attain average standards at A2 level. German: Satisfactory. Numbers are very small. Year 12 students are making satisfactory progress at a very early stage in the course.
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in both A2 level and GCSE re-sit groups. Students are highly motivated and apply themselves well in lessons.
Science	Biology: Good. Staff expertise and good teaching promote high standards. Physics: Satisfactory. Teachers use their strong subject expertise to encourage students to achieve well. Chemistry: Satisfactory. Teachers have good subject expertise and give very good encouragement to students. Learning is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology	ICT: Good. There is a successful VCE programme, in which students are well taught and achieve good results. Sixth form students enjoy good access to ICT resources, in the library, in the sixth form centre and in departmental ICT suites. However, there is no formal provision and no accredited courses (for example, in key skills), for those not enrolled on the AVCE course
Humanities	History: Teaching promotes good learning and achievement. Students enjoy the subject and work conscientiously Geography: One Year 13 lesson was seen in which teaching and learning and students' achievement were satisfactory. Students' knowledge and understanding of mid-latitude weather systems were below expectation. Economics: Very good. Vigorous teaching leads to high levels of engagement and very good learning. Students achieve well and attainment is above the national average. Psychology: Satisfactory. There is a successful AS and A2 level programme, attracting good numbers – albeit many more girls than boys. Students respond well to enthusiastic teaching, but there are constraints in the lack of a formal base for the subject which makes it difficult to collect and display the kind of visual resources associated with the best provision.
Visual and performing arts and media	Art and Design: Good. The quality of teaching, the range of contexts for learning and the promotion of students' independence as learners leads to good achievement. Photography: Excellent. The very hard work by students and teacher in photography promotes high standards of attainment and develops pupils' self esteem very well.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical Education: Good teaching and facilitation in lessons ensures that students apply their coaching and analysis of performance skills effectively. Standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory.
General Education	General Studies: Students achieve well and results are above average at AS level. In the lesson seen teaching was satisfactory. BTEC Animal Care: A very well taught lesson in BTEC First Diploma (Animal Care) was sampled, in which the students, fired by the enthusiasm and expertise of the teacher, were achieving very well indeed.

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements 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'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The sixth form managers and the form tutors provide a good quality of support and guidance in Years 12 and 13. However, better use could be made of the tutorial period. Attendance is satisfactory. There is scope to improve the range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. The quality of advice offered in preparation for university entry is good. By contrast, students who are not aiming for university lack guidance and information about careers opportunities. There are effective monitoring and tracking procedures. Review procedures are good but there is scope to improve the frequency of reporting to parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The head of sixth form and her deputy are well organised and have a clear vision for the development and improvement of the sixth form.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Discussion between inspectors and a significant number of sixth form students, both formally and informally, indicated that students enjoy the community life of the sixth form and are justifiably positive about the range of subjects offered and the level of support they receive from teachers and sixth form managers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 with standards improving from a low baseline to a level close to the national average. Girls perform better than boys overall, but the difference is less than that observed nationally. However, GCSE standards overall are well below the national average by the end of Year 11 for both boys and girls. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is generally below average but students achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- a rising trend in national test results at the end of Year 9 over the past three years
- the number of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE is well below the national average
- standards achieved in the sixth form are satisfactory and represent good learning gains
- pupils underachieve in art, design and technology and history as a result of unsatisfactory provision
- pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as other students
- pupils underachieve in learning about citizenship as a result of an inadequate curriculum provision.

Commentary

1. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school, based on achievement of Level 4 in national tests in English, mathematics and science, indicates that standards are in line with the national average. However, the school's own assessment, based on cognitive analysis tests (CATs) suggests that baseline attainment is lower than this and the proportion of pupils entering the school with Level 5 and Level 6 has been below average for several years.
2. At the end of Year 9, results in the national tests in 2003 showed a rise in the number of pupils attaining a Level 5 or more in mathematics and science, but a fall in English. When compared with other schools in a similar context, based on prior attainment, standards in English and mathematics were above average and in science were below. The performance in all three subjects was close to the national median for boys, but below this for girls. Results in 2004 were similar, but overall, the trend in the school's average national curriculum points for all core subjects over three years is broadly in line with the national trend. The school has set challenging targets and has strategies in place to meet them.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.3 (34.7)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	34.3 (33.8)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.0 (30.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 246 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Unvalidated results in 2004 (APS 30.8) indicate a slight dip, but standards observed during the inspection were in line with the national expectation in mathematics and science and above this in English. Attainment in ICT is higher but in design and technology, geography and history it is unsatisfactory. In all other subjects standards are generally in line with the nationally expected standard, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

4. At the end of Year 11, results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C (38 per cent), and also in terms of points score per pupil (31.3). The performance of girls was significantly poorer than that of boys and the trend over the last five years has been below the national trend. In comparison with schools in a similar context, the number of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C is broadly average, but the APS remains below average.
5. Unvalidated results in 2004 reflect a similar pattern with 38 per cent of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades. Boys achieved less well than girls overall, but girls have shown a steadily declining trend over the past three years and the gap between their performance and that of girls nationally is wider than for boys. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-B also fell from 2003 to 2004, and is well below the national average. The best GCSE outcomes in 2004 were in ICT, music, religious education, science and Spanish. In 2004, results close to national averages were achieved in English literature. Although these unvalidated results were similar to 2003, average points scores were closer to the national average.
6. Pupils' current standard of achievement, as observed during the inspection, is satisfactory overall, but with fluctuations between subjects. It is good in English, science, and ICT, and in the small cohort subjects such as Spanish, and very good in music and photography. It is unsatisfactory in art, design and technology, geography, history and German. In citizenship, owing to lack of overt teaching and assessment, it is also deemed unsatisfactory at this time. A significant number of pupils make insufficient progress at this stage of their education and the school is developing its alternative curriculum pathway to meet their needs. Inspectors recognized that the school's Key Stage 4 intervention strategy is addressing identified barriers to raising standards, such as parental apathy and pupils' lack of motivation. Closer monitoring by all of the senior management team will be a critical factor in its success.
7. Students with SEN make the same progress as others. They regularly obtain a range of externally validated certificates of attainment and achieve GCSE grades C-G in a range of subjects. The very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well, but in many lessons higher attaining pupils underachieve owing to their being given work that is too easy.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	38 (37)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	80 (82)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	91 (90)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	29.2 (29.9)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 248 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth Form

8. Students may follow courses leading to AS-level, A2 level, GCSE and vocational qualifications in the sixth form. Students entering the sixth form to study AS or A2 levels are required to have 5 GCSEs at A* to C, although the school shows considerable flexibility in admitting those deemed to have potential.
9. In 2003, results at A2 level were in line with the national average. In 2004, the overall pass rate decreased to 92.5 per cent and 31 per cent achieved A-B grades. However, these students entered the sixth form with a lower average GCSE point score and in terms of value

added, achieved better A2 level grades than predicted. Their results were broadly in line with the Coventry LEA average. Male students have consistently outperformed female students over the past three years.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	97.8 (93.1)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	33.5 (26.3)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	233.9 (183.4)	234.2 (232.9)

There were 46 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

10. Overall, standards of attainment on entry to the sixth form are below the national average. However, students respond well to teaching. In the lessons observed and in the samples of work scrutinized, overall achievement was at least satisfactory. In the majority of lessons observed, the standards reached by students were in line with national expectation. In 69 per cent of lessons observed, students made good or very good gains in learning.
11. Students with SEN in the sixth form make the same rate of progress as their peers. There are currently no students at an early stage of English language acquisition.
12. Standards in literacy and communication skills, numeracy and ICT are good. Evidence from the inspection shows that students make effective use of the internet for research and independent learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main Strengths and weaknesses:

- relationships are good between adults and pupils and among pupils; pupils have a strong sense of community
- pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong; many are responsible and mature
- the school provides good opportunities for social, moral and cultural development, but pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom is too limited
- behaviour is good throughout the school for the majority of pupils
- behaviour on school buses is a cause of parental concern
- attendance has improved and unauthorised absence has fallen.

Commentary

13. Attendance and punctuality have risen over the last four years and are now in line with national figures. The school has good procedures and good award systems to promote attendance and to support a number of pupils with attendance problems, together with the support of the Educational Welfare Service. Systems for registering attendance are good for those pupils on work-related learning and work experience. The number of exclusions has fallen considerably over recent years.
14. Behaviour is good overall in lessons, assemblies and around the school, although occasionally, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils can be disruptive. Pupils are well supported by the tutor system and most tutor times are used productively.

15. The school sets appropriate standards for students' behaviour. Its systems of behaviour management are generally consistently applied by heads of year and tutors, although the monitoring role of senior management is limited, and this has led to negative perception on the part of some parents. Procedures for monitoring incidences of inappropriate behaviour are in place. Although a small number of parents expressed concern about the standard of behaviour and incidences of bullying, these concerns were not borne out by the pupils when interviewed. Most of these concerns relate to behaviour on the buses. The school has in the past appointed bus monitors and this scheme might usefully be reinstated. In discussion, pupils felt that bullying was not a major issue and were confident that any bullying issues would be dealt with effectively by the school. Some favourable comments included tributes to teachers' helpfulness and the support of their tutors. Earlier this year, the school conducted a behaviour audit to improve its behaviour management and a number of initiatives have been successfully implemented. Pupils are generally well-disciplined, especially given the very crowded conditions in the canteen and at some congestion points at lesson changeover times.
16. Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very well developed by a strong policy of social inclusion. For those with SEN, behaviour modification is well addressed in specialist lessons and there are good links with external agencies which provide further specialist help. The Phoenix Centre, which is central to the school's provision, provides very well for those with poor attitudes and behaviour in years 7, 8, and 9. It is successful in changing pupils' attitudes and values fundamentally and for the better. Anger management, social skills and advice for surviving mainstream school are central to five weeks' training for some very vulnerable pupils. Counselling and very good opportunities for confidence building and reflection enable them to make good choices on how they will behave and as a result their personal qualities develop very well. Pupils with behaviour difficulties in all years are specially targeted and individually supported. Well monitored individual behaviour programmes are a strong feature of provision, and allow pupils to be fully included in all school activities.
17. Because teachers have high expectations of them, and offer good examples of courtesy and fairness, pupils are often thoughtful, helpful and understand the importance of personal responsibility. Nearly all are open, confident, helpful and friendly to visitors. Many have a strong commitment to their work and their concentration and perseverance are good. Many are eager to contribute to discussions and work well both independently and co-operatively. In some subject areas, such as PE and music, pupils are strongly self-disciplined and able to assess their own and others' work very well. Relationships are good and sometimes very good. Generally, adults offer pupils consistent examples of courtesy and fairness.
18. Pupils are eager to take up the opportunities for responsibility offered by the school, although these are not extensive - for example, there is no House or prefect system and the profile of the elected heads of school is not high. They are also keen to participate in activities, clubs and residential trips. Their social and moral development and sense of community are satisfactorily promoted through the School and Year Councils, tutor groups, assemblies and the personal health and social education (PHSE) programme. Most pupils show a good understanding of the importance of living in a community. They value the chance to make their views known, but do not feel that they are always listened to. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and there is an extensive range of fund-raising activities for charities.
19. Pupils have some understanding of their own and other cultures and religions, through RE, the Expressive Arts, links with the Cardinal Wiseman orphanage in India, theatre and concert trips and the well-established foreign visits programme. However, opportunities for them to learn about other cultures within the United Kingdom are limited. Most pupils are sensitive to the values and beliefs of others.

Attendance

The school is working hard to maintain good levels of attendance. At the time of the previous inspection the level of unauthorised absence was high, particularly in Year 11. This has now improved significantly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.6	School data	0.9
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

The number of exclusions has fallen considerably in recent years.

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	1142	675	2
White – Irish	36	0	0
White – any other White background	149	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	14	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	3	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7	0	0
Black or Black British – African	7	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	1	0

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

Sixth Form

20. Students' attitudes to the school are very positive. They identify closely with the school and speak highly of the support they receive in the sixth form.
21. Many students lack the personal study habits to do justice to their own abilities when they enter the sixth form. The school recognises the need to inculcate a strong work ethic and monitors the progress of each student closely. Students are encouraged to work conscientiously and to assume responsibility for their own learning. The imminent re-organisation of the existing sixth form accommodation, to include an area for quiet study, should provide the means for students to work more productively during school hours.

22. The good levels of support offered by teachers help students to enhance their personal learning skills. Secure relationships contribute to positive attitudes and a keen sense of loyalty. Students appreciate their school and value their own involvement in the process of sixth form education. There are a significant number of students who are the first representatives of their families to enter a sixth form and to aim for higher education.
23. The personal development of students is good. They may choose to assume responsibilities and to contribute to activities in the school at large. An opportunity exists to voice an opinion and to initiate ideas through the sixth form council. Some sixth formers liaise with feeder schools; others are involved in mentoring of younger pupils and paired reading programmes. However, students in general felt that the school should allow for more involvement with pupils in the lower school.
24. Students relate well to one another and work cooperatively in a spirit of mutual trust. There is a relaxed, supportive and convivial aspect to the sixth form, which helps to nurture individual self-esteem. Students are good ambassadors for the school and provide good role models for younger pupils in their support of the school ethos.
25. Overall, the school prepares students effectively for entry to tertiary education. In 2003, 83 per cent of students gained a university place.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school's provision for its pupils is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good features.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Most pupils make gains in learning because of the expertise and knowledge of their teachers, their own good attitudes towards learning and effective assessment of their progress in learning. A small minority do less well where motivation is lacking.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teaching is mainly good.
- the assessment and progress reporting system contributes to effective learning and achievement.
- monitoring of teaching and learning is unsystematic and infrequent.
- there is insufficient in-class support for pupils with SEN other than that provided within the Learning Support Centre.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 148 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3%)	26 (16%)	57 (39%)	53 (36%)	8 (5%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

26. Good and very good teaching was observed in 59 per cent of lessons overall, and some excellent teaching was observed in English, photography and music where clearly focused, well-planned, fast-paced lessons stimulated pupils' response and challenged their thinking. Very good teaching, which engaged all pupils in productive activity, was also seen in animal care, economics, English, French, ICT, mathematics, media studies, music, physical education, science and Spanish. In lessons judged to be just satisfactory, relative

shortcomings in planning, including lack of focus on work to suit different rates of learning, reduced the effectiveness of the teaching. In particular, there was insufficient challenge or extension for some more able pupils.

27. Unsatisfactory lessons were observed in all years of the main school, the majority within Years 7-9. Characteristics of those lessons judged to be unsatisfactory were:
 - poor classroom control
 - lack of effective planning and pace
 - failure to ensure that pupils understood the nature of the task or the learning objective;
 - Inappropriate level of challenge resulting in no significant learning gains for many
 - cursory marking of work which was unhelpful and did not indicate how to improve;
 - setting of tasks which did not engage pupils;
28. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is developing but has yet to become embedded within the culture of the school. Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are generally well recognised and used in other subjects, but the promotion of independent learning is not yet a recognisable feature within several departments.
29. Teaching of students with SEN was consistently good in the alternative curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Well-planned lessons provided good learning opportunities for the full range of ability. Literacy, including specialist vocabulary, is well addressed. Use of well illustrated textbooks, audio-visual programmes and interactive whiteboards catch students' interest and help them to concentrate. The students are well behaved and learn independently and collaboratively. Groups withdrawn from lessons to improve their literacy are soundly taught by teaching assistants. Individually adapted learning materials are effectively used in these lessons to aid learning. Fourteen teaching assistants, who are well trained and well managed, effectively support teaching and learning. However, some classes are too large to enable individual attention to be given to pupils with SEN where no in-class support is provided, and this in turn prevents potential high achieving students from extending their learning. The very good and sometimes inspirational teaching in the Phoenix Centre is central to its success.
30. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good and contribute significantly to pupils' achievement. The great majority of teachers plan well and set targets for individual progress. Pupils are positive about the teaching they receive and recognise the expertise of teachers and their concern for individual progress. In practical subjects, such as photography, ICT and science, some very good teaching results in high quality outcomes and performance by the pupils.
31. With the exception of citizenship, where there is no coherent assessment scheme by which learning and progress can be measured, work is marked regularly in all subjects according to the whole school policy. Constructive and helpful feedback is given to pupils in English geography, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music, photography and science. The standard is more variable in art, design and technology and physical education. Target setting is used with pupils and they are generally aware of their progress towards reaching them
32. Departmental management of teaching is satisfactory, but there are insufficient opportunities for managers to monitor the quality of classroom practice on a regular basis. This limits opportunities to share good practice and drive up standards.

Sixth Form

33. The overall standard of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. In seven out of ten lessons observed, teaching and learning were good or better.

34. Teachers plan well and set clear objectives for their students. They use their own very good subject expertise most effectively. Tasks are appropriate and provide good opportunities for students to develop their independent learning and critical thinking skills. Very good classroom relationships with groups of students underpinned the best teaching observed. Students make good gains in knowledge and understanding because lessons provide them with the structure to assimilate and make sense of new information. Homework is set regularly and is planned to extend and consolidate classroom learning. Overall, assessment is used effectively to ensure that students are clear about the standard of their work and what they must do in order to improve their performance. Particular strengths in teaching were observed in the A2 photography course, where overall provision is outstanding.
35. Teachers know their students very well. Where opportunities arise, they are generous in investing personal time to offer academic and personal advice outside lessons. Based on the student questionnaire and inspectors' discussions with students, it is clear that students consider that teaching is both interesting and challenging. They particularly value the expertise of their teachers and their readiness to offer individual help. Overall, students value their experience in the sixth form.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3 %)	7 (18 %)	18 (46%)	13 (33%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

Curricular provision at Cardinal Wiseman School is good. It is designed to maximise opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of ability or motivation.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- the wide range of academic and vocational courses available in Years 10 and 11
- the unique cross-curricular contribution offered by the rural dimension
- the well-resourced and managed library facilities
- very good provision of extra-curricular activities
- the breadth of sixth form subject choice via the consortium
- statutory requirements are not met regarding the teaching of citizenship in the main school or religious education in Year 13.

Commentary

36. The recent achievement of specialist status as a Language College, linked with 'the rural dimension', derived from a process of planning, review and development which have underpinned strong developments in the curriculum.
37. In Years 7 to 9, the school meets statutory requirements for a broad and balanced curriculum, with the exception of citizenship and careers education. The Foundation Studies programme provides Year 7 students with a secure transition from primary school, although in Year 7, not all pupils receive specialist teaching in history and geography which impacts on standards.
38. In Years 10 and 11 there is a balanced core, a wide choice of option subjects and strong vocational courses. Vocational education is very good, greatly enriched by the rural dimension which the school farm brings to the experience of city children.

39. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to the core subjects of English and mathematics, three languages are on offer (French, German and Spanish), with the option of single or double award combined science, business studies, communication studies and sports studies as well as traditional academic subjects. More able students study both English language and literature. Eighty per cent of students are entered for the GCSE in religious studies - with very high pass rates. ICT is used across the curriculum and included in lesson planning, but formal tracking of skills development and ability to evaluate or certify this is in need of development throughout the school, particularly in Years 10 and 11 for pupils not following the GCSE course. The school is alert to this problem, and the current development plan targets attention and funding to sustained improvement in ICT resources across the school.
40. For pupils for whom the GCSE-based curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not appropriate, a range of alternative curricular pathways has been introduced. These vocational routes include construction, mechanics, hairdressing, animal care and rural studies, reinforced by college courses and extended work placements. Pupils on this alternative curriculum, including those with SEN, spoke with enthusiasm of their work in landscaping, fencing, block paving - and one recalled with quiet delight the way he was looked after by his workmates and treated as an adult. All students in Year 10 undertake a well-organised two-week work experience placement.
41. The rural dimension brings a richness both to the curriculum and to the school's engagement with its community - particularly local primary schools. The wildlife garden is dedicated to St Francis, fusing the school's Catholic focus with its physical centre, and this provides a remarkable spiritual oasis at the heart of the school.
42. There is strong input to the wider curriculum from external agencies and partners. The health authority contributes to guidance on health and personal issues, with input also from business and other partners on matters of personal finance and careers guidance. The school has close links with *Connexions*. Social and personal education takes place in a context which stresses the paramountcy of Catholic values, moral integrity and loving personal relationships.
43. Very good curriculum provision for children with SEN is reinforced by the Phoenix Centre, where students in Years 7, 8 and 9 can be withdrawn from mainstream classes for blocks of six weeks. The time there gives them a basis thereafter to re-enter mainstream education with much improved personal confidence.
44. Enrichment and extra-curricular provision are strengths of the main school, as is increased attendance at voluntary worship and charity events. Staff refer to "*a generosity both of funding and of spirit*" in which students work extensively for good causes, including support for the Cardinal Wiseman children's orphanage in India, a commitment which enhances the multi cultural dimension in a predominantly white school. Provision for photography is excellent with pupils often starting at 7 am to complete projects or research. Year 11 pupils on the alternative curriculum spoke with great enthusiasm of rock climbing, canoeing and abseiling. They appreciated the value placed on their fitness and physical courage, and were more self confident as a result. Participation in sport is high with a large number of teams as well as additional clubs, enabling pupils to gain success in local and regional competitions. The English department provides poetry competitions and theatre trips and visiting theatre groups are encouraged. The drama club is flourishing and pupils have opportunity to perform in school productions. In design and technology, gifted and talented pupils have very good opportunity to link with a local college to participate in a national competition to design and produce model cars, using computer 3D programmes. Regular trips to Europe are organised. Many pupils benefit from instrumental tuition and the school has an orchestra which performs concerts. The school farm gives pupils very good opportunities to work with animals. Pupils have access to computers before school and at lunchtimes. However, there are very limited opportunities within history and geography.

45. Accommodation and resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory. The library makes a significant contribution to this and pupils make good use of it. The school's excellence in photography not only strengthens the curriculum, but brings stimulating visual life to displays in corridors and public areas. The school building is not, however, fully accessible to wheelchair users despite the installation of some lifts and hoists. There are two toilets for the disabled and a room to meet therapeutic needs. Resources for special needs are very good, often individually tailored to the needs of specific students. Interactive whiteboards and good use of ICT further meets students' needs. Staffing is adequate, with the exception of design and technology where recruitment difficulties have been experienced.
46. A unique feature in this city school is the rural dimension whereby agricultural, horticultural and animal husbandry courses are taught. Resources to support a variety of accredited and non-accredited activities include a school farm with ponies, goats, sheep, chickens, ducks, geese, and rabbits; a wildlife garden with a pond and greenhouses in which a variety of plants are grown including a computerised weather station; and a rural studies room with more exotic animals such as parrots, snakes, spiders, scorpion and toads. The impact and benefit of the rural dimension is felt widely throughout the school as it provides opportunities for all areas of the curriculum and, through after-school and holiday involvement, offers many pupils life-changing experiences in handling and caring for animals. In the sixth form, a one-year BTEC course in animal care acts as the prelude to further training for veterinary nursing.

Sixth form

47. The curricular provision in the sixth form is good. The selection of 20 AS/A2 level courses is well matched to the aspirations and needs of current students. Provision is enriched by the consortium arrangements with five other schools and a further education college. Overall, students may select from a range of 42 courses. The school offers 3 AVCE and 2 GNVQ courses. In addition two GCSE re-sit subjects are available. A particular feature of the sixth form is the one-year BTEC course offered in animal care, which draws on the expertise of a talented teacher. An additional highlight is the A2 level course in further mathematics, which is taught in conjunction with Warwick University.
48. All students in Year 12 follow a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which adds breadth to their sixth form experience, but some students do not receive tuition in religious education. Students have the opportunity to refine their communication and use of number skills through their subject courses. The use of ICT is good in most subjects and students' independent work demonstrates that they are competent, autonomous users of it. Provision for moral, social and cultural development through different subject areas, assemblies, the tutorial and PHSE programmes and the enrichment hour is good, although there is scope to extend the range of enrichment activities offered and to encourage greater participation in extra-curricular activity.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care and welfare is satisfactory. The provision of support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- the induction arrangements for pupils in Year 7 are good
- there are effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid
- adults provide pupils with satisfactory levels of support
- the school has satisfactory systems to monitor pupils' academic standards and progress and these are used well to provide pupils with advice and guidance
- the involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is satisfactory.

Commentary

49. The school has satisfactory health and safety procedures. Governors and staff make regular risk assessments and checks of equipment, although because there is no overview by senior management some equipment checks have not taken place recently – for example, on kilns in the art department. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are thorough and a good number of staff have had first aid training. Health and safety arrangements are not well co-ordinated and, because of recent re-organisation, nearly all first aiders are housed in the reception area, at a distance from the main body of the school. Recent improvements to security mean that there is now little vandalism. However, despite the efforts of the conscientious caretaker and his staff, pupils' toilets are occasionally damaged by a small number of irresponsible pupils and are locked except at break and lunch times. This caused much adverse comment from pupils and parents. Playgrounds and the area near the canteen are frequently strewn with litter after lunch, although the school is taking steps to deal with this. The lack of lockers means that all pupils have to carry coats, bags and equipment everywhere and this is a strain for younger pupils. Safety practice is good in science and PE and very good in the rural dimension area.
50. The acting deputy headteacher and a senior member of staff have recently been trained in child protection and procedures are secure. They give good support through training to all staff, especially heads of year, and concerns are shared regularly. Good support is given to pupils in public care, although personal education plans have not yet been received from the LEA. Good support is given by the School Nurse. Links with social services are satisfactory and links with the police are good.
51. The school has good induction arrangements for new pupils. These include visits by senior staff and some Year 8 pupils to all seven feeder primary schools. Year 6 pupils visit the college for taster days. Pupils in Year 7 felt welcomed into the school and settled in quickly. The well-established Foundation Studies programme for Year 7 ensures that transition to secondary education is easy and, when asked, pupils said it had prepared them well. Meetings at the school take place for all parents and pupils. There are limited 'buddy' or mentoring arrangements, but tutor groups are effectively organised. Staff have good relationships with most pupils and the tutor system provides good opportunities for pupils to develop trusting relationships with adults. The counselling service is valued by pupils.
52. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are satisfactory. In discussion, most pupils said that they understood what they needed to do to progress. The PHSE programme contributes to pupils' personal development and this is monitored through tutor files, head of years' notes and annual reports. However, there is no formal monitoring of pupils' personal development and no overview of the quality of learning experienced by pupils through the programme. The *Connexions* service offers a good level of support to pupils in Years 9 and 11.
53. The school has satisfactory procedures for seeking pupils' views, through year councils and the School Council. At two council meetings observed during the inspection, pupils discussed such issues as congestion, the pupils' toilets and taster days to check their GCSE choices. However, some pupils did not feel that their views had a positive impact on school life.
54. Care, guidance and support of pupils with SEN are very good. The learning support room provides a study space for vulnerable pupils during breaks in the school day. The school has developed a centre where disabled pupils or those with SEN may take external examinations. Behavioural support is of a high order. There are frequent, productive meetings of the student support service. Students benefit from a learning mentor who successfully raises the standards of some very vulnerable students, and helps to include them in all learning activities.

The Sixth Form

55. The school provides very good support and guidance for its sixth form students. Good relationships are a significant factor in the support they receive. The advice given by teachers and tutors is based on substantial personal knowledge of each individual. Students are kept well informed of their progress and find that their teachers, tutors and other sixth form managers are very accessible.
56. The school is aiming to increase the number of students staying on in the sixth form as currently only 33 per cent of the Year 11 cohort choose to move in to Year 12. Some of the existing students felt that the school could do more to raise the expectations of individual students lower down the school and to build a greater awareness of the variety and accessibility of the courses available in the sixth form. They also felt that their influence was minimal and that they were under-used within the school in supporting authority and discipline.
57. The information and guidance received about higher education are good. An initiative within this is the support offered by Warwick University to guide students in applying for university entry and in seeking financial support. In addition, students take part in a range of higher education activities including visits to a local higher education and employment fair. Particularly good links exist with the Universities of Coventry and Warwick. There is an awards access scheme for entry to Warwick University. Individual students are supported through the school access fund to attend university open days, including summer schools held at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There is a well-stocked library of higher education prospectuses. However, students who are not aiming for university entry deem the quality of careers guidance they receive to be less satisfactory.
58. A number of students have been able to gain work experience as part of their vocational course or within a job insight programme. The school recognises that there is scope to give greater emphasis to work-related learning in the sixth form.
59. Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are good and there are good procedures in place for monitoring their attendance and punctuality.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory, although the amount of involvement of many parents in their children's education is very limited. Links with the community and with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- the school has good links with its feeder primary schools
- links with the local community are good
- a few parents are very critical of the school and feel marginalised or ignored
- information supplied to parents is in need of improvement
- the school is not effective in involving all parents in its work.

Commentary

60. In a very low return to the questionnaire and at the poorly attended parents' meeting, the majority of parents felt satisfied with most aspects of the school. They were very satisfied with the arrangements for new pupils and with the way the school encourages their children to become mature and independent. A minority of parents expressed considerable dissatisfaction with several areas, such as bullying, the behaviour of some pupils and the extent to which the school seeks their views or deals with concerns. The findings of the inspection do not support parents' views about behaviour and bullying, but support their view that the school does not consult effectively with them.

61. The information supplied to parents is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses. While the prospectus is well presented and satisfactorily lays out for parents the nature and aims of the school, it does not give a clear picture of the strengths of the school, such as the pastoral system and Foundation Studies, or of its more unusual features such as the rural dimension. It also includes no information about the school's new Language College status and does not provide statutory information about a complaints procedure. The governors' annual report to parents does not meet the statutory requirement to include an evaluation of provision offered to SEN pupils nor an analysis of where the money is spent. Good curriculum guides are offered to all year groups and are attractively presented, although the options booklet for Year 9 makes no mention of the alternative curriculum. Annual reports on pupil progress comply with statutory requirements and are well and honestly written. They provide pupils and parents with helpful information and offer pupils the opportunity for self-assessment.
62. The school does not regularly seek parents' views, although questionnaires were sent out recently on the proposed new uniform and the school's performance. However, no results were published and responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that parents do not feel strongly involved in school life. Homework planners are not used consistently as a means of communication between home and school. Attendance at consultation meetings with teachers is good in Years 7 & 8 and poor in Years 9-11: the school has no procedures for following up parents who have not attended. Newsletters are satisfactory, but often do not reach home; the editor has retired and no replacement has yet been appointed. The web site has not been updated for 5 months. Individual Education Plans have not been completed for pupils with Special educational Needs.
63. Complaints are not always handled effectively, leading to negative perceptions about senior management.
64. The school has very good links with its Catholic primary schools, which supported the college financially in its recent bid for Language College specialist status. Language links have already been established with two of them. The director spends one afternoon per week at each school on a rotational basis and teaches French to different years. It is the intention to teach Spanish and German during the next two terms, so that pupils will have experienced three languages before they enter Cardinal Wiseman. The rural dimension of the school has also been included in the bid for language college status. This has already resulted in significant improvements to resources. Plans are envisaged for signs in different languages to provide a nature trail, with input from the foreign language assistants.
65. The school has developed good links with the local business community, through its work experience programme and work-related learning. Good links have been established with Coventry Rugby Club and the local theatre. Within the Language College development, evening classes in three different languages have already started for the wider community, and there are plans to support the linguistic requirements of local businesses. A number of local organisations use the school premises for activities.
66. Good links have been established with the wider community through visits to France and Germany and through the school's considerable support for the Cardinal Wiseman orphanage in India. Arrangements for the exchange of information with primary schools are effective. Some links have been established with other local secondary schools, through competitions and exhibitions of pupils' work. There are good links with local universities through teacher training placements and through the annual careers conference. The Cardinal Wiseman Association is very supportive of the school and raises good sums each year to support its work.

Sixth form

67. Sixth form managers communicate well with parents. Individual meetings are held as required and parents receive an adequate level of information about sixth form events, including a termly newsletter. There is, however, scope to increase the frequency of reporting to parents about students' progress.
68. Much is done within the sixth form to extend the boundaries of knowledge and understanding through links with institutions of higher education. Sixth form managers also work to ensure that there is regular interaction with other schools - especially those within the consortium, and with primary schools as part of community service activity. A recent conference with partner schools was successfully incorporated into the September 2004 induction programme. The international dimension of sixth form life is less explicit, except as part of the European Studies Project that is offered as an alternative to the General Studies AS level course in Year 12. There is also scope to build stronger partnerships with local business enterprises.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. Governors are committed to the school's aims and provide support for its work. The headteacher provides appropriate direction for the school and ensures a safe and secure environment for staff and pupils. The senior management team executes responsibilities efficiently but has yet to demonstrate the level of pro-activity required to drive the school forward. Middle management is generally good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- good relationships between management, staff and pupils
- the breadth of planned curriculum opportunity
- monitoring of whole-school policy implementation and curricular activity are weak
- governors do not monitor statutory compliance or challenge the school's academic performance with sufficient rigour
- the effectiveness of the senior management team is diluted by over-reliance on delegation without adequate support and accountability
- the leadership of work related learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

69. Governors have a strong commitment to the school and to its published aims as a Catholic foundation school. They strive to provide the headteacher with active support without undue interference, but are overly reliant on guidance from him and other key staff to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. This militates against the development of an independently evaluative role for governors which would enable a stronger leadership function. Through a committee structure, they seek to ensure that the school meets its statutory obligations, but there is a need for greater rigour in holding the school managers to account for the results of significant investment in training and resources, and in ensuring that statutory curricular requirements are met within the set timeframes. There is also a need to consider whether the current committee structure best meets the need to monitor such developments.
70. The school fails to meet statutory requirements in relation to the curriculum and provision of information to parents. For example, the subject of citizenship falls a long way short of meeting statutory requirements at present. There are also shortfalls in the statutory provision of careers education in Years 7,8 and 9, although current planning indicates that these will be remedied in September 2005.

71. The headteacher leads the school with commitment and integrity. He strives to improve pupils' attainment, at the same time ensuring that the education of the whole child is maintained and safeguarding the school's high standard of care and guidance. This focus on 'educating the whole child' is central to the governors' vision for the school which seeks to create *"a truly Christian environment in which pupils are valued as unique individuals"*.
72. The school's senior management team is committed to the school, but lacks the drive necessary to achieve improved standards of attainment within an increasingly challenging social context. They manage the school effectively on a day-to-day basis, but have not put in place the monitoring systems necessary for consistent implementation of whole-school initiatives, nor to secure the pace of improvement and change on which its development depends. This, in part, is due to lack of clarity about lines of accountability, and is reflected in the over-use of delegation without accountability. Whole-school development planning has clear objectives, but does not appear to be effectively used within line management of departments. This, in turn, leads to some middle managers feeling unsupported in seeking to build on it. Although line management responsibilities are defined, the senior management team is reluctant to challenge the work of teachers and middle managers systematically, and they rely too much on task-driven activity at the expense of strategic management. Although examination and test results are analysed, the day-to-day learning experiences of pupils are not monitored well enough. Delegation to middle management without the necessary monitoring has frequently rendered it ineffective. For example, the impact of new teaching methods and pupil groupings is not currently monitored or evaluated.
73. The school has a strongly inclusive ethos, backed by an appropriate range of policies. Good systems involving the sharing and analysis of data are in place for the monitoring of pupils' progress, and professional development of staff has been directed towards promoting new approaches to teaching and learning. Implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has been used well to provide all staff with professional development, and systems are in place to link performance management to training needs of individuals. However, the oversight of their implementation and impact is not rigorous enough.
74. Middle management is generally effective, although not always consistent. Heads of department and heads of year are afforded considerable autonomy and generally use it professionally and to good effect. Most, but not all, departments are well led. Where there are shortcomings, these can sometimes be traced to historic staffing difficulties. Planning processes have developed throughout the school but are variable in quality. School improvement priorities are shared with middle managers to help inform their own short-term development planning but there is a need for a greater and more pro-active whole-school focus in which curriculum, professional development and resource planning are co-ordinated by the senior management team in the context of honest self-evaluation. The involvement of governors in such planning from the outset would enhance the expertise available to the school and bring a wider vision to bear on future needs.
75. Leadership of SEN is currently unsatisfactory. Social inclusion has recently been placed within the framework of learning support, but senior management has failed to ensure that there is a coherent plan for the development of both areas of provision to fully meet the needs of all pupils. Management of SEN is satisfactory. Day-to-day routines run smoothly. Procedures are clear and generally followed. There is a good deal of information on students available to all staff and this is regularly monitored. Some Individual Education Plans are not yet in place.
76. The school has a well-qualified and dedicated staff. Several teachers have served many years of their career in the school, which is a source of considerable strength. This engagement with the community and in the Catholic life of the school provides a bedrock of long-term commitment, while giving space to the energy and enthusiasm of younger teachers. Several of the younger staff have been recruited by the school following their initial teacher training placement, to great mutual benefit. Technical and administrative support is good.

However, there have been problems of securing well-qualified staff in a few areas, and reliance on supply teachers has been less than satisfactory. In design and technology there has been limited continuity over a number of years, with students discouraged from choosing the option because the school is not confident of its provision. A lack of specialist staff meant that one group had to be disbanded for lack of teachers, while the Key Stage 3 course - rotating round different skill areas - does not offer equal opportunities.

77. The administrative support team is well managed and provides very good service to the professional staff and to pupils, and the use of ICT to support the administration of the school is well developed.
78. Cardinal Wiseman school is an efficient and orderly place in which personal contact is a valuable contributor to communication. Financial management is very good. Effective checks on departmental expenditure are in place, and the fabric of the school is generally clean and maintained well. The principles of best value are well understood and applied. The school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses and therefore the school provides good value for money.
79. The fabric and condition of the accommodation is good. Many rooms are bright, well decorated with pupils' work, and exceptionally well maintained. The school building is not, however, fully accessible to wheelchair users despite the installation of some lifts and hoists. There are two toilets for the disabled and a room to meet therapeutic needs. Resources are very good, often individually tailored to the needs of specific pupils. Interactive whiteboards and good use of ICT further support learning. The management of accommodation and resources connected with the rural dimension is excellent.

Sixth form

80. The quality of leadership is good. The Head of Sixth and her deputy share a clear vision for development and improvement. They are well organised, resourceful and responsive in approach. Providing a forward looking and optimistic character to the sixth form, they do much to generate confidence in students, and are committed to understanding and meeting their varying needs. Daily administrative arrangements, systems and procedures work well. However, there is scope to improve the educational content of the tutorial period.
81. Strategies for monitoring and evaluating student performance are good. Overall, planning for change and improvement and evaluation of outcomes are effective in ensuring the development of the sixth form. Co-ordinators from consortium schools meet regularly and this aids the smooth organisation across the federation. However, some students complained that transport arrangements were not always reliable and others felt that there was an unacceptable lack of co-ordination at subject level where the teaching was split between schools, leading to repetition of work and gaps in provision.
82. Funding is used in a cost-effective way to give students a good quality of teaching and educational experience. Staffing arrangements are good. Overall the number of teachers is in good proportion to the number of sixth form students. The expertise and experience of teachers are very well suited to the demands of sixth form teaching. Teachers are deployed effectively to provide a balanced curriculum.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,254,791	Balance from previous year	98,245
Total expenditure	5,147,402	Balance carried forward to the next	205,634
Expenditure per pupil	4,010		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-Related Learning (WRL)

Provision for work-related learning is **satisfactory overall**, but needs greater co-ordination.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- a wide range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11
- a well managed work-experience programme for all pupils
- good opportunities for extended work placements within an alternative curriculum pathway
- good links with further education
- leadership and co-ordination of WRL elements are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

83. At this early stage, the school is providing a satisfactory school and college-linked programme for work-related learning. In Years 10 and 11, it includes courses in rural and agricultural science, beauty, business studies, catering, childcare, construction, engineering, hair-dressing, ICT, photography, retail, sport and recreation, and work-readiness. Most subjects in Years 10 and 11 contribute to WRL and have useful links with business and industry, particularly, ICT and design and technology. The programme is innovative and wide-ranging, though there is room for development with regard to vocational pathways, and the school has recognised the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to undertake a business challenge, problem-solving or enterprise activity.
84. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 taking the reduced options course display a sound knowledge and understanding of local employment opportunities, the qualities and skills needed for the jobs for which they will be applying, and other essential matters such as workers' responsibilities, and health and safety in the workplace. Some higher-attaining pupils have a more complex grasp of the labour market and understand how changes in the national and global economy can affect employees at a local level. In a GCSE business studies lesson observed, the teacher illustrated this well with up-to-date references to the large car plant in the region, affected by poor sales abroad.
85. Pupils' learning through work is a strength of the programme. All Year 10 pupils take part in the very well-organised, and carefully monitored, two weeks' work experience arranged by the school and careers staff, which, wherever possible, is tailored to the pupils' needs and aspirations. The school may wish to review the time allocated for debriefing the pupils in the light of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.
86. The school also provides additional extended work experience, training or further education courses for pupils following the alternative curriculum, including taster courses and NVQ Level 1 courses at local colleges. In this way, theory is linked to practice and pupils gain "inside" knowledge of the vocational areas in which they are interested. *Connexions* staff, the careers department and the course tutors responsible for these pupils, liaise closely and

effectively and when questioned, pupils spoke warmly of the help and support received. Work on preparing for employment begun in Year 10 is successfully built upon and added to in Year 11 for all pupils.

87. All pupils questioned reported gains in confidence, independence and self-esteem. Pupils achieve well, especially those for whom a normal time-table has proved challenging. They have learned new, workplace skills and knowledge and also rediscovered their motivation to study. For example, some pupils with a history of truancy are now receiving excellent reports from their college tutors, employers and trainers, have attended all GCSE English and mathematics lessons to date, except when genuinely ill, and there is every expectation that they will complete their NVQ Level 1 qualification, pass their GCSEs and go on into full employment.
88. Results are generally good and there are areas of strength within the programme, individual course tutors leading and managing their areas of work-related learning satisfactorily. However, the overall leadership, management and co-ordination of WRL are unsatisfactory. A senior manager is acting as care-taker, but there is no WRL co-ordinator and no monitoring of what is being delivered across Years 10 and 11, no planned and co-ordinated staff development, and no planning for future curricular development or regular opportunities to update teachers and to share good practice. Crucial links between WRL, citizenship, PHSE and careers are not explicit within a properly structured overall scheme of work which would improve, develop and celebrate the school's achievements in these areas as they deserve.
89. Careers provision, which supports WRL, is satisfactory, and is provided by staff in the mathematics department trained, for example, to deliver a web-site self-analysis and guidance system; and also through PHSE. A newly-appointed careers co-ordinator has already begun improving provision which is adequate but uneven in quality, especially in Year 12, where resources are stretched as a result of the recent, more intensive focusing on Years 10 and 11, where provision is good. *Connexions* staff are permanently on site, underpin many of the careers initiatives, and are training more teachers. The careers co-ordinator is also keen to undertake NVQ training in careers guidance. There is an improving and developing itinerary of careers visits and speakers, for example from the Armed Forces, and the Police.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- good relationships lead to a generally positive attitude to learning
- teachers' very good subject knowledge and effective management leads to good progress in lessons
- strategies to improve pupils' literacy feature strongly in English lessons and are effective
- many pupils do better than expected in examinations
- some groups are too large and have too wide a range of ability to allow for teaching that is sharply focused on individual needs.

Commentary

90. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is average. Standards in tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades at GCSE was well above average for boys but below average for girls. Results in Literature were well above average, but with a far smaller entry than is the case nationally. Results in 2003 indicate that pupils made good progress over Years 7 to 11 and achieved well overall. The position was rather more complex in Years 10 and 11 where the high achievement of boys masked the poorer performance of girls. In 2004 overall standards were maintained at the end of Year 9, but pupils (particularly boys) did not do as well as predicted at GCSE. The standards observed during the inspection indicated that the dip in 2004 has been arrested, and that pupils overall are achieving at least in line with predictions.
91. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is very good overall. Teachers know their subject and their pupils well. Pupils' learning and personal needs are usually accommodated sensitively in very well planned lessons. Relationships are consequently good. The beneficial impact of the Key Stage 3 and literacy strategies is clearly seen in the conduct of lessons and in pupils' resulting progress and sense of achievement. For example, lower set Year 9 pupils did good work against the odds (many had difficulty concentrating and working co-operatively) through skilful timing, negotiation and target setting. The teacher provided a model of courtesy and firmness which enabled pupils to do their best. This was typical of the quality of teaching. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen however where there was too little challenge for pupils to reach their potential. Learning is generally good, however. The difference between the very high quality of teaching and the quality of learning is explained by pupils' evident dependence on teachers for progress and motivation.
92. Leadership and management of the department are both good. The head of department provides a very good model of careful and encouraging teaching. There is clear delegation of responsibilities. There is a collaborative approach to planning and curriculum development. Colleagues' professional development is well served through observation, in-service training, and deployment of department members according to their known strengths. There is too little time allocated for the proper coverage of management responsibilities, however. Groups in Years 7 and 8 are too large and have too wide a range of ability for teaching to be as carefully focused on individual needs as it could or should be. Some teaching goes on in non-specialist rooms at a distance from the 'core' accommodation. These three factors work against the principal element (raising attainment) in the school development plan.

93. Since the last inspection results and pupils' achievement have improved. The dip in results in 2004 does not herald a downward trend because current pupils are working and achieving well. Assessment, target-setting and the use of ICT (all issues raised in the last report) are effectively established. Improvement therefore has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

94. Standards of literacy and provision for literacy development across the school are satisfactory overall with significant strengths in particular areas. Inspectors noted good support for writing in English, mathematics, science, and art, with excellent provision for advancing pupils' literacy through work in photography. In these subjects pupils' standards were above average on account of the close attention given to the development of their skills. The library makes a significant contribution to literacy development through its encouragement of reading for learning and for pleasure. The school has a well-planned programme for literacy development, but no current arrangements for evaluating and tracking its impact on standards.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- GCSE examination results should be better in French and German
- pupils' speaking skills are not good enough
- the faculty is well led
- pupils achieve well in Spanish.

Commentary

95. Pupils enter the school with no experience of modern foreign languages and below average capability. In Years 7 to 9, girls and boys of differing capability from all religious, social and ethnic backgrounds achieve satisfactorily in French and attain standards close to those usually found nationally. High attaining pupils write very well, but middle attaining pupils underachieve in writing. Pupils' speaking skills are less well developed. They lack confidence and fluency.
96. Almost all pupils study a second language, German or Spanish, in Years 8 and 9. Those who choose Spanish achieve well. Achievement in German is satisfactory.
97. Practically all pupils continue to study a language in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, GCSE results were just below average in French and German, but clearly above average in Spanish. Pupils do better in Spanish than in their other school subjects. Boys outperformed girls in French. In 2004, results were higher still in Spanish, but were lower in French and much lower in German.
98. In Years 10 and 11, standards are currently close to the national average in French and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' writing skills remain better than their speaking. Standards are above average in Spanish and pupils achieve well. In German, pupils attain below average standards, but achieve satisfactorily.
99. In Spanish, teaching and learning are good in all years. In French and German, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan their lessons well. They use good support materials to help pupils with special educational needs, and provide opportunities for gifted pupils to excel. They use ICT increasingly to support learning. In the most successful lessons, teachers speak the foreign language extensively and expect pupils to do likewise. However, there are too many lessons where pupils are not

required to use the language sufficiently. There are too few opportunities to practise speaking in pairs or groups. Suitable homework is set regularly, and marking is very good. However, in German, too few pupils respond positively to teachers' helpful comments.

100. The faculty is well led, with vision and purpose, and well managed. The leaders are good role models. The curriculum is inclusive, and is enriched by study visits and other extra-curricular activities. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The committed team of expert linguists is capable of making further rapid improvement within the framework of its Language College development plan.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teaching and learning are good; teachers work well with the National Numeracy Strategy to help improve standards
- the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, overall; teachers work well together and are committed to improving the pupils' standards of attainment
- an occasional weakness in teaching results in a minority of pupils not working hard enough to improve their attainment levels
- computers are not used often enough to enhance pupils' learning in mathematics.

Commentary

101. Results of the national tests at the end of Year 9 have continued to improve and are now close to the national average. In relation to their recorded prior attainment pupils achieve well.
102. GCSE results in 2004 were below national averages and not as good as in 2003. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-G grades were close to the national average in both years. Boys' results were better than the girls'.
103. In Years 7,8 and 9 standards observed during the inspection and in pupils' work covered a range and were in line with the national average. Pupils achieve well in lessons. They demonstrate a confident approach to handling number including fractions and percentages and use calculators competently. More able pupils understand and find reciprocals of numbers including fractions and squares of numbers using calculators. Pupils who are below average attainment on entry to the school continue to improve number skills, mentally and in writing; they add and subtract fractions demonstrating an understanding of equivalence.
104. Pupils' achievement across Years 10 and 11 is broadly average. The most able achieve highly; they develop good algebraic skills and competently solve simultaneous equations by substitution and by formula.
105. Pupils learn well because of the good quality teaching. Teachers are knowledgeable with regard to the subject and to examination requirements. They plan lessons well. In Years 7 to 9 plans are linked to the National Numeracy Strategy; this provides varied activities that help to maintain pupils' interest and involvement and hence they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs, ably supported by teaching assistants, make similar progress.
106. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils show an interest in the activities, work co-operatively and concentrate throughout lessons. A minority of pupils who lack interest talk too much and do not address the work of the lesson and this limits their progress. Teachers plan lessons well and link the work to course requirements. The pace of learning is brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met.

107. Pupils' work is monitored through regular end-of-unit tests and plans are in place to make better use of the setting of targets. However, teachers do not make consistent use of National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades in the marking of class work and homework to inform pupils of their learning.
108. Leadership of the faculty is satisfactory and management of the team is good. Teachers work well together and are committed to improving standards. Areas to improve have already been identified and some initiatives are in the early stages of development,.
109. Resources in the faculty are satisfactory. However, the six computers in the faculty, although used regularly, are insufficient to enhance the learning of mathematics for all pupils.
110. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Results at the end of Year 9 are improving helped by the National Numeracy Strategy and improvements are planned to ensure the assessment of pupils' work is more informative.

Mathematics across the curriculum

111. Standards are satisfactory overall. There is a whole-school policy to improve number skills across other subjects but no systematic approach to monitoring the policy. There are no established links between the mathematics department and other subject departments.
112. Although some subjects use numeracy adequately most lack systematic planning for this. In mathematics, although teachers plan and use a variety of activities to strengthen numeracy skills, mentally and in writing, these are not consistently in use across the faculty.
113. Pupils' number skills are adequate to support the work of other subjects. In art, pupils develop spatial skills and an understanding of proportion. Number work is used extensively in all years in science and pupils cope adequately; standards are satisfactory. A variety of mathematical ideas related to maps, coordinates and population pyramids, for example, are used and reinforced in geography; standards are satisfactory, overall. Pupils in design and technology develop skills in measurement and standards adequately support the work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teaching is imaginative and interesting in all years and pupils respond with good behaviour and a positive approach to the subject
- pupils are encouraged to work hard and learning is productive
- good leadership and management and shared commitment of staff are identifying and implementing action for improvement
- most lessons enable pupils to learn effectively but at times there is a lack of challenge to stretch the highest attainers
- although resources relating to ICT are satisfactory there is a need to increase its application in teaching.

Commentary

114. Across Years 7 to 9 the standard of work seen is average and overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils settle quickly on entry to Year 7 and encouraged by supportive teaching soon display good scientific thinking. Their interest in science is apparent, as was seen in a Year 7 class fully enjoying and taking pride in their work as they prepared a slide and drew the resulting onion cell structure viewed under a microscope. Year 9 test results in 2003 were below average when compared with all schools but in line in comparison with similar

schools based on prior attainment. Results have been rising steadily in recent years and this continued in 2004. Strategies to improve results such as booster lessons, targeting borderline pupils, and use of question packs have been most effective.

115. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is above average and achievement is good. Pupils are taught to think for themselves and to explain and evaluate their observations in practical work. They show respect for each other and co-operate well in group work. Pupils with special needs receive good support, with staff well aware of their requirements. They participate fully in lessons and progress as well as others. There are no differences in achievement amongst any groups of pupils in classes.
116. GCSE double and single science results in 2003 were well above the national average. Results declined but remained above average in 2004. Direct comparison with national figures is difficult because of the options policy which leads to far more taking single science than is usual, including some higher ability pupils. In double science boys have outperformed girls in recent years. In single science, girls' results were better than boys' in 2003 but fell disappointingly to below the boys' standard in 2004.
117. Teachers' good subject expertise and their skills in presenting information leads to effective learning. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of approaches which maintains pupils' interest. A Year 10 class clearly understood the effect of temperature and concentration changes on reaction rates following an activity in which pupils took on the role of colliding particles. Constructive relationships between teachers and pupils lead to a productive working atmosphere. Marking is regular and of a good standard. It contains helpful comments so that pupils know what to do to improve. Formal assessment procedures are satisfactory but sometimes in lessons opportunities are missed for judging the effectiveness of learning. Teaching is always inclusive: however, in some lessons those of highest ability are not challenged and fully stretched.
118. Science is well led and managed by a faculty head with a clear sense of direction for the future of the subject. All staff show a strong commitment to improvement and work together effectively as a team. Systems for monitoring teaching are good and, followed by evaluation and development action, are important in taking the department forward. The use of ICT as a research tool is satisfactory and science benefits from its own computer room with fifteen machines. There is, however, a lack of ICT application to the evaluation and analysis of experimental work which would help pupils' further understanding. Literacy skills are good, both in written and oral work. In all years, pupils' confident and correct usage of scientific language is a notable feature. Numeracy skills adequately support all work. Accommodation is just satisfactory. Laboratories are well maintained but are dated and in need of refurbishment. They do not enhance the commendable practical approach to teaching and learning. A hardworking team of technicians provides good support.
119. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been good. There are now effective schemes of work which offer good ideas on supporting pupils of all abilities and give good support if the teacher is not a subject specialist. The faculty development plan has been strengthened and is linked to an appropriate programme of staff development. Changes introduced have resulted in an improvement in the overall standard of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- there are high levels of achievement in Years 7 to 9 and among GCSE candidates
- teaching is consistently good or very good and combines with pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour to secure effective learning

- in Years 10 and 11, there is no systematic provision of skills-based ICT for those not on the GCSE programme
- at present there are no purely vocational courses in ICT for Years 10 and 11
- the VCE programme in sixth form attracts good numbers, and provides well for pupils on both academic and vocational routes
- members of the department have developed and shared very imaginative and attractive teaching materials, securing a high quality common baseline of ICT experience even for pupils taught by non-specialists.

Commentary

120. There has been substantial improvement since the previous inspection, both in resources and the quality of teaching. Standards are good at the end of Year 9, good in GCSE at the end of Year 11, and good overall. ICT is among the higher performing subjects at GCSE, both in overall pass rate, in the proportion of very high grades and in comparison with national averages. A higher percentage of pupils take the subject to GCSE than do so nationally.
121. Achievement is good in both key stages. Although pupils enter Year 7 with below average attainment, at the end of Year 9 more than 66 per cent of the group have achieved Level 5 or above in the teacher-assessed tests, which is above the national average. In 2004, the number of pupils achieving grades A*-C at GCSE rose to 57 per cent (well above both school and national averages), representing good achievement for Year 11.
122. Teaching and learning are very good at all levels. Pupils are enthused by the subject, relations among pupils and staff are excellent and the strong teaching leads to very effective learning. Teachers are mutually supportive and good recent appointments have created the nucleus of a very successful department. The use of assessment and homework is a particular strength. Work is regularly set, scrupulously marked and monitored. Excellent use is made of data to track and guide learning, while analysis of the way individual module marks feed through to grade levels is particularly helpful and motivating to Years 10 and 11.
123. Implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy in ICT has created a strong base for development. In Year 7, ICT is taught by form tutors as part of the Foundation Studies programme. This has been made possible by a full scheme of work and a growing bank of learning materials which secure a common framework for teaching and help non specialist experienced colleagues work to a common baseline
124. Leadership and management of the department are very good, and much of the strength both of the provision and the improving standards of achievement derives from their effectiveness. The faculty director's experience as an examiner and assessor adds authority to the department's practice in monitoring and assessment, and helps ensure that grades are securely linked to national norms. The detailed level of planning which has been brought to course design, schemes of work and lesson planning has given the department a very strong foundation on which to build a coherent approach to teaching and learning in ICT.
125. In most of the computer rooms there is very good accommodation (although one is totally inadequate) with space for group and plenary work and a layout that allows pupils to have books and folders by the terminals. Teachers make good use of smart boards and stored departmental resources. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good. With the exception of provision in Years 10 and 11 for those not taking the GCSE course, all of the previous shortcomings have been very successfully retrieved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

126. The use of ICT to promote learning in subjects across the curriculum is just satisfactory.

127. Levels of usage and hardware support are uneven, although several subject departments (notably history, mathematics, geography and music) do make very effective use of ICT in learning despite relatively poor resources. In a few areas, teachers have access to clusters of terminals as well as the bookable suites and there is growing provision of whiteboard technology, with commendable levels of staff enthusiasm for its use in conveying information. A generic software base is supplemented by licences for specialist applications where appropriate, and ICT teaching and support staff give generously of their time in providing supervised access to the computer suites. Most departments include IT in their schemes of work but the use of ICT in support for learning is not yet fully embedded in the culture of the school.
128. There is some use of spreadsheets, and very good use of graphics and design packages in photography and art, both for the creation and manipulation of images. Programmable keyboards in music support pupils in composition. CAD-CAM equipment is available but underused in design and technology, as is ICT generally. The internet is increasingly used as a research tool to support learning. In English and the Humanities faculties, some pupils' work is word processed, and ICT is used for presentation, internet based research, manipulation of data and for analysis of information - but its spontaneous use (for example in drafting and redrafting text) is hindered by the difficulty of securing access to terminals.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not make sufficient progress
- good schemes of work enable effective lesson-planning
- the majority of pupils display positive attitudes towards geography
- there is not enough off-site fieldwork for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

129. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average: their experience of the subject is varied, geographical skills are underdeveloped and many have low levels of literacy. The results of both the 2003 and 2004 teacher assessments in Year 9 were well below average. Standards observed during the inspection in the current Year 9 are closer to, but still below, expectations. In Years 7 to 9 specialist geographers teach fewer than half of lessons and the allocation of a single one-hour period per week is minimal. Whilst most pupils develop skills in map-reading and the interpretation of data and are able to describe geographical patterns and processes, such as tectonic activity, too few produce the more detailed explanatory writing required to reach the levels expected by the end of Year 9. Achievement in relation to prior attainment is, therefore, unsatisfactory. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress because of good individual support by teachers and the provision of suitable materials and textbooks.
130. In 2003, GCSE results were below average, although boys attained better than girls and better than boys nationally. The standards indicated by the unvalidated results for 2004, in which the performance of boys declined significantly, and in work seen during the inspection are also below average. The department has introduced strategies to raise attainment, particularly that of boys: schemes of work offer more relevant case studies, there is more support for coursework and a continued focus on the techniques required to produce higher level answers to examination questions. Their effectiveness is evident in the high proportion

of pupils who achieve a GCSE grade though not yet in the numbers achieving grades A*-C. In relation to their starting point at the end of Year 9, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory.

131. Overall teaching is satisfactory and good in those lessons which are less teacher dominated, with pupils given some independence in developing knowledge and understanding. The guidance provided in detailed schemes of work allows teachers to plan lessons with clear learning objectives and a range of activities which cater for the needs of pupils with differing capabilities and learning styles. Lessons are well managed with good relationships between teachers and pupils, the great majority of whom respond with hard work and good behaviour. In some lessons taken by non-specialists, however, teachers do not do enough to check that pupils are secure in the application of skills and newly acquired knowledge and there is an overemphasis on fact and description rather than explanation.
132. Leadership and management of the subject are just satisfactory. Development planning, indicating awareness of the need to raise standards through improvements to the curriculum and organisation in Years 7 to 9, does not focus directly on improving teaching. Schemes of work provide clear direction and guidance to a large team of teachers but the curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to learn geography outside the classroom through fieldwork and educational visits. Procedures are in place for target-setting and the monitoring of pupils' progress, but inconsistencies in application mean that not all are aware of how well they are doing in relation to national standards. There is much informal monitoring of teaching and sharing of best practice through good working relationships, but little is done to effect improvement through rigorous evaluation of the work of the department. Satisfactory improvement has been made in relation to the issues raised in the previous inspection concerning ICT, investigative work and target-setting.

History

Provision for history is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- standards at the end of Year 9 are well below national expectations
- GCSE results have been consistently well below the national average
- the level of behavioural management, expectation and challenge is unsatisfactory in some lessons
- procedures for monitoring, departmental review and record keeping are inadequate.
- where teaching is good, pupils demonstrate interest in the subject and work productively in lessons
- marking and assessment procedures are effective.

Commentary

133. In 2004 teachers' assessment of pupils' performance at the end of Year 9 indicates well below average attainment for both boys and girls. In 2003, the attainment of boys and girls at GCSE was significantly below national averages. In 2004, the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C was higher and the relative performance of the subject in the school improved markedly from the previous year. National comparators are not yet available for 2004. Over the past five years, boys have consistently outperformed girls.
134. Standards seen in Year 8, which was the only year group in Years 7 to 9 studying history during the inspection week, ranged from below to well below national expectations. Levels of achievement reflect the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Unsatisfactory achievement and attainment reflect unsatisfactory classroom management. However, the limited curriculum time devoted to history as part of the school's Foundation Studies programme, and the lack of specialist teaching also depress

standards. Pupils enter the school with below average skills in the subject. They acquire an understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying, but many have difficulty in recalling information accurately. Pupils appreciate that history is based on evidence, and all, including those with special educational needs, can extract information from a variety of written and pictorial sources. Whilst the majority of pupils develop sound writing skills, many have weak listening skills and are easily distracted in lessons.

135. Overall, achievement in Years 10 to 11 is determined by the quality of teaching and ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, pupils are helped to acquire the skills and confidence to write at increasing length, follow lines of enquiry and to construct historical arguments. Higher attaining pupils successfully build on historical knowledge and understanding. They write structured accounts, synthesising information from a range of evidence. Their recall of historical facts is generally secure and their conceptual understanding of cause, consequence and change is well developed. In other lessons, uninspiring teaching combined with poor classroom management impacts adversely on pupils' attitudes; they are reluctant to take individual responsibility or to use their initiative. Their work is lacking in detail and frequently incomplete.
136. History teaching is of a variable quality overall. The best teaching seen was characterised by secure specialist knowledge, well-paced delivery and good subject coverage. These qualities were underpinned by effective learning materials, which provide variety and structure learning experiences. Teachers make good use of ICT to stimulate interest. Where all teaching lacks development is in differentiating for pupils at different levels of understanding. There is also room to raise the expectations of the most able pupils through consistent challenge. Where teaching is good, pupils enjoy history lessons and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Overall, there is scope to enhance independent learning skills through the provision of more rigorous homework assignments. The department recognises the requirement for greater vigilance to ensure that all pupils produce good quality GCSE coursework on time.
137. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The head of history is committed to improvement and models good teaching practice. However, objectives are not yet underpinned by effective management practices. The current procedures for monitoring, review and record keeping are inadequate. Planning for development within the social science faculty does not cover the full range of subject priorities. There is scope for performance data to be used more effectively to monitor progress and to analyse value added information. Assessment and target setting are areas of comparative strength. Most pupils are aware of the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to improve further. There is scope to build the profile of the subject in the school through the provision of history-based extra-curricular activities and a wider range of educational visits.
138. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have fallen at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE. Achievement has declined at the end of Year 9, but remains consistent in Years 10 to 11, where there is good teaching. The quality of teaching is more variable than at the time of the last inspection. The use of ICT has significantly improved.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- pupils' standards and achievement are well below expected levels
- long-term staff absence and problems of retention of specialist teachers in resistant materials and graphics have had a negative impact on attainment
- subject development planning is weak

- relationships between teachers and their pupils and pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good
- the impact of ICT is beginning to show in improved standards of work.

Commentary

139. Standards in design and technology on entry to the school are below average. Pupils' practical skills are unsatisfactory and they have limited appreciation of the principles of design. In 2004 in Year 9, standards measured by teacher assessments indicated that pupils were below national averages at level 5 and above. This represents unsatisfactory achievement and was reflected in the standard of work seen during the inspection. Pupils are not always guided through the stages of designing and making in a way that enables all pupils to establish basic competence in using a range of research, analysis, development and communication techniques. They do not therefore always recognise and use skills acquired in earlier work to inform increasingly demanding design and make activities in new situations. Rates of improvements are slowed because of the rotational course structure, imbalance in opportunities to work in all specialist areas and staff absence in two key areas. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in lessons and make similar progress to the rest of the class because of the high levels of individual teacher support. Gifted and talented pupils are starting to be supported through initiatives like the F1 Challenge.
140. In 2003, in the GCSE examination fewer than one in four pupils obtained A*-C grades - a result which was well below the national and school average. Unconfirmed results in 2004 showed that standards had declined further and achievement remains unsatisfactory. The proportion of pupils obtaining A*-G grades was in line with the national average.
141. Results have declined steadily in resistant materials and graphics over the previous three years, whereas in food technology they have increased significantly and are now similar to the school average. In home economics child development (all girls) results have remained below and well below the school and national average.
142. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was satisfactory. All teachers introduce lessons well and give good demonstrations. They help and control pupils well in lessons. As a result, attitudes and behaviour in lessons are normally good. In some instances the focus for the lesson is directed towards the task at the expense of developing learning to the depth and breadth expected. In such lessons, teachers tended to instruct the class and questions were not effectively used to check levels of understanding or challenge the more able. Over the last two to three years, pupils have not always been taught by permanent, specialist teachers in resistant material and graphics, and their learning has also been limited because of the poor condition of resources. Computer-assisted-design and manufacturing facilities are not readily available in all areas, but the use of ICT is slowly beginning to improve standards of presentation and depth of research.
143. Leadership is unsatisfactory and fragmented and reflects staffing vacancies of specialist key personnel. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in addressing all of the issues identified in the last report, including the significant decline in standards, which remain well below average.
144. Direction for development is articulated in the faculty development plan, but it needs to be much more sharply focused with clearly identified measurable outcomes and interim milestones to effectively monitor progress.
145. Day-to-day management is satisfactory and the head of faculty works extremely hard to remedy the daily issues surrounding the deployment of supply teachers.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

146. **Drama** teaching was sampled as part of the inspection. Two lessons were seen. Standards of teaching were good. Standards of learning did not entirely match the quality of teaching because of the size of the classes in Year 7 and the difficulties some boys find in concentrating and co-operating. There is no drama in the curriculum for Year 9. This means that the option offered for GCSE is not chosen with a sufficiently solid base of experience. For these reasons, provision for drama is unsatisfactory, despite the good teaching and good studio facilities

Art and Design

The provision for art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teachers have good subject knowledge.
- leadership and management are unsatisfactory
- monitoring of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory
- there is insufficient challenge in lessons for all students to do their best.
- assessment and marking are inconsistent, frequently lacking guidance for pupils.

Commentary

147. Standards are below average for pupils in Year 9. However, this represents good achievement from the well below average standards when they entered the school. Design ideas are limited by the pupils' lack of working knowledge of a range of art materials and the skills to work in different forms. Sketchbooks, recently introduced, are beginning to be used to collect images and for recording ideas. For example, pupils in a Year 8 lesson have produced annotated drawings for their clay pots that show a basic understanding of shape, form and design.
148. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, attainment was significantly below average in art and design and insufficient progress from earlier achievement at the end of Year 9 was evident. The numbers of pupils taking the subject to examination level has fallen since the last inspection and the standard of girls' work has declined below that of the boys. Work seen during the inspection was below expectation for pupils at this stage. Design work is not well researched: while it reflects an awareness of other artists, there is too much copying from artwork instead of using it to inform their own work and style. The range of materials is too limiting. Drawing skills are improving but there could be more first hand observational drawing. Pupils do not use a wide enough range of materials or work at different scales and forms to increase their technical confidence.
149. The teaching is just satisfactory. The recent changes to broaden the curriculum to include more three-dimensional work means that pupils are beginning to have more learning opportunities. Improvements in lesson planning are causing teachers to use their good subject knowledge to challenge the pupils more effectively. However, the range and quality of materials and equipment to support teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, especially for classroom reference. Teachers have good class discipline. Individual advice and support, sensitively given, are helping pupils gain the confidence to develop their work. Assessment is used but it is unreliable. The methods are not consistent across the department and pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve. In a small minority of lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and the teaching does not make enough use of questioning to check their understanding.

150. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there has been a lack of improvement on the issues identified at the time of the last inspection and standards have fallen. The head of art is a recent appointment and has begun to make changes. He has a clear view of the department, its strengths and areas for further development. The number of pupils taking the subject at GCSE and continuing into the sixth form has begun to increase. Visits to galleries give good opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. The present system for assessing pupils entering the school does not give reliable information about what they can do in art and design or for predicting what they should be able to do in Years 9 and 11. Monitoring in the department does not focus enough on pupils' learning and progress as they move through the school. While the management of the work of the department is beginning to be effective, there is insufficient overall monitoring of the department by senior management.

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- good GCSE results and rising standards overall
- pupils achieve well in most music lessons
- higher attaining pupils need more challenging work
- resources for music from some cultures need expanding.
- Some teaching is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

151. Standards on entry have been well below expected levels but have begun to improve. Performance observed in lessons was slightly below expectation, particularly in Year 9, where more than half of lessons observed reflected lower than expected achievement. However, most pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to capability.
152. In Years 10-11, with a small cohort of pupils, standards at GCSE were close to the national average. During the inspection, in lessons observed they were above expectation for each stage of the course. Pupils achieve very well.
153. Year 7 pupils were starting to use technical vocabulary well. Their understanding, appraising and vocal work was also developing well. Confusion about the elements of music was seen in some Year 7 work. Pupils worked mostly with enthusiasm and maturity where expectations were clear and high. In some Year 9 lessons, pupils were using good performing skills and developing good notation reading skills.
154. Over half the lessons observed were good or very good but unsatisfactory teaching and learning was observed in a significant proportion. Where the teaching was good, work was well planned with clear learning outcomes, resources well prepared, and activities varied at levels appropriate for all pupils. Assessment was well used to help pupils understand how to improve and they were enthusiastic to reach higher levels. Behaviour management was skilful. Sometimes higher attaining pupils were not challenged enough and opportunities to link performing with composing missed. The use of ICT is developing with scope for further progress.
155. In lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory learning outcomes were not clear, and pupils did not understand their purpose or what to do in order to improve. Pupils' behaviour was not well managed and they did not work with focus or enthusiasm.

156. The curriculum provides access to a wide range of music and activities well suited to pupils' interests and needs, including instrumental tuition and extended curricular work though the latter is hampered by short lunch breaks and the use of music rooms as form rooms. The use of ICT is good among Year 10-11 pupils. The number of pupils opting for music at GCSE level is limited. Resources for music from some cultures require improvement and work with other arts subjects is limited.
157. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a clear vision and accurate perception of the strengths of the department and areas needing improvement. This is well communicated and colleagues are well supported. Routines are very clear and assessment and moderation very well managed. Data is well used to analyse standards and inform the detailed improvement plans.
158. The department has made good progress in maintaining and in some cases raising standards, also in developing the use of assessment. With action to improve the unsatisfactory teaching it is well placed to continue improving.

Photography

Provision for photography is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- high standards of attainment and very good progress owing to consistently high quality teaching
- quality of planning, on-going assessment and level of challenge to pupils
- excellent relationships in the classroom, contributing to positive attitudes and self-esteem of pupils

Commentary

159. Attainment in GCSE examinations is well above average. During the inspection, the standard of pupils' work was also well above expectation. It reflected a very good understanding of processes, techniques and associated technologies. Pupils of all abilities confidently handle equipment and materials and use a broad range of techniques to develop their ideas, making rapid gains in learning. An excellent example seen was a bas-relief produced by a Year 11 pupil as a result of researching the work of Jim Dine.
160. Teaching observed was excellent because of the teacher's rapport with his pupils and the quality of the planning that consistently challenged all to succeed. Assessment is integral to each student's learning and progress. Pupils are positively encouraged to take full responsibility for their learning through informed decision-making. The range of materials and equipment in photography is very good. The subject benefits very well from the support it gets from industry and the community. Fieldwork enriches the pupils' experiences and broadens their horizons.
161. The leadership and management provided by the teacher of photography and key staff is excellent. Standards and the numbers of pupils taking the subject, at GCSE and continuing into the sixth form, have risen since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- good and very good teaching ensures that pupils acquire new skills and knowledge
- leadership and management are good and there is a clear vision for improvement.

- results in GCSE examinations are well below the national average, but are improving
- achievement is good in Years 7 – 9
- the department provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities
- monitoring of pupils' progress is regular but concentrates, mainly, on the development and application of skills.

Commentary

162. Lesson observations confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments, showing that standards are average by the end of Year 9. As pupils enter the school with varied previous experience this represents good achievement. Standards in boys' badminton in Year 9 are above average and pupils play sequences of shots to outwit opponents. Although standards in Year 8 dance and gymnastics are in line with expectations, pupils achieve very well to link actions imaginatively in self-composed sequences.
163. At the end of Year 11, the percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in the 2003 GCSE examination was well below average. The trend over the past three years has been upwards and in 2004 results again improved. Pupils achieve almost as well in physical education as they do in the other subjects.
164. During the inspection, standards observed were in line with the expectation overall, and above this in Year 10 trampolining and soccer. Satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 core practical activities was observed, but in GCSE theory lessons, standards are below average. Pupils gain knowledge of anatomy and complete their individual coursework projects, but their work often lacks the depth required for extended responses. Pupils with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers throughout the school.
165. Teachers' very good knowledge ensures that pupils acquire skills and apply them well. Lessons are planned with clear objectives and good, structured progressions that enable pupils to know what they are to learn and the expected outcomes. Tasks are introduced at a brisk pace, keeping pupils interested and participating with good physical effort. Relationships are very good and pupils are very well managed, resulting in very good, sometimes excellent, attitudes and behaviour. In the most effective lessons, pupils evaluate their own work and that of others, to suggest ways to improve performance. They also learn through principles of play and, thus, gain knowledge and understanding as well as skills. However, tasks and equipment are not always sufficiently adapted to enable pupils to be suitably challenged in order to gain consistent success.
166. The department is well led and managed, with a clear vision for development. This is based on an audit for School Sports' Co-ordinator programme, which has produced good links with feeder primary schools and local clubs. The department, previously working separately with boys and girls, is now integrated and all teachers have clear roles and responsibilities, making an effective team. Documentation is thorough and includes outstanding risk assessments. Teachers are very committed to providing a very good range of extra-curricular activities and pupils gain success locally and regionally. Accommodation is very good and the refurbished swimming pool provides a good, additional facility.
167. There are no formal procedures for regular monitoring of teaching and learning but annual reviews are in place. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored but does not include an assessment of all objectives identified in termly planning.
168. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection to maintain the good standards of teaching and pupils' attitudes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

169. **PHSE** lessons were not held during the week of the inspection. Study of the documentation shows that the programme is effectively delivered and sessions appropriately tailored to the needs of different year groups. Much of social and personal education is delivered through RE, assemblies and tutor times. However, the time allocated is very short, with only one session a month for all pupils, and this has to include careers guidance. It is not surprising, therefore, that nearly half of students in the sixth form indicated via the questionnaire that they did not feel well-advised about their career choices.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- planning is inadequate and the full National Curriculum is not covered
- pupils' work is not properly assessed and their progress is not reported
- the school's rich tradition of community service and its caring ethos offer excellent potential for development of the subject
- standards are below those expected and achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils do not learn the full subject
- leadership and management are unsatisfactory because standards achieved, teaching learning and the curriculum have not been monitored or supported by senior management.

Commentary

170. Citizenship is taught partly through PHSE sessions, and partly through other subjects. Work has been done to establish which subjects cover the programmes of study and some subject departments refer to citizenship in their schemes of work. However, provision for citizenship in PSHE is wholly inadequate, no accommodation having been made for this new National Curriculum subject in Years 7 to 9, and hardly any in Years 10 and 11. Pupils receive only 14 hours of PSHE a year in total, roughly one lesson each month. Currently, work is not assessed specifically for citizenship, and pupils' progress cannot be reported to parents at the end of Year 9, although methods of assessment are planned which can be applied uniformly and will fit in well with the school's existing strategy.
171. Coverage through other subjects of the first two elements - knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens and developing skills of communication and enquiry - is too patchy and incomplete. Teachers are relying too heavily on lessons which make only passing or incidental contributions to citizenship, and in which pupils are generally unaware that they are studying a distinct subject. This was further confirmed in discussions with pupils and the small amount of work available for scrutiny. Consequently, standards are below those expected and achievement is unsatisfactory by the end of Years 9 and 11.
172. For the third element, there is no planned programme which ensures that all pupils have opportunities to develop their skills of responsible action within school and the wider community. Plans to develop such a programme, drawing on existing school and community initiatives, are at an early stage of development. These include: the work of the school and year councils; a summer school involving collaboration between Year 7 and Year 6 pupils; free advice to other schools on the best use of grounds and gardens; animal road-shows, with talks on pet care and animal handling; and significant and substantial work for a wide range of charities.
173. No overall judgement could be made on the quality of teaching and learning since no PSHE lessons were scheduled to take place in the week of the inspection and no other discrete citizenship lessons could be observed. However, an excellent lesson was seen as part of

some valuable, planned citizenship work in Year 10 and Year 11 photography, under the topic of, "The Concerned Photographer." In the lesson seen, pupils were being asked to look at how the work of prominent social documentary photographers began to change public opinion by providing pictorial evidence. The photography project they were set, as concerned photographers, involved substantial research using a range of sources, including computers, and will reflect their own views on the environment and the world in which we live. One pupil is considering using the altered image of the drowning Ophelia to show humanity drowning in its own rubbish.

174. The school has not managed the introduction of citizenship satisfactorily because insufficient time has been given for teaching it and there is no monitoring of what is taught. The programmes of study in citizenship are not yet covered, and there is no scheme of assessment in place. However, there is now clear-sighted leadership, underpinned by a comprehensive and sensible action-plan, incorporating all of the required elements and drawing on the extensive school and community initiatives.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 9 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003 for which national comparisons are available. At the time of the inspection, validated data for 2004 was not yet available.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art & Design (Photography)	2	100	N/A	50	N/A	35	N/A
Art & Design (Fine Art)	3	100	80.1	66.7	23.7	46.6	29.9
Biology	5	80	65.2	0	11.1	20	20.6
Business Studies	1	100	76.4	0	16.3	40	26.2
Chemistry	3	66.7	72.7	0	13.9	16.6	24.1
Computer Studies	1	100	67	100	10.9	60	21.4
Economics	2	100	73.6	50	20.1	45	26.4
English Literature	1	100	85.9	0	19.1	30	30.2
French	2	100	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
General studies	20	100	73.9	5	17.8	32	25.7
Geography	2	100	74.3	0	19.8	25	26.5
History	2	100	N/A	0	N/A	25	N/A
Mathematics	3	66.7	61.9	0	17.1	16.6	22.1
Mathematics (further)	4	100	N/A	100	N/A	57.5	N/A
Physics	1	100	68.6	0	14.4	40	22.7
Psychology	2	100	N/A	0	N/A	25	N/A

Religious Studies	3	100	N/A	0	N/A	30	N/A
Sociology	1	100	71.8	100	18.4	50	25.4
Spanish	1	100	N/A	0	N/A	20	N/A
Sport/PE Studies	1	100	73.2	0	11.4	30	23.1
Vocational AS Level							
Information Technology	6	100	N/A	33.3	N/A	35	N/A

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art & Design (Photography)	7	100	N/A	57.2	N/A	91.4	N/A
Art & Design (Fine Art)	1	100	98.6	0	50.2	80	87.5
Biology	8	100	96.4	12.5	39.2	70	78.6
Business Studies	12	100	98.7	33.3	36.8	78.3	80.1
Chemistry	3	100	97.6	0	49	53.3	84.9
Economics	10	100	98.9	50	52	90	88.3
English Language	1	100	N/A	0	N/A	80	N/A
English Literature	6	100	99.5	50	46.5	93.3	85.5
French	2	100	98.8	50	51.5	90	87.6
General Studies	5	100	94.7	0	31	52	73.1
Geography	7	85.7	98.7	42.9	44.5	62.8	84
History	4	100	99	75	44.6	95	84.6
Mathematics	8	100	96.7	50	55.6	90	88.8
Physics	4	100	96.7	75	44.6	90	81.7
Psychology	1	100	N/A	100	N/A	120	N/A
Psychology JMB/NEA	9	100	N/A	33.3	N/A	71.1	N/A
Religious Studies	6	100	N/A	100	N/A	106.6	N/A
Sociology	5	100	98.2	40	44.3	88	83.6
Spanish	2	100	N/A	0	N/A	80	N/A
Sport/PE Studies	5	100	98	20	30.9	76	75.2
Vocational A Levels							
Business	1	100	N/A	0	N/A	40	N/A
Health & Social Care	3	100	N/A	66.7	N/A	93.3	N/A
Information Technology	9	100	N/A	22.2	N/A	75.5	N/A
Media Studies	5	100	N/A	40	N/A	80	N/A

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teachers' very good subject knowledge
- good planning of lessons and support material
- close and supportive marking of students' written work
- very good use of group work in media studies
- literature lessons do not always require students to develop skills of discussion and presentation.

Commentary

175. Results in A2 English Literature examinations in 2003 were above average. This shows good achievement because many students did better than predicted. In 2004 standards were maintained. In the new media studies course achievement was similarly good.
176. Work seen during the inspection confirmed this positive picture. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers are well informed. Their enthusiasm communicates itself to students, who respond well and clearly enjoy lessons and their sense of progress. Planning is careful and detailed so that teachers and students are clear about the purposes of the course of study and individual lessons. Students are confident users of critical vocabulary. For instance, in a media studies lesson, well-managed group work enabled students to apply their knowledge of theory to scenarios which interested and challenged them. The subsequent presentations were of high quality and testimony to very capable and motivating teaching. Literature lessons are similarly well-prepared, but are not as consistently involving as those observed in media studies. Where students are reticent they would benefit from developing their skills through discussion and debate rather than depending on the sympathetic interventions of their teachers. Students are always well-supported however, and clearly so by teachers' detailed marking. Students are made to have close regard for what examiners will look for and reward, and the response to teachers' comments and targets clearly advances the quality of their writing.
177. Leadership and management are both good, as evidenced by curriculum development (the newly introduced media courses) and by the careful use of assessment to track progress and encourage progress. Achievement in literature and media examinations, and the rising popularity of those subjects in the sixth form indicate that improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

178. Students have good language and literacy skills, which contribute to their good achievement. Most subjects in the sixth form give close attention to the linguistic demands of their disciplines. In English, science, ICT and art, inspectors noted extended writing of high quality, well supported by explicit modelling and careful marking. There are often high expectations concerning students' oral skills, with discussion and presentation as normal features of lessons. There is no discrete course for Key Skills.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teaching and learning are good
- students' oracy is generally weak
- teachers use ICT very well to engage students.

Commentary

179. Standards of attainment are satisfactory. In the A2 examinations in 2003, two students attained grades A-E, one of which was in the range A-B. In the examinations in 2004, all five candidates attained grades A-E, with one of the grades in the range A-B.
180. In Year 12, students are at an early stage of the course. They understand the lessons conducted in French, and they are able to extract information from cassette tapes successfully. In a lesson about smoking, they successfully linked the statements to the persons concerned. Reading aloud was rather hesitant, and their speaking skills are generally weak. Several students are not confident enough to ask for help in French. Listening skills are good in Year 13, and students coped adequately in a long listening exercise about pollution. Two students in the group spoke well from memory about recycling – a topic that they had prepared- whereas the other two students had not committed the material to memory, and their response was weak. In work seen during the inspection, students' overall standards of attainment were in line with the requirements of the course.
181. Achievement relative to prior attainment at GCSE is also satisfactory. Over time, they acquire the relevant vocabulary and constructions to deal with a variety of topics. They receive a comprehensive grounding in grammar and tenses.
182. Teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and they use French consistently in class to challenge students. Lessons are planned well to include a range of different activities and skills, including strategies to engage students' interest. Teachers use ICT well to support their lessons, and they provide students with details of Internet sites to use for independent research on their topics. Students' attitudes are also good and they respond well to the enthusiastic teaching that they receive. They enjoy most aspects of the course and they work co-operatively together. They particularly like the new inter-active whiteboards, which add pace to the lesson. Homework is set regularly to consolidate and extend the work of the classroom, and students receive good feedback about their progress.
183. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is also satisfactory.

German

Provision in German is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- class sizes are too small and this limits group discussion of topics
- teaching and learning are good

Commentary

184. German has attracted only one student in the last three years, who attained a grade at A-E in 2004. There are at present two students in Year 12, with moderate grades from GCSE, and none in Year 13.
185. At a very early stage in the course, standards of attainment are in line for the requirements for the course. In the one lesson observed, students had a sound understanding of the text that dealt with the life of Mozart and the works he completed, and of the cassette on famous Germans. In the homework that they had prepared well, students spoke fairly confidently with notes, with some good use of vocabulary and constructions. They are beginning to ask for help in German. Written work is reasonably accurate. They are making satisfactory progress in developing all their linguistic skills.
186. Teaching and learning are good. The quality of learning is enhanced by the students' excellent attitudes and motivation. Lessons are prepared well, and the different activities engage the students' interest, so that they work productively and gain in knowledge. Resources are used well. Students use dictionaries to check on different tenses in work on grammar, and they are encouraged to listen to German radio and visit websites.
187. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- the very good teaching enables students to achieve well in Year 13
- there is good enrichment of the curriculum
- GCE results, especially at AS level, should be better.

Commentary

188. Small numbers of students sat the GCE A2 level examination in 2002 and 2003 and attained average standards. Results were similar in 2004.
189. Numbers in sixth form classes have now increased. The 10 students currently in Year 12 began their course with average standards and are achieving satisfactorily. They write well, expressing their ideas clearly in accurate Spanish. Their speaking skills are less good: they still lack confidence and fluency and do not speak the language enough in class. However, they understand the excellent and clear Spanish of their teacher well.
190. Year 13 students currently were highly critical of the consortium arrangements for teaching them in the first year of their course. They underachieved badly in the AS level examination and had embarked on the A2 course with a very low standard of attainment. They are now achieving well and have attained average standards for this stage of the course. Extended work experience in Spain at the end of Year 12 and the very good teaching they are receiving have improved their language skills and made a valuable contribution to their personal development. They express their ideas fluently and confidently. However, they need more regular opportunities for extended writing. They are committed, enthusiastic students. They use the Internet effectively for research and study, and regularly read Spanish newspapers.
191. Teaching and learning are good in Year 12 and very good in Year 13. The teacher is an expert linguist, who uses Spanish almost exclusively to develop students' listening and speaking skills very effectively. She provides many insights into Hispanic culture. Her

enthusiasm is infectious. She and the subject leader work well as a team, know their students well and give them good advice and help. She takes pains to challenge students and to develop their independent study skills and self-reliance. The course is well led and managed.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered A2 and AS level courses in mathematics. In addition the GCSE re-sit course, for those who did not gain grade C in year 11, was also inspected.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teaching and learning are good; teachers structure lessons well and students are keen to learn
- relationships between the students and with their teachers are very good
- a relative weakness in teaching is taking time from the lesson to copy the teacher's notes of the work from the board; this results in limiting students' progress.

Commentary

192. Although the number of students entered for A2 and AS levels has been and remains low, results were above the average for all schools nationally in 2003. All but one student gained at least a pass grade and half of the students gained B or above. The performance of boys exceeded that of girls. In 2004 results were similar apart from a reduced proportion of A-B grades.
193. Standards of work seen during the inspection, and in students' folders, reflect these results. Students from A2 and AS level groups have good number and algebraic skills and are able to apply these confidently. Students in the GCSE re-sit group improve their recall skills and consolidate earlier learning. Achievement is good overall.
194. Teaching and learning are good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are planned with care. Plans are well structured and state clear objectives. However, occasionally, time is not used wisely in the lesson: students are requested to copy the teacher's prepared notes from the board and this limits the progress made. Photocopies of these notes would save time. Teaching of the GCSE re-sit group is good and provides students with guidance on tackling examination questions. Regular homework is used to assess students' understanding of the work and to offer guidance on how to overcome difficulties.
195. Students demonstrate mature attitudes: they are attentive and apply themselves to the work of the lesson. They are well supported by their teachers. Relationships are very good and the behaviour of students is exemplary.
196. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Teachers work well together and with the students. Regular formal and informal meetings are held to discuss ideas and the work of the faculty.
197. High standards in the sixth form have been maintained since the last inspection. However, the numbers of students within the A2 and AS level groups have remained small. Currently in Year 12 the subject has increased in popularity, with a substantial improvement in student numbers.

Mathematics across the curriculum

198. There is a policy to promote numeracy across the curriculum but there are no established links between the members of the mathematics faculty and other subjects.

199. Overall standards are good. In mathematics, students have high-level number skills: they are confident and proficient in mental number operations as well as in the use of calculators and they improve their competence in the manipulation of complex formulae. In science, students confidently handle equations and calculations.

SCIENCE

Physics

Provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- teachers' good knowledge of their specialism ensures high standards of physics
- students' very good attitudes assist their learning
- small group sizes provide limited opportunity for student interaction
- use of ICT in the physics course is limited.

Commentary

200. A2 and AS level results in physics are difficult to compare with national averages, as the number of candidates has been small. However, students generally make good progress in terms of their prior attainment. The situation is more complex as the results from those students from other consortium schools who are taught at Cardinal Wiseman School do not appear in the Cardinal Wiseman School results.
201. Standards observed in lessons and in the scrutiny of students' work indicate generally good achievement. Students develop good practical skills. Year 13 students showed mature practical skills in an independent investigation of the characteristics of a spring. A Year 12 group showed a good understanding of their GCSE work on refraction and were able to develop a more detailed understanding of the topic through lively questioning and practical activities.
202. Teachers make good use of their subject expertise to encourage students to do their best. Teaching is always sound and is at times very good. Teachers plan their lessons well so that students are interested in the course and have the motivation to work hard. Students are provided with appropriate challenges which, together with their very positive attitudes to the course, enhance their learning. Opportunities for students' use of ICT in physics are limited and independent learning in physics could be further developed.
203. The A2 and AS physics courses are delivered by two well qualified members of staff and good technical support is available. Management and administration of the course are sound. Student numbers in physics are small; hence standards are variable from year to year.
204. Since the previous inspection student numbers have remained small but external examination results have been above, or in line with, students' prior attainment. Overall progress since the previous inspection has, therefore, been at least satisfactory.

Biology

Provision in Biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- good teaching and subject expertise
- very good student attitudes
- opportunities for students' use of ICT are limited.

Commentary

205. A2 and AS results in biology are very variable and difficult to compare with national averages as the numbers of candidates in recent years has been small. Student numbers on the AS biology course are large, although several of these students with limited GCSE grades find the course difficult and fewer students follow through to the A2 course. However, students generally make good progress in terms of their prior attainment based on their GCSE grades.
206. Standards observed in lessons and in the scrutiny of students' work indicate generally good achievement. Year 13 students showed their capability for independent learning in their preparation of posters on different aspects of aerobic respiration which they used to explain the processes involved to the remainder of the group. A Year 12 group worked enthusiastically on a practical investigation of biochemical tests. Teachers make good use of their subject expertise and the standard of teaching is almost always good. Lessons are well planned so that students are interested in the course and have the motivation to work hard. Student attitudes to the course are very positive, and the quality of coursework and field work is high.
207. The A2 and AS biology courses are delivered by four members of staff with good technical support. The head of biology, who is also Head of Science provides clear leadership for the team. Management and administration of the course are good. Although students have access to a small science department ICT room, there was little evidence of the use of ICT in students' work.
208. Since the previous inspection student numbers have remained small but external examination results have been above, or in line with, students' prior attainment. Overall progress since the previous inspection has, therefore, been at least satisfactory

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff provide good learning opportunities for students
- relationships are good with staff aware of the needs of individuals
- teaching methods should allow students to take on more responsibility for learning
- planning of lessons is good
- the achievement of objectives needs evaluating more fully in classes.

Commentary

209. In 2003 AS and A2 level results were both at an average standard and this level was repeated in 2004. Although the low numbers of students entered makes accurate comparison against national standards difficult, work seen during the inspection, both written and in class, indicates that current students are continuing to produce work of an average standard in both years. Assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills in classwork shows achievement to be satisfactory based on prior attainment. There are however clear indications that students are beginning to apply greater intellectual effort. In a Year 12 group observed, students correctly completed a challenging card sort activity which demanded a good understanding of moles and molarities, and a Year 13 group applied obvious thinking skills in a discussion about the feasibility and spontaneity of reactions.
210. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and involve a variety of teaching approaches. Students' response is generally positive, but in some lessons they are too passive and need to be challenged and stretched to a greater extent. Marking is often good and helpful, but it is not consistent. Some work by students is

simply acknowledged when they would benefit from guidance and advice. There is a need to look at assessment procedures used to measure students' achievements over the short term, with objectives reviewed and progress evaluated in all lessons.

211. The Year 13 class is very small and, although at times this reduces the benefit of discussion, teachers manage the situation well. There is a pleasing increase in enrolment numbers in the current Year 12 class.
212. Leadership is good, the subject leader forming an effective team with other teachers and the head of faculty. All staff have a strong commitment that appears to be raising standards and they work well together as a team. Management is generally satisfactory, but aspects of the short-term assessment policy need to be reviewed. Teaching strategies to increase the involvement of students in the learning process should also be developed, together with the application of ICT linked to experimental work. Resources for sixth form work including ICT are satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

213. **Photography** is a strength of the school. Standards at GCSE and in the sixth form are high and the students know if they take a course in photography they will be expected to become independent learners, to work very hard and achieve to their maximum potential. Targets for learning are very clear to each student. They know that each piece of finished work must be of high quality. Students are taught and guided by an expert teacher who has an excellent rapport with his students. Students of all abilities are given every chance to do their best, to seek and listen to advice from a very wide range of sources, to refine their work and develop individuality and style. The subject at all levels is very successful. Large numbers choose photography at GCSE and in the sixth form and the significant progress made is proof they enjoy their learning very much. Many go on to develop the subject further and pursue careers in the field.

Art and Design

The provision for art and design in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- students make very good progress from prior attainment at GCSE
- the quality and range of learning opportunities provides a broad art and design experience
- good teaching.

Commentary

214. Standards in the 2003 AS examinations and in the work seen during the inspection are at the level expected and showed a very good improvement on prior attainment. This was especially so for those students who had not studied the subject since the end of Year 9. In the A2 examination standards reflected satisfactory progress from the AS level and were at the level expected. No Year 13 lessons were seen during the inspection. Students frequently continue their education in areas linked to art and design and media with success. The number of students taking the subject in Year 12 has increased since the last inspection.
215. Teaching in the sixth form is good with some very good features. There is a good range of materials and contexts for students to use to develop their expressive abilities. The style of questioning used by the teacher encourages students to make connections between their own work and that of other artists and designers, past and present. They are successfully encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning, and to access and selectively use information from a wide range of sources to inform their images and three-dimensional work. Portfolios are well presented and contain thorough research often relevantly linked to

world issues. The standard of written work, especially of the higher-attaining students, is very good in both range and content. Students explore and refine their design ideas and are successful in realising them in good quality work in a range of scales, materials and dimensions.

216. Students' breadth of knowledge and skills is extended by the good use made of visits to galleries and a residential experience working on landscapes in Wales.
217. Courses are well managed and students benefit from an enthusiastic and committed course leader. Recruitment to the sixth form in Year 12 has been particularly successful both in numbers and the calibre of students.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	3	4
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
Overall standards achieved		4
Pupils' achievement	4	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		3
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	3	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
The leadership and management of the school		4
The governance of the school	5	5
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	3	5
The effectiveness of management	3	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).