

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FOXFORD SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ARTS COLLEGE**

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103732

Headteacher: Ms R Williamson

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 22 – 26 November 2004

Inspection number: 268809

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



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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1044
School address:	Grange Road Longford Coventry
Postcode:	CV6 6BB
Telephone number:	024 7636 9200
Fax number:	024 7636 9201
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Bigham
Date of previous inspection:	16 November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Foxford School and Community Arts College is an average sized comprehensive school with 1044 students on roll, including 126 students in the sixth form. The school has been over-subscribed for the last three years. There are 244 students with special educational needs, which is above the national average for a school of this size. The percentage of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is high and there are four students at the early stage of learning English. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The percentage children living in high social class households is well below the national average. Overall, the attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average. There is a low mobility of pupils, with only 29 students who joined the school other than at the usual time of admission. The school has become a specialist arts college and has applied for a second specialism in humanities. The school is part of an Education Action Zone. The school gained the Artsmark Award in 2004; Investor in People award in 2003 and gained the Healthy Schools Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Lead inspector	
13706	Gillian Marsland	Lay inspector	
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Community languages
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Citizenship
7926	James Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education Sociology
25743	Peter Butler	Team inspector	Science Chemistry (sixth form)
22042	John Challands	Team inspector	Special educational needs Leisure and tourism Work-related learning
19135	Derek Ebbage	Team inspector	Mathematics
31135	Rachel Hobson	Team inspector	Religious education English (sixth form)
30518	Mike Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design Art and design (sixth form)
24127	James Kidd	Team inspector	History History (sixth form)
28199	Peter Lawley	Team inspector	English Psychology
18967	Brenda Loydell	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)
19867	Maxwell Pettitt	Team inspector	Music
23891	Peter Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology Design and technology (sixth form)
33727	Nick Vinall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Information and communication technology (sixth form)
30344	Steve Walker	Team inspector	Geography Business education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The overall effectiveness of the school is good and is improving.** Students make good progress across the range of subjects in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are below national averages but have improved significantly since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good. They are stronger in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form than they are in Years 7 to 9. The leadership and management of the school are good. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Students have positive attitudes to their learning. The school is welcoming and the hardworking and dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff are unified and ambitious for the school. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There have been significant improvements in students' attainment since the last inspection.
- The social and racial harmony within the school is a particular strength and the school's commitment to inclusion is good.
- There is a good ethos within the school, with students responding positively to the high expectations demanded by staff.
- Students' attitudes are good. They are very good in the sixth form. These positive attitudes contribute to pupils achieving well in the school.
- The support, guidance and pastoral care provided for students are very good.
- Statutory requirements are not being fully met for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Students are underachieving in modern foreign languages (Years 7 to 9), religious education (Years 10 and 11) and in music (Years 10 and 11).
- There is a lack of consistency in the standards of teaching across all subjects.

Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. The progress in the sixth form has been very good. At the time of the last inspection only 22 per cent of students gained five GCSE grades A\*- C. This has increased to 40 per cent in 2004 and the rate of improvement is well above the national average. There have been similar significant increases in the results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. The proportion of students reaching level 5 and above has more than doubled in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. In tackling the key issues identified in the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress. The issues of monitoring, evaluation, target-setting, literacy skills and limited opportunities for research have been tackled effectively but the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship are still not being fully met.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			Similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	E	C	A
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	E	E	E	

*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 are well below average when students enter the school and by the end of Year 11 standards are below when compared with national figures. However, in relation to their prior attainment **students are achieving well in all year groups**. This is especially the case for students with special educational needs and for those students with English as an additional language. In 2004 the school achieved its highest ever number of students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- C.

Students' standards in the national tests at the age of 14 are improving at a faster rate than the national trend. Students are underachieving in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, in part because of staffing difficulties and some teachers' low expectations. There is also some underachievement in religious education



(because there is insufficient time for teaching the subject in Years 10 and 11) and in music in Years 10 and 11 because of unsatisfactory teaching.

Students' have a good attitude to their work and behave well during lessons and at other times. The school has high expectations for students' conduct and promotes racial harmony effectively. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Attendance is very good in the sixth form. Stringent procedures to monitor and promote good attendance have raised attendance levels throughout the school. Holidays in term-time, although discouraged, continue to have an impact on attendance levels. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Teaching is better for older students but is good, overall.** Assessment is satisfactory, overall. Whilst assessment arrangements are very good in mathematics, ICT and geography there are weaknesses in some other subjects. The use made by teachers of ICT to support teaching is good. The curriculum has many strengths and the school has worked hard at ensuring that the courses provided meet the needs of students. This is especially evident in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are good and students are well supported and this makes a significant contribution to the good level of achievement. Links with other schools, colleges and with the local community are good and these links enhance the quality of education provided for students.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good.** The enthusiasm and commitment of the recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by her two deputy headteachers are building upon recent improvements to raise standards even higher. Governance of the school is good, although it is unsatisfactory in respect of meeting all statutory requirements. The strength of leadership and management of the sixth form has led to increased numbers staying on into the sixth form and for ensuring that they reach the standards their prior attainment indicates they should. Overall, the leadership provided by middle managers is satisfactory. This includes some very good leaders but also includes some areas of the school where leadership is unsatisfactory. There is a strength in the leadership of special educational needs and English as an additional language and this is reflected by the good achievement that these pupils make. There is a weakness in management in that not all subject co-ordinators are using the available data effectively to set targets for individual or groups of students.

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

Most parents felt the arrangements for their son/daughter to settle into school were good. They also felt that staff encourage children to become mature and independent and to work hard. However, nearly a quarter of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that behaviour in the school was not good – a view that is not shared by the inspectors. Some had concerns about the amount of homework – again not a view shared by inspectors.

Most students are positive about their school, especially those in the sixth form. Students' responses mirror their parents' views with regard to behaviour in the school. There is some dissatisfaction with the range of food and price of food in the canteen and justified concern about the small size of the sixth form common room.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Tackle the underachievement in modern foreign languages by improving the quality of leadership and by ensuring that all teachers have high expectations for students in Years 7 to 9.
- Tackle the underachievement in religious education in Years 10 and 11 by increasing the amount of time for religious education to be taught.
- Improve standards in music by improving the quality of teaching and learning and raise the level of challenge for students in lessons.
- Raise the standards of teaching in Years 7 to 9 to match the high standards achieved in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all students in Years 10 and 11 receive their full entitlement to religious education and science.
- Ensure that all students receive their entitlement to a daily act of collective worship.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good**. Value-added, or achievement, is good. Standards are below average, but students enter Year 12 with much lower prior attainment than in other sixth forms. Teaching and learning are very good. The leadership of the sixth form is very good. Management systems are good. The cost-effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The range of courses is good because they meet students' needs and the range of enrichment activities is very good.
- The experienced head of sixth form provides very good vision and support for students, which leads to students having good levels of confidence.
- Students have very positive attitudes, which contribute to the good achievement.
- Links with other sixth form providers are very good, which enable students to choose from a wider range of courses than could be provided at Foxford.
- Standards at A2 level are below national averages, especially in the number of students gaining the higher grades.
- The accommodation for sixth form students has not kept pace with the increasing number of students entering the sixth form in recent years.

## 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	Provision in English is <b>good</b> . Students are achieving well and teaching and learning are good.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is <b>satisfactory</b> . Mathematics is taught well to A-level and GCSE retake students. Achievement is good, although standards are below national expectations.
Chemistry	Provision in chemistry is <b>good</b> . Students are achieving well. Teaching and learning are good.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is <b>good</b> . Students are achieving well and teaching and learning are good.
History	Provision in history is <b>good</b> . Students are achieving well and teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good.
Psychology	Provision in psychology is <b>good</b> . Good teaching underpins rising standards and students are achieving well.
Sociology	Provision in sociology is <b>good</b> . Students are achieving very well as a result of very good teaching.
Design and technology	Provision in design and technology is <b>satisfactory</b> . Students' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
Art and design	Provision in art and design is <b>good</b> . Students' achievements are good and teaching and learning are very good.
Leisure and tourism	Provision in leisure and tourism is <b>satisfactory</b> . Students make satisfactory progress and the quality of teaching and learning are good.
Business Studies	Provision in business studies is <b>good</b> . Students make good progress based on their prior attainment. The quality of teaching is very good

throughout the department.

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*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 school provides very good advice, guidance and support for students. Their teachers and tutors are very effective in offering career or subject advice as well as personal support, which contributes to the very high completion rates for students who embark on sixth form courses. The school brings students into contact with higher education colleges and universities and a high proportion of students move from the sixth form into higher education.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form has very good leadership, which has ensured that increasing numbers of students opt for sixth form courses. Effective leadership and management have established a very wide curriculum and a very close match between students' needs and suitable courses. This has resulted in very high completion rates and very positive attitudes. The school's active participation in the local federation for sixth form providers ensures that if a student's needs cannot be met by the school they receive maximum support to attend either the local College of Further Education or other sixth forms to follow courses which meet their needs. The head of sixth form has raised standards by an appropriate emphasis on assessment and target-setting to increase the value-added for students. Management systems are good.

#### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Most students are very positive in their attitudes to the school and the vast majority enjoy being students in the sixth form. All students believe that teachers are accessible to help them if they have difficulties with their work. Students are equally positive about being helped and encouraged to study. Most students believe worthwhile homework is set and that their work is assessed helpfully so that they can see how to improve it. Most students are rightly concerned that the size of the common room is not large enough to accommodate all students comfortably and they also have a concern about school meals.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Standards are well below average when students enter the school and by the end of Year 11 standards are below when compared with national figures. However, in relation to their prior attainment students are achieving well in all year groups. This is especially the case for students with special education needs and for those students with English as an additional language.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In 2004 the school achieved its highest ever percentage of students gaining five GCSE grades A\* - C.
- Students' standards in the national tests at the age of 14 are improving at a faster rate than the national trend.
- Standards in the sixth form whilst low against national standards, especially for the higher grades, represent good achievement when compared with their prior attainment as a result of very good teaching.
- Students are underachieving in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, and in Years 10 and 11 in religious education and music.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.8 (30.8)	N/A (33.4)
mathematics	36.0 (33.5)	N/A (35.4)
science	33.1 (32.0)	N/A (33.6)

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

1. Students enter the school with standards that are well below the national average. Their overall standards of attainment in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well below the national average for English and below for science and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, based on students' prior attainment, results for English were below average and in line for mathematics and science. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all three core subjects was above the national trend. Results for 2004 show an increase in all three subjects over the school's 2003 results. The results for English show a significant increase over the 2003 results and these results show that standards in English are likely to be above the national average. Results for science show an increase to being in line with national averages and results for mathematics show an increase over 2003 results but remain below the national average.
2. Overall, standards in the work seen were below average in Years 7 to 9. As students enter the school with standards that are well below the national average, and by the end of Year 9 standards are below average, this indicates that students are achieving well. The major factors for this are the positive attitudes students have in lessons and because expectations are high.
3. For individual subjects, by the end of Year 9, standards are above national averages for art and design. Standards are in line for English, science, ICT and drama. Standards are below average in mathematics, geography, history, music, design and technology, physical education and religious education. Standards in modern foreign languages are well below average. However, in most subjects, students are making at least satisfactory progress, often good. In modern foreign languages students are

underachieving in part because of recent staffing difficulties but also because some teachers do not have high expectations.

4. In 2004 the school has met its targets for the proportion of students reaching level 5 and above in English and mathematics but the targets were not met for ICT and science. The school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2005.

### ***Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004***

	<i>School results</i>	<i>National results</i>
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*- C grades	40 (36)	53.4 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*- G grades	91 (81)	88.6 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*- G grades	98 (94)	97.2 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	273	282.3

*There were 180 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*- C was well below average in 2003. The provisional results for 2004 show an increase in the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- C and standards are now close to the national average. The 2004 GCSE results were the best results the school has achieved. When comparing the performance of students in 2003 with their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- C was below average. The proportion gaining five GCSE grades A\*- G and one A\*- G were well below average when compared with similar schools. In 2004, the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- C was above average and well above average for students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- G and one A\*- G.
6. The analysis of individual subjects in the 2003 GCSE examinations show that results in art and design were above the national average. For all other subjects they were either in line or below the national average. However, the individual results for art and design and French were significantly better than other results in the school. Those that were significantly below were science, English, English literature, history and mathematics. Initial analysis of the 2004 results show that students' performance in science and German were relatively stronger than their performance in other subjects. Students' performance in business studies and history was relatively weaker.
7. In 2004 the school met its published targets for the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- C; one GCSE grade A\*- G and average point score. The trend in the school's average point score from 1999-2003 was broadly in line with the national trend. Results for the period 2002-2004 show a trend above the national average.
8. Overall, most students are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Relative to the national performance of boys and girls there is a difference, with boys outperforming girls. Girls do outperform boys but the gap is not as great as it is nationally. In individual subjects students are achieving very well in art and design and well in most other subjects. Only in music and religious education are students underachieving. In religious education, the reason for this is that they have insufficient time to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus; and in music, students are restricted in what they achieve because too many lessons are extended instrumental rehearsals rather than focused teaching sessions. Students are not challenged in music when teachers rarely ask questions or provide appropriate tasks to extend them.

9. Many of the students identified as having special educational needs experience considerable difficulties with literacy skills. Many have specific learning difficulties and some have emotional and behavioural problems. The number of students on the special educational needs register is well above the national average, although the number of statemented students is in line with the national average. The achievement of these students, overall, is good although many students who are withdrawn from lessons in Years 7 to 9 for literacy support make very good progress. Progress of those students who are supported in lessons by learning support assistants is often also very good.
10. Students for whom English is an additional language make good progress in line with other students. There are examples of particularly good achievement in the sixth form. Bilingual students are making very good progress in business studies. Some students who arrived at the school in Year 10 with no English are following A level and A/S courses with considerable success. The school is particularly successful in supporting developing bilingual students who arrive at the school with very little English.
11. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are average, overall. Students speak confidently and explain their ideas well in drama, art and design, physical education and English. At the same time, opportunities to extend understanding through discussion and questioning are missed in science, mathematics and music. Reading for pleasure and reference is promoted well through an attractive and well-managed library. In several subjects there is a lack of opportunity to deepen understanding and to develop thinking through writing.
12. Students enter the school with levels of attainment in mathematics that are well below the national average. By Year 9, standards of work seen are generally below national averages. Higher-attaining students use their mathematical knowledge to complete a statistical investigation well. Lower-attaining students show accurate measurement in mathematical constructions and achieve well.
13. Students enter the school with below average prior attainment in ICT. By the end of Year 9 standards are close to the national average. Students in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. In Years 10 and 11 those students who are not studying GCSE courses follow a Key Skills ICT course within design and technology and these students make satisfactory progress. There is good year-on-year progression in students' skills. Low standards of literacy have an impact on standards in Year 7. By the end of Year 9 there is a significant improvement in literacy and higher-attaining students can tailor their response to specific audiences. A strength is the development of independent learning skills, which serve students well.
14. Since the last inspection the proportion of students reaching level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests has increased significantly and at a rate above the national trend. The pattern of improvement at GCSE is more evident, with 40 per cent of students gaining five GCSE grades A\*- C in 2004 compared with 22.4 per cent in 1998.

## Sixth form

### *Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004*

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	97 (86.3)	(89.4)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	9 (9.7)	(32.6)
Average point score per student	164.4 (145.6)	(258.2)

*There were 43 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

15. Students enter the sixth form with standards which are on average well below the average for sixth forms nationally. Many quite weak students (as judged by their results at GCSE) go on to achieve very

credible results at A level and in other courses they follow. Completion rates are high, with very few students dropping out of their courses. In 2004, the percentage of students gaining A - E grades was very high and showed a significant increase over the 2003 figures, which were close to the national average. Fewer students gain the higher grades at A-B than is found nationally. However, detailed analysis of value-added data shows that, in relation to their prior attainment, most students are achieving well. This partly reflects the very good teaching and learning in the sixth form and also the high levels of attendance from students.

16. Gifted and talented students achieve well, overall. A very high proportion of students who complete A levels goes on to study in higher education (190 students out of 209 Year 13 students over the last five years). This is an even more remarkable achievement as very few of their parents had continued in full-time education beyond school. In the school's analysis of the 2004 examination results there was good value added for ICT and business studies. There was weaker value added in English literature.
17. There is a very comprehensive use of target-setting in the sixth form, with rigorous monitoring of students' progress by tutors. The school has introduced and developed a timetabled 'mentoring' period for all students and this has strengthened the relationships between individual students and their tutors. Tutors make very good use of the Gradebook system, which records student performance at set periods, along with the use of data on prior performance and attendance.
18. There have been significant improvements in standards and in the popularity of the sixth form since the last inspection, which in part is attributed to the strong leadership provided by the head of the sixth form in setting high expectations and standards for sixth form students and in creating an ethos of learning, achievement and progression to higher education.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Attendance is very good in the sixth form.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students have good attitudes to their work and behave well during lessons and at other times.
- The school has high expectations for students' conduct and promotes racial harmony effectively.
- Stringent procedures to monitor and promote good attendance have raised attendance levels throughout the school.
- Holidays in term-time, although discouraged, continue to have an impact on attendance levels.

### **Commentary**

19. Students have good attitudes to learning because they respect the staff and want to do well. They swiftly settle down to work and particularly enjoy lessons such as creative arts, design and technology and history. All staff insist on high standards of behaviour and the majority of students conform to their expectations. However, the behaviour of a minority of students is sometimes challenging. Staff manage behaviour well and provide additional support for these students.

## Exclusions

### *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	635	53	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	36	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	9	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	222	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	43	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	21	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	0	0

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

20. Exclusions are only used when all other attempts to modify behaviour have been unsuccessful. The school maintains links with the behaviour support centre, the educational welfare officer and outside agencies, such as Connexions, to keep these students in full-time education and if possible, reintegrate them back into school. Occasionally, some students are moved to other schools as part of a partnership in a process of managed moves. Initiatives are also in place to raise the confidence and self-esteem of these students.
21. The school successfully promotes social and racial harmony. All students relate well to one another and enjoy very good relationships with the staff. The ethnic diversity of the staff provides the students with good role models.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/4 (91%)*

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
--------------------	----------------------



School data	7.8
National data	7.2

School data	1.2
National data	1.1

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

22. The school has very good procedures in place to monitor and promote attendance, which have resulted in an improvement in attendance levels. Attendance is now broadly in line with the national average for secondary schools. Registration is undertaken electronically in each lesson, enabling staff to identify absences swiftly. Close liaison between the 'early calls officer', educational welfare officer and heads of year ensure that regular analysis of attendance takes place and frequent absentees are identified and monitored. The early calls officer contacts the homes of absentees each morning and the educational welfare officer arranges home visits when necessary. Certificates are awarded for good attendance and frequent newsletters explain its importance. Many students are encouraged to arrive early each morning, as breakfast can be purchased from the canteen. However, although discouraged, some families still take holidays in term-time and this continues to impact on attendance levels.
23. Students with special educational needs behave well in lessons. They are most confident that they will succeed when they have support from learning support assistants but, because most staff have a good understanding of students needs and respond appropriately, their attitudes to learning are generally very positive. Most have good relationships with other students and with their teachers.
24. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enhances their personal development well. Students are very proud of their school and say that both students and adults care for the well-being of the whole school community and support one another willingly.
25. Students have many opportunities to discuss their concerns and feelings in several areas, in personal, social and health education, for example, but the provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory because subject and faculty planning does not always address this aspect directly. However, there are some outstanding examples of opportunities for students to develop an understanding and respect for the feelings of others, as in the excellent assembly entitled *An Interview with God*, in which Year 11 were transfixed by the PowerPoint presentation on how we should treat others and ourselves. The Year 7 assembly, too, engaged the emotions of the youngsters as they listened to a modern version of the parable of the *Good Samaritan*.
26. Moral and social development is fostered well. Teachers are good role models and encourage their youngsters to develop a sense of social responsibility and teamwork. Bullying in all its forms is taken seriously and students comment that, on the rare occasions it occurs, teachers handle it quickly, sensitively and effectively. The rewards system is highly regarded and students receive full credit for their efforts and achievements. Furthermore, the school council is very effective in eliciting the views of students and its democratic nature ensures that youngsters in all years have a voice and can express their opinions on a range of school issues.
27. Provision for students' cultural development is very good and, not only do students of different races and religions get on well with each other, there are many opportunities for them to celebrate the achievements of other cultures. The school is proud of its multicultural heritage and, as members of a creative arts college, students are encouraged to share their cultural identity through performance and art. For example, they consider Japanese, Chinese, Islamic, Indian, African and South American works of art and there are many visits to galleries at home and abroad. Moreover, in design and technology, they use different ingredients from all over the world and explore different techniques in textiles such as Mola and Batik.

### Sixth form

28. Students' attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. They clearly enjoy life in the sixth form, where they grow in confidence, strive to do their best and support one another. Attendance and punctuality are very good, in part because of the effectiveness of the electronic registration system.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching is better for older students but is good, overall. The curriculum has many strengths and the school has worked hard at ensuring that the courses provided meet the needs of students. This is especially evident in the sixth form. Pupils' care, welfare and health safety are good and students are well supported and this makes a significant contribution to the good level of achievement. Links with other schools, colleges and with the local community are good and these links enhance the quality of education provided for students.

### Teaching and learning

There have been improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The quality is very good in the sixth form, good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Assessment is satisfactory, overall. Whilst they are very good in mathematics, ICT and geography there are weaknesses in some other subjects. There is a good use made by teachers of ICT to support teaching.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are better for older students.
- The high quality of relationships between students and staff, allied to high teacher expectation, contribute to the improving standards within the school.
- The good management of students' behaviour by teachers ensures that little teaching time is lost and this helps students to achieve well.
- Students with English as an additional language and students with special educational needs are well taught, with an appropriate range of teaching methods and resources.
- There is some good practice in assessment in some subjects, but practice across the school is not consistent.
- Many students have well-developed skills in being able to work independently.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching in music and modern foreign languages.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 162 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	34 (21%)	83 (52%)	36 (22%)	7 (4%)	2 (1%)	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.*

29. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are good in many subjects but satisfactory in geography, history, religious education, Punjabi and physical education. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in music and modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good in art and design. It is good in most other subjects but is unsatisfactory in music.
30. One of the major strengths in teaching across many subjects is the high quality of relationships between students and teachers. Most teachers provide encouragement and give students confidence to tackle their work effectively. The high quality of relationships results in students having very positive attitudes to their learning and contributes to effective learning taking place in lessons. There is also a very good pace to learning when teachers have high expectations for students. This is particularly evident in dance, and in art and design lessons.
31. The management of students' behaviour is good and it is rare to see teaching or learning time lost because of time spent in managing challenging behaviour.

32. The variety of teaching tasks set for students is good. It is stronger in Years 10 and 11 than it is in Years 7 to 9. It is a weakness in some music and physical education lessons. A feature of several lessons, which were otherwise satisfactory, is for students to be over-reliant on teachers and for teachers to rely mainly on whole-class teaching. However, when students are given the opportunity to work in pairs, or small groups, they stay on task and can give clear feedback to the class, as was evident in a Year 10 lesson on child abuse. As a result of being well taught many students have well-developed skills in being able to work independently.
33. In many subjects, teachers make good use of technology to support their teaching. Several teachers used 'PowerPoint' presentations to very good effect. The quality of the materials produced in these presentations grabbed the attention and interest of students and contributed effectively to developing students' acquisition of knowledge and understanding.
34. Several students and parents raised concerns about homework. The inspectors' judgements are that homework is satisfactory; with most teachers setting appropriate tasks to extend and reinforce what has been learnt in lessons. However, homework is not always consistently set in line with the homework timetable.
35. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory. Some opportunities to extend understanding through discussion and questioning are missed in science, mathematics and music. Reading for pleasure and reference is promoted well through an attractive and well-managed library. In several subjects, such as science, history and geography, there is a lack of opportunity to deepen understanding and develop thinking through writing. This is a result of lesson activities and materials which require little more than the simple filling in of forms and writing in short phrases or sentences, without developing student skills to write in more detail in extended paragraphs. Across the school, there are good examples of the teaching of writing, especially in English. Nevertheless, in other subjects there is too much inconsistency of method for good approaches to make their maximum effect.
36. A whole-school policy on the use of mathematics across the curriculum has been in place for the last four years. The mathematics faculty teachers offered in-service training to all staff. The ideas in the National Numeracy Strategy are also extended into lessons for students in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics. At present, there is no numeracy co-ordinator in the school, and co-ordination of approaches to numeracy across other subjects continues on an informal basis. There is effective use of numeracy to support learning in science, design and technology, art and design, ICT drama and history.
37. The teaching of students with special educational needs is good across most subjects but is noticeably better when students are supported by learning support assistants in lessons. Those Students with Statements of Special Educational Needs are always well supported and often make very good progress. In some lessons, where there was no support for SEN students, their progress was often good because class teachers were aware of their specific learning needs and responded appropriately with a range of teaching strategies and resources. However, in many lessons across several subject areas, progress was not so good because teachers had not adapted their teaching strategies to the needs of the students. Most teachers use information from individual education plans very effectively to help them plan lessons and guide their teaching so that students make appropriate progress. A significant factor in the progress made by many students is the very good support provided by learning support assistants. They know the students very well and spend time with subject teachers planning to meet the needs of the students. They also have good records of progress and are able to set specific targets for students in different lessons. In many lessons they do not just confine their attention to those students with special educational needs, with the result that other students in the class benefit from their help. In English and maths, setting arrangements are also very effective in ensuring good progress. Classes are smaller and staff are often able to respond more effectively to individual needs. In most lessons where students were withdrawn for literacy support the teaching was good or very good, as it was when pupils with specific learning difficulties were withdrawn.
38. Induction programmes are very effective for students with English as an additional language. Teachers work hard to integrate students into mainstream classes as quickly as possible. Withdrawal support has clear targets and is time-limited. Students' progress is very well monitored. The teacher responsible for

bilingual students is also in charge of primary liaison; consequently students' literacy problems are identified early so that support can be targeted effectively. There is particularly good liaison with parents. The school has outreach workers for the Caribbean and Asian communities. However, there is limited support for students who are at the later stages of language acquisition because of staffing difficulties and because support for these students in faculties is inconsistent. There is good support in English, to develop writing; in science, where key words are emphasised; and in modern foreign languages, where students are encouraged to enter for GCSE examinations in their home languages.

39. The arrangements for marking and assessing students' work are satisfactory. Work is marked regularly and standards and achievement are routinely reported to parents. There is a clear whole-school policy. There are good procedures for collecting information on students' capabilities as they enter the school and settle into Year 7. By the end of Year 9, results from national tests and teacher assessments provide further information that assists decisions for courses and examinations to be taken in Years 10 and 11. Following GCSE examinations the school carries out a detailed analysis of results and performance is reviewed to celebrate achievement and to identify actions to be built into improvement planning. The school receives very good support from the LEA in analysing performance data.
40. At individual subject level and classroom level practice is inconsistent. The available information is not always used fully to inform teaching and learning strategies and in planning work for students of different levels of ability. Assessment data is not always used effectively to identify how students can improve their work and, overall, students are insufficiently aware of the level at which they are working. Assessment arrangements are very good in mathematics, ICT, and geography. Where arrangements are good or better, not only are requirements met but there is also provision to develop students' capacity for self-assessment so that they have a sharper understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their work and are therefore more able to achieve their targets. There are weaknesses in the quality of assessments in English, Punjabi, art and design, physical education and citizenship.
41. The good standard of teaching at the time of the last inspection has been improved upon. At the time of the last inspection, in 62 per cent of lessons, teaching was judged good or better and this has increased to 73 per cent. There has also been a reduction in the number of lessons where teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

### **Sixth form**

42. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. In over 90 per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be good or better. Common to most lessons is an extremely high level of subject expertise and authoritative explanation and questioning by teachers. Their ability to encourage and involve students is very good. Teachers work hard to provide a variety of learning activities that stimulates active learning. For example, in a Year 13 sociology lesson, every student in the group contributed well to the challenging questions from the teacher during a 'PowerPoint' presentation.
43. Many sixth form teaching groups contain students with a wide range of prior attainment. However, the teaching of gifted and talented students, although a small number, in the sixth form is good and tasks are set which fully challenge these students. Similarly, weaker students are well supported and encouraged and often these students gain results that exceed their predicted grades. The marking of students' work is thorough and detailed and gives very clear guidance on how students can improve their work.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provides all students with a good range of learning opportunities. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good access to the curriculum for all students, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Provision is good for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).
- There is a wide range of vocational courses.
- Curricular enrichment in the arts is good.
- The curriculum has been developed well.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements for science and religious education in Years 10 and 11 and there is no daily act of collective worship.

### **Commentary**

44. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for most students. In Years 7 to 9 the requirements of the National Curriculum are met, with the addition of a wide range of visual arts courses and dance. Courses are available in four foreign languages: French, Punjabi, Spanish or German. PSHCE is provided in all years. In Years 10 and 11 provision is good for most students. Vocational courses are included and help to provide a suitable alternative for those students for whom the normal programme of GCSE examination courses is not appropriate. Links with other schools, colleges and local businesses enrich students' vocational experience. Media studies has been offered through English in response to the need to provide a broader and more appropriate curriculum for some students. There are no opportunities for students to study a second foreign language, except for those wishing to study Urdu after school. A significant feature of the school's curriculum is the opportunity provided for students to begin fast-track arts GCSE courses in Year 9, initiated through the development of the school's specialist status in arts.
45. The school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 as there is insufficient time for the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to be met. There is no daily act of collective worship for all students. The current timetable arrangements for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11 do not allow them to study a science course. This issue has been identified by the new headteacher and arrangements are in hand to ensure that the current Year 10 students will receive science when they are in Year 11 and that from 2005 all students will follow a science course.
46. There is good provision for students with special educational needs and all of these students are receiving their curriculum entitlement. There are very good arrangements for special educational needs students in Years 10 and 11 to follow vocational courses and to achieve appropriate accreditation. Very good support is provided for those students who have failed to reach the appropriate level when they leave primary school. For those students experiencing particular difficulty with reading there is also very good support when they are withdrawn from other lessons and receive very specific and highly structured support. Most make very good progress and the school is very successful in improving reading ages significantly during students' first two years in the school.
47. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are good in art, dance and drama. Many specialist arts practitioners visit the school and work with students. There are regular theatre visits and study days as part of the English curriculum. The school band is well supported. All students have the opportunity to experience a residential trip during their time at the school. Opportunities across the wider curriculum are adequate. Student participation in sport is satisfactory. The Foxford Secondary Guarantee ensures that students' participation in enrichment activities is monitored effectively.
48. Developments in the curriculum since the previous inspection have been good. The move to specialist status has enabled the school to initiate some imaginative ideas in the creative arts.

49. Curriculum needs are generally well served by specialist teachers. However, there are a number of teachers, particularly in humanities, who are required to teach outside their subject specialism. The school has found it difficult to recruit a specialist physics teacher.
50. Accommodation is satisfactory. In art, students benefit from a rich array of specialist facilities. In physical education, students have access to good quality playing-fields and a well-managed leisure centre, including an attractive sports hall and fitness suite. The gymnasium has a temporary structure supporting the roof, which impinges on teaching. The swimming pool roof requires renovation. All subjects are taught in suited rooms. There is a mixture of old and new teaching blocks. Classrooms in the new parts of the school are rather cramped for the size of teaching groups. Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory because of an inappropriately shared classroom, insufficient practice rooms and poor storage facilities. The school library is attractive and provides good support for independent learning. It is very well managed. The school site is well managed by a good support team and is clean and inviting.
51. Learning resources are good. The quality and quantity of ICT resources are good in most subjects and in the school library. Many subjects make effective use of PowerPoint presentations.

### **Sixth form**

52. The school is able to offer a very good range of AS and A level courses because of its partnership links with several local schools and colleges. This enables the school to be very responsive to student demand, as in developing its courses in sociology and psychology. Applied GCSEs are available in leisure and tourism, and business studies. AVCEs are offered in ICT and business studies. There are opportunities for students to re-sit GCSE mathematics and English. All students participate in a good enrichment programme, covering such issues as human rights, counselling, drug awareness and sexual health.
53. An adequate range of extra-curricular activities is available. Some students are keen to take on responsibility when offered, and work in the local community. Students do not experience a daily act of collective worship.
54. Accommodation for sixth form students is unsatisfactory as the sixth form common room is too small for the number of students in the sixth form. Resources are good.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Arrangements to ensure the students' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Provision for support, advice and guidance is very good. The involvement of the students in the work and development of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are effective child protection procedures in place.
- The strong pastoral team provides the students with very good support and advice to help them improve their work and make the right choices.
- The school values the views of the students to improve and develop the school.
- Effective induction procedures enable the students in Year 7 to settle swiftly into school.
- Advice on further study and career opportunities enables students to make informed decision about their future.

## Commentary

55. Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students are good. Child protection procedures are in place and regular training sessions ensure that all members of staff are well aware of their responsibilities.
56. The tutors and heads of year provide very good advice and support for the students. Year 7 students entering the school make good use of their 'Friday diary' to inform their tutors and parents as to what they have learned, what has really interested them and what they are worried about each week. This encourages the start of home/school dialogue and provides the opportunity to raise any concerns or worries. Tutors remain, if possible, with the same tutor group throughout the school to provide continuity of support. Heads of year liaise closely with tutors and carefully monitor the achievement, attendance and behaviour of each year group. Support and advice for the students are considered to be a high priority at the school and additional specialist support and advice from outside agencies is used to support the most vulnerable students. Students are set personal and academic targets and given advice on how they can improve their work. Detailed discussions are undertaken with the students on academic review day.
57. Students voice their opinions about school life through the student council. Members from each year group meet to discuss possible improvements and organise community events. Regular discussion takes place with staff and their views are sought when selecting new senior members of staff.
58. The very good induction procedures in Year 7 allow the pupils to settle swiftly into the school, with minimal disruption to their learning. The head of Year 7 makes an early visit to the primary schools and attends the meeting for prospective parents. The Year 7 'transition group' also visits the primary school to tell them about their experiences when transferring to the school. Staff visits are undertaken to meet the Year 6 pupils, particularly those identified with special educational needs. A 'taster day' is arranged so that the pupils can sample secondary school lessons and curriculum links are developed through joint literacy and numeracy projects. A teacher has allocated responsibility for primary secondary links and spends time each week in partner primary schools developing curriculum links.
59. The school provides good advice on further education and career opportunities. The personal and social education sessions include careers information and advice. There is a well-planned preparation for transition from Year 9 to Year 10 courses, particularly in view of the fact that some pupils are educated off-site. There is also an office for the Connexions agency based in the school, which provides counselling and work placements for the Year 10 work experience programme.
60. Arrangements for assessing recording and reporting the progress of students with special educational needs are very good and meet statutory requirements. Procedures for identifying students are very thorough and the learning support co-ordinator, together with other staff, monitor the progress of all students carefully to ensure that appropriate progress is being made. All students discuss their progress regularly with staff and new targets are set as a result. There are good links between the learning support department and all other departments in the school. When support staff are in lessons they assess progress and liaise with subject staff to provide relevant information to plan future lessons. Support for those students with behavioural problems is good and a room is staffed and available at all time for those students who may be experiencing problems in lessons. Primary school liaison is good and forms the foundation for initial assessment, which is then developed through very thorough testing of students on entry.



## **Sixth form**

61. Support and advice in the sixth form are very good. Tutors mentor each student and set targets for their academic and personal development. The 'enrichment programme' of activities such as counselling, drugs awareness, human rights, mental and sexual health provided by outside agencies, is very relevant to their age group. Certificates are given on completion of these courses to confirm the skills gained.
62. Advice on further studies or career opportunities is very good. Links are in place with local colleges, and university visits are undertaken (such as the three-day residential visit to Aberystwyth).

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the local community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the local community enhance the students' learning.
- Links with local schools and colleges aid transition into higher education.
- Parents are provided with a wide range of high quality information about their children's work and progress and the life of the school.

## **Commentary**

63. Good links with the local community enhance the students' social skills and their learning. The school is the base for adult education courses and hosts classes such as computer studies, dance and flower arranging throughout the day and evening. The local community uses these facilities well. Students working in the creative arts department of the school have seen their sculptures and artwork displayed within the local community and in the centre of Coventry. Links are established with the local business community through the work experience and work-related learning programmes. The school band regularly entertains at local events.
64. Links with local schools and colleges aid the students' transition into secondary and further education. Primary school links are maintained through induction programmes and arts events. Primary school children also visit the school for design and technology, science and swimming sessions. Links with further education colleges are maintained through the work-related learning programme.
65. Parents receive very good information about school events and their children's work and progress. Annual reports are of good quality and highlight areas in which the students could improve their work. However, reporting on citizenship has been omitted from the Years 7 to 9 reports. Gradebooks also keep parents informed of academic achievement each term. The school issues regular newsletters for each year group and the headteacher frequently sends out letters informing parents of forthcoming events. A translation service is available for homes where English is not the first language. Meetings are also held to inform parents about the curriculum and following the issue of annual reports.

## **Sixth form**

66. Links with local schools and colleges are very good. Arrangements are in place for the students to attend lessons at other secondary schools and colleges if their chosen subject is not available in school. In turn, other secondary schools and colleges within the federation reciprocate by allowing their students to attend courses at Foxford.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership provided by the headteacher, ably supported by her two deputy headteachers, is very good. Governance of the school is good, although it is unsatisfactory in respect of meeting all statutory requirements. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The leadership provided by middle managers is satisfactory. This includes some very good leaders, but also includes some areas of the school where leadership is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiasm and commitment of the recently appointed headteacher is building upon recent improvements to raise standards even higher.
- There is a major commitment within the school to provide an inclusive school and the strength of social and racial harmony within the school is evidence of this.
- The strength of leadership and management of the sixth form has led to increased numbers staying on into the sixth form and for ensuring that they reach the standards indicated by their prior attainment.
- There is a strength in the leadership of special educational needs and English as an additional language and this is reflected by the good achievement made by these pupils.
- There is a weakness in the leadership of modern foreign languages, music and religious education.
- There is a weakness in management in that not all subject co-ordinators are using the available data effectively to set targets for individual or groups of students.

### Commentary

67. The headteacher has only been in post since September 2004 but in a very short period of time has shown a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. She and her two deputy headteachers provide very good leadership for the school, supported by the wider leadership group. There has been a marked raising of standards over recent years and much of the credit for this must go to the leadership provided by the former headteacher. It is already evident that the new headteacher's enthusiasm, commitment and strong leadership are producing good results in motivating and influencing staff and students and building upon what is a good base for seeking further improvement. The headteacher has a particular expertise in strategic planning and in identifying the changes necessary to raise standards higher. The size of the leadership team is appropriate for a school of this size. The leadership team is committed to running an inclusive school, which in part is why there are relatively few exclusions. The lead provided by senior staff is a major contribution to the very strong social and racial harmony within the school.
68. The leadership of subjects is more variable. There is very good subject leadership for art and design and design and technology. In several other subjects leadership is good, but there is unsatisfactory leadership for modern foreign languages and music. Pastoral leadership is good. The school has a strong commitment to self-evaluation, which is used effectively to produce school and faculty improvement plans.
69. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The learning support co-ordinator is very well informed, has a clear vision for the development of learning support in the school, and has conveyed this very successfully to all of her staff. She is highly respected by staff and students alike and has been very successful in ensuring that learning support is recognised across the school as the responsibility of all staff. A large team of learning support assistants and support teachers are very well deployed and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Regular meetings and very good relationships within the team ensure that all have a common purpose. All learning support assistants and teaching

staff have access to a wide range of in-service training. Resources and accommodation are good and contribute to the good working environment that all those involved in learning support enjoy.

70. Leadership and management of English as an additional language are good. There is good support from senior management, which has taken the decision to enhance staffing by funding the co-ordinator's salary. Resources are well targeted to where the need is greatest. However, staffing is inadequate for the needs of all students. For this reason there is limited support for bilingual students in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Learning support assistants have received little training in supporting language development.
71. Management is good. The school's policies are effective in identifying a clear vision for improving the school and in the main there is a consistent implementation of these policies. The school is rich in data on students' performances. Monitoring data provided by the school, the LEA and Ofsted provides a lot of information but this information is not yet being used effectively by all subject co-ordinators to identify targets for individual or groups of students. The day-to-day administration of the school enables the school to run smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.
72. The priorities for improvement identified in the school strategic plan for the next three years are appropriate. For each issue there are clear strategies with clear criteria for success. Appropriate time-scales for their completion have been identified.
73. The professional development of staff is good. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. There are effective arrangements in place for supporting Initial Teacher Training students. Performance management is fully implemented and contributes to the identification of training needs.
74. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely and well with the headteacher and senior staff. Governors play a very supportive role in planning for the school's improvement. Governors offer good support and challenge to the school. In one respect, governance is unsatisfactory in that governors are failing to meet all the statutory requirements. Not all students in Years 10 and 11 are receiving their entitlement to science. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are not being met for students in Years 10 and 11. Students in the school are not receiving the entitlement to a daily act of collective worship.
75. The school has maintained the high standards for leadership and management reported in the last inspection report.

### **Financial information**

#### ***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,522,155	Balance from previous year	309,045
Total expenditure	4,585,629	Balance carried forward to the next	245,571
Expenditure per pupil	4,222		

76. Financial control is good. The latest auditor's report, dated September 2004, stated that the financial procedures in the school were well controlled. The report is both rigorous and detailed and the governors have accepted the recommendations it contained.
77. The school is well resourced and, as a result, it allows for smaller classes than would be found in most schools nationally.

78. The finance committee meets regularly and its members are well informed and monitor expenditure rigorously. The principles of best value are well applied; for example, when the school put out to tender the contract for building a much-needed two-classroom extension.
79. The allocation of resources to priorities is good and the resourcing of subjects is good. The additional grants the school receives, such as the grants for special educational needs and ethnic minorities, are used effectively for the purposes for which they were intended.
80. The school continues to provide good value for money.

### **Sixth form**

81. The sixth form is very well led and managed. The sixth form has had the benefit of good vision from the leadership team and the current head of sixth form, who have enabled students' numbers and the range of courses to expand enormously since the previous inspection. The evaluation of the current strengths and weaknesses is very convincing and supported by well-marshalled evidence. The head of sixth form's analysis of examination results shows satisfactory value added. He sets very high standards for students, especially over attendance, and has very high expectations for students. In this he is well supported by his team of sixth form tutors and a clerical assistant. The tracking of students' progress is thorough and there are examples of very good practice in most sixth form subjects. The school is an active member of the Coventry North-East Federation of Schools. All these schools and a local College of Further Education have a common sixth form timetable, which enables students from Foxford to follow courses at other schools, and in turn takes students from other schools. This results in viable and cost-effective sixth form courses within the school.

## **WORK-RELATED LEARNING**

The effectiveness of the school's provision for work-related learning (WRL) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some subjects make a good contribution to work-related learning.
- Work experience is very well planned.
- Students receive good careers guidance.
- There is no curriculum policy or a development plan for work-related learning.

### **Commentary**

82. The effectiveness of the school's provision for work-related learning (WRL) is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. There is evidence of a good contribution to work-related learning in the creative arts subjects, design and technology, business studies, science, and personal, social and health education. Vocational courses for lower-attaining students in Years 10 and 11 make a very good contribution. Planning to incorporate WRL in other areas of the curriculum is at an early stage.
83. Work experience is very well planned and organised. A range of local employers is used and all students in Year 10 participate for two weeks. Preparation is very thorough and most students on vocational course are provided with placements that will help develop their knowledge and understanding of their particular course. Tutors are involved with students in assessing progress and this is recorded in students' progress files as part of a thorough de-briefing process. Opportunities to link work placements to areas of the curriculum are being missed.
84. Students have good careers guidance including interviews, with a very active and supportive Connexions service in the school which is involved in the guidance process with students from Year 9 onwards. Guidance procedures on both sixth form education and future careers are very good. Many students are given individual support and guidance by Connexions staff throughout Years 10 and 11.

These staff are also involved in helping to develop alternative vocational curriculum arrangements for students who have difficulty accessing the normal school curriculum. There are comprehensive careers units for students delivered in PHSE lessons, although none was operating during the inspection. A range of visitors to the school representing local industry, is also involved in careers lessons and other lessons.

85. WRL is well led, but there is no curriculum policy and no development plan. There is no single assessment system in place, unless a student is on a vocational course nothing is recorded on progress in this area.

# **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**

- Rising standards are a consequence of improved teaching methods.
- Good leadership and management have improved lesson organisation following analysis of student need.
- Computers are used well to teach students with special educational needs, and to adapt activities to their interests and capabilities.
- Advice given to students on how to improve is encouraging, but does not make its full effect due to lack of follow-through and consistency.

#### **Commentary**

86. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 rose sharply in 2004. Results in 2003 were well below those found nationally, overall, and below the average for the proportion reaching at or above the expected level (level 5). This reflected standards over three years, where boys were below the national picture for their gender and girls well below. Standards were below in mathematics and science but are now above. In comparison with similar schools, results showed students achieving less well than expected.
87. GCSE English results in 2003 were well below those found nationally, both for the proportion gaining higher grades and overall. Boys did worse than girls, as is the case nationally, but girls were further behind the national trend for their gender than boys were for theirs. Since the last inspection, standards have risen. GCSE English Literature results followed a similar pattern, except that boys and girls were equally behind the national trend for their respective genders.
88. In work seen in Years 7 to 9, standards of speaking and listening are above average, where students debate issues, express ideas and explain alternatives clearly in response to well-delineated teacher questioning. Students' standards of reading are average. They extract and synthesise information from the Internet with assurance, and use computers well to lay out ideas to communicate to the reader. Higher- and average-attaining students grasp well the importance of key characters and events in Shakespeare and write about them competently. Nevertheless, they rarely link their explanations to the text with sufficient detail. Standards of writing are average. Higher-attaining students make skilful use of drama and suspense in vividly written narratives because teachers give them systematic instruction in narrative method. Average-attaining students analyse newspaper articles well, demonstrating an awareness of bias in reporting, and go on to weigh up evidence and draw their own conclusions about current moral issues, such as fox hunting. Girls do better than boys. Lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs write colourful original stories, although they suffer from technical inaccuracies in their writing.
89. Standards in lessons seen by the end of Year 11 are average. Students understand and explain proficiently the events and characters in examples of twentieth century drama. Higher-attaining students lay out their ideas logically to communicate to the reader. This follows good, thorough teaching which trains them to use bullet points, tables, and other methods of note taking to clarify and order their thinking. Again, girls do better than boys. Students with special educational needs achieve well where teachers adapt their expectations astutely and prompt them carefully in class. With the help of very good teacher guidance and well-adapted computer programs, they are adept at extracting information from the Internet, manipulating photographs and keying-in text to write original stories.

90. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are adept at seizing student interest and involvement by means of vigorous questioning and well-focused praise. In some lessons, student interest flags where teachers do not move them on quickly enough, or adjust tasks to engage lower-attaining students. Students benefit from good guidance and encouragement to improve their written work, but its effect is often limited because teachers do not insist that it is subsequently followed through.
91. Achievement is good, because students respond to a mixture of high teacher expectations and regular checks on how well they are doing, before they are encouraged to learn further. As a consequence, their work rate is good because commitment and confidence are secured by well-calibrated activities.
92. Good leadership has established a firm direction to the organisation of teaching, leading to better learning and improving results. Teachers work well together as a team to enhance classroom methods and activities. Management is good because systems to check on students' needs and to share what is learned about their achievement are used to improve lesson planning. This leads to clearer teacher expectations and the production of enhanced lesson content to engage students' interest, underpinning the rise in standards since the last inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

93. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are average, overall. Students speak confidently and explain their ideas well in drama, art and design, physical education and English. At the same time, opportunities to extend understanding through discussion and questioning are missed in science, mathematics and music. Reading for pleasure and reference is promoted well through an attractive and well-managed library. In several subjects, such as science, history and geography, there is a lack of opportunity to deepen understanding and develop thinking through writing. This is a result of lesson activities and materials that require little more than simple filling-in of forms and writing in short phrases or sentences, without extending student skills to write in more detail in extended paragraphs. Across the school, there are good examples of the teaching of writing, especially in English. Nevertheless, in other subjects there is too much inconsistency of method for good approaches to make their maximum effect.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is unsatisfactory for most students by the end of Year 9.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- There is good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Some teachers' expectations of students are too low in Years 7 to 9.
- The department offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.

### **Commentary**

94. GCSE results in French in 2003 were close to the national average. Students performed better in French than they did in other subjects by comparison with the national average. Results in Spanish were below the national average but students' performance by comparison with other subjects was in line with national expectations. Overall, results were particularly impressive because the school entered a higher proportion of students for the examination than was the case nationally. However, results in 2004 showed a significant decline. In both French and German, results were well below average. Results since the last inspection have been inconsistent. Students who are entered for examinations in their home languages achieve well.

95. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are well below average and achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory for most students. This is partly explained by the staffing problems that the faculty has experienced over the past few years but is also caused by low expectations from teachers. Higher-attaining students and many average students in French in Year 9 underachieve. These students have little understanding of the main tenses, produce little extended writing and have few opportunities for extended speech. However, some students in Spanish in Year 9 achieve in line with expectations as do some higher-attaining students in German classes in Year 8. Achievement by students with special educational needs is inconsistent. They sometimes achieve well, particularly in those lessons where they receive effective help from learning support assistants. However, in many lessons they underachieve because their needs are not met effectively. Students do not develop good literacy skills.
96. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are close to average in French and German and below average in Spanish. Most students have opted to continue with a language and achieve well. In Year 10, German students have a good understanding of word order and begin to use complex sentences to bring variety to their writing. In Year 11, students in French and Spanish use tenses with a good level of accuracy and often demonstrate a wide knowledge of vocabulary. However, there is little evidence of achievement at the highest level. A small number of students in Spanish are not well motivated and do not achieve well.
97. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, overall. However, teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11 because teachers have established good working relationships in lessons. In addition, teachers have a good knowledge of GCSE criteria and use this to set appropriate targets for students who, as a result, demonstrate a good understanding of what they need to do to reach their target grades and work conscientiously to achieve them. However, in Years 7 to 9, the standards of teaching are inconsistent. In many lessons, teachers do not manage students effectively. They do not set appropriate targets and do not have high enough expectations of what students should be achieving. As a result, many students, particularly higher attaining ones, do not feel challenged. The pace of lessons is often too slow and students do not become involved in many lessons because there is not enough variety of activity. However, there is some good practice. Some lessons in Years 7 to 9 are well structured with clear links to previous learning and good starter activities. Learning is often enhanced by good support material. Learning support assistants are well used. However, learning is not reviewed effectively at the end of each lesson. When marking students' work some teachers give very detailed feedback and show them how to improve. These students are well motivated because they are clear about their learning.
98. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is some effective analysis of examination results, which has led to appropriate action. There is good support from the senior management team. Development plans have identified in broad terms what the faculty needs to do to move forward. However, there is a lack of detailed planning, which demonstrates a limited vision. There is limited documentation in the faculty. There is no guidance in terms of clear policies and this is the major cause of inconsistency in teaching. This is particularly the case for new teachers who, therefore, receive limited support for their classroom management. Continuing staffing difficulties further affect performance. As a result, there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **Punjabi**

Provision in Punjabi is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most students make expected progress and students' achievement is good by Year 9 and satisfactory by Year 11.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but information gained from assessments is not used well enough to inform a clear match of task to students' abilities.



- There is insufficient use of dictionaries to promote learning of spellings.
- ICT is not used well enough to enhance students' learning and study skills.

### Commentary

99. Punjabi is taught in Years 7 to 11. Standards vary widely in Years 7 to 9, but are average, overall, by Year 9 and achievement is good. In the 2004 GCSE examination results in Punjabi, the standards were below average. Students with special educational needs are suitably supported in lessons and achieve standards in line with their capabilities. This represents a positive picture and considerable improvement since the last inspection.
100. Students of all abilities cope well in most activities created and controlled by the teachers. When required to speak spontaneously or to write independently students show confidence in their use of language. They are able to apply their knowledge in new situations because the teachers give them enough opportunities to consolidate their understanding before beginning new work. In some lessons, however, the tasks are not well matched to students' abilities and they make limited progress as a result. Teachers prepare their own resources and mark students' work regularly. However, their marking is less diagnostic and does not help them enough to improve further. Teachers do not use helpful comments or appropriate levels or grades in their marking.
101. Standards are below average in Years 10 and 11. The achievement of students is generally satisfactory compared with their prior attainment. The teacher extends opportunities and gives encouragement to students to converse; however, the opportunities to speak audibly and at length in discussions, are lacking. Students' work shows that only a few students acquire satisfactory competence in reading and writing in Punjabi by the end of Year 11. Most students show lack of fluency in writing and weak standards of handwriting and presentation. A few higher-attaining students apply simple grammatical rules carefully and understand the use of different tenses and expressions. The teacher does not sufficiently encourage students to use dictionaries to support their own learning and correction of spellings.
102. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. It is occasionally good. There are two Punjabi teachers, but only one teacher was observed teaching. In the good lesson, the student with special educational needs was supported very effectively and as a result showed good progress in the task. The teacher provided a variety of activities that held students' interest and attention. In one lesson, Year 7 students had an opportunity to listen to 'animal noises' on a CD and this improved students' listening skills and the ability to identify and name the animals. A generally lively pace generated a willingness to participate. In most lessons, however, the teacher's expectations of students' work are often not high enough, particularly of students who are already fluent speakers and readers of Punjabi. Students use a range of appropriate vocabulary relating to topics such as 'items in the houses' or the 'local environment'. Most higher-attaining students begin to write for different purposes, for example, writing a letter or a short story to extend their skills. Relationships between teacher and students are mostly good. Students show appropriate respect for the teacher's exposition and behave well in most lessons. The secure subject knowledge of the teacher and some of the well-planned activities in lessons have a positive impact on students' learning. There are satisfactory assessment procedures, but individual targets of improvement are not used consistently. All students are given appropriate assessments at the end of each topic. However, the information from assessments is not used for planning lessons. As a result, work does not always match the students' abilities. There is appropriate support to extend students' learning through regular homework. ICT is not used enough to enhance students' study skills and word processing skills in Punjabi.
103. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader is well organised and aware of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, especially the lack of appropriate textbooks in Punjabi, which affects the quality of students' learning. The overall provision is well maintained since the subject was last inspected.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are increasing year on year.
- Generally, teachers insist on good behaviour in their classes and, as a result, students' attitudes to learning are usually good or very good.
- Teachers do not set aside enough time at the end of lessons for high quality sessions to summarise the gains in the lesson.
- Teachers mark work very thoroughly, with useful comments, which enable students to know how to improve their mathematics.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- The quality of leadership and management of mathematics is good.

### Commentary

104. Results at the end of Year 9 were below the national average when compared with all schools in 2003. In comparison with similar schools, based on the prior attainment of students when they joined the school, the results were in line with national averages. Considering the attainment levels when students arrive at the school, which are well below national averages, students' achievement is good. Boys performed better than girls. The mathematics results are better than those in English and about the same as science. The results achieved over the last few years are increasing at a greater rate than the national average. The average points scored by students have increased steadily over the last four years. The results achieved in 2004 were considerably better than those in 2003.
105. Results at the end of Year 11 were significantly below average in GCSE examinations in 2003. There has been an improving trend in the examination results: at the time of the last inspection, the percentage of A\*-C passes was approximately half of the 2004 figure. However, when the 2003 figures are compared with all other subjects in the school, students performed below other subjects' results. The 2004 results have dramatically increased, and the comparison with other subjects will give a much better picture for mathematics. The 2004 results showed good achievement and students performed above the levels expected from their prior attainment.
106. Students enter the school with levels of attainment in mathematics that are well below the national average. By Year 9, standards of work seen are generally below national averages. Higher-attaining students understand how to solve simultaneous equations, and study circle theorems at a high level. They use their mathematical knowledge to complete a statistical investigation well. Average students expand brackets with confidence, use equivalent fractions well, and use good diagrams to help their understanding of the properties of polygons. Students with special educational needs show accurate measurement in mathematical constructions and achieve well.
107. Standards are well below average by the end of Year 11. Higher-attaining students in Year 11 solve simultaneous equations by elimination with good algebraic skills. Their work is in line with that normally associated with top sets in Year 11, and the curriculum offered is very demanding. Lower-attaining students, and those with special educational needs, use tracing paper to rotate shapes and understand the three commands need to specify a rotation. Students have a clear idea about their target grades and the tier of examination in which they are to be entered. Lower-attaining students struggle with basic numeracy skills.
108. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. All lessons observed are at least satisfactory, with over two-thirds being good or very good. This is an improvement, because there were significant weaknesses in a minority of lessons when the school was last inspected. Teachers' command of mathematics is very good, and their planning is satisfactory. Teachers do not always break lessons into small, manageable parts and check carefully at each stage that students have understood the new concepts. Several three-part lessons are seen, which follow the recommendations of the National

Numeracy Strategy. However, some teachers do not leave enough time for a thorough plenary session. This session is needed to confirm knowledge and skills gained during the lesson. Teachers expect students to work hard, and have high expectations of what they will achieve. They control students very well. This leads to mature behaviour and good achievement in lessons. Relationships between teachers and students are very good; students enjoy their mathematics, respond very well to challenges from teachers and work enthusiastically.

109. Assessment of students' work is good. Teachers mark students' work very thoroughly, and comments enable students to see what they need to do to improve. The faculty keeps extremely detailed records of test and assessment results; these are carefully analysed to discover areas of knowledge that require further understanding. Targets are set and discussed with students. This is an area of strength.
110. The leadership and management of the mathematics faculty are good. The head of faculty clearly identifies objectives for continual improvement. The schemes of work have been totally revised. There is a very impressive faculty performance portfolio, which is issued to all teachers. The detail in all faculty documents shows vision and is directed towards self-review which will generate improvements in students' performance. There are very high aspirations to improve standards. The head of faculty monitors teaching. The use of data on students' attainment is improving. Planning and organisation within the faculty are very detailed. The head of faculty, with support from other mathematics teachers, has coped very well with changes in staffing and staff absences.
111. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Attainment is increasing year on year, due to a determined effort by teachers to raise standards. The teaching strategies used are still fairly traditional. The behaviour of students and their relationships with teachers are now very good. Teaching has improved and teachers in the faculty are working together well as a team.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

112. A whole-school policy on the use of mathematics across the curriculum has been in place for the last four years. The mathematics faculty teachers offered in-service training to all staff. Teachers are becoming more confident in using the three-part lesson. New materials are proving useful in helping students to develop their mental mathematics. At present, there is no numeracy co-ordinator in the school, and co-ordination of approaches to numeracy across other subjects continues on an informal basis.
113. In science, students complete a substantial amount of numeracy work using graphs and bar charts. In Years 10 and 11, students show good numeracy skills in their investigative coursework, with high quality tabulation and lines of best fit. In art and design, students have satisfactory awareness of spatial concepts; they measure well in their three-dimensional studies, and use proportion and enlargement sensibly. Students in design and technology measure accurately; they also handle data well, using ICT with Excel programs. There is an emphasis on accurate measurement as this affects the quality of the final manufactured product. In ICT, Year 8 students use spreadsheets for graphical outputs. In history, students use graphs on land control trends in Northern Ireland in the eighteenth century satisfactorily. In drama studies, students use graphs well to show peaks of dramatic scenes in a play.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good, with increasingly effective classroom practice leading to improved standards, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- A variety of teaching methods, including an emphasis on student-focused approaches, ensures a high level of interest, so that learning is productive.

- Management of the faculty is good, with work well supported by documentation of a high standard.
- Planning of lessons is good.

### Commentary

114. GCSE double science results in 2003 were below the national average. A change of entry policy meant that in 2004 students were entered for double and single science in approximately equal numbers and results are above national average in both options. Boys' results are better than girls'. The small number of students taking the Certificate of Achievement in science were successful in both 2003 and 2004, mostly attaining the higher-level grade. 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. In comparison with other core subjects science was in line with mathematics and better than English. Results have improved significantly over the past few years and, in 2004, are above average in comparison with similar schools.
115. Across Years 7 to 9 the standard of work seen is average and the overall achievement is good. Students settle quickly on entry to Year 7 and soon display good scientific thinking. A Year 7 class demonstrated that they could both develop their learning and enjoy science as they excitedly but productively planned and designed transporting a raw egg by parachute. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is average and achievement is satisfactory. In class, students answer questions well and make good use of appropriate scientific language. Practical work is carried out safely with accurate observations that are clearly recorded. Students show respect for one another and co-operate well in group work. Those for whom English is an additional language, and those with special educational needs, receive good support from teachers and from well-prepared support assistants. These students participate fully in lessons and progress as well as others. In lessons, all groups of pupils make equivalent progress.
116. Teaching and learning are good, with teachers' subject expertise and skills in presenting information a feature of lessons. A variety of teaching and learning approaches ensures a positive response from students. A Year 11 class showed obvious pride in producing a 'PowerPoint' presentation on selective breeding and genetic engineering before sensibly discussing related moral questions. Lesson plans clearly identify learning opportunities for all students but sometimes there is a failure to stretch and challenge higher-attaining students. Procedures for formal assessments are satisfactory. In some lessons, although learning objectives are clearly stated, the progress of students in reaching them is not fully evaluated. Homework is used effectively to extend learning although the standard of marking is inconsistent in terms of identifying ways in which students may improve. Overall, student behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. In only one lesson did the poor behaviour of a small number of students disrupt learning, as the teacher had to spend too much time on class management.
117. The head of science provides good leadership and management. A strong teaching team, all with a shared commitment to subject improvement, supports him. Ideas for taking science forward are identified in the impressive faculty improvement plan and delivered within the agreed time-scale. Regular and systematic monitoring of teaching, followed by evaluation and development action, is also important in taking the faculty forward. The use of ICT as a research tool is good, and the faculty benefits from having twenty-four laptops for students' use and an electronic whiteboard. Data-logging experiments have been identified to support work in all years and a member of the faculty has responsibility for staff training to take this initiative forward. Literacy skills are satisfactory, with use made of a key words approach and helpful writing frames in some lessons. Numeracy skills supporting science are good in all years. Laboratories are well designed, with impressive wall displays, and provide a good learning environment. The technicians provide good support to the work of the faculty both inside and outside laboratories.
118. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been good. Strategies, such as the sharing of good practice, have helped to improve teaching standards and this has led to a marked improvement in standards of attainment. The application of ICT in science has improved and is still developing.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good because teachers plan well and have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Assessment and marking are thorough, so students know how to improve their work.
- The very good accommodation and resources provide a very good learning environment.
- Poor guidance means that some students in Years 10 and 11 are studying an inappropriate applied GCSE course.
- The excellent in-school ICT consultant has contributed positively to the good improvements in ICT across the curriculum.

### Commentary

119. Students enter the school with below average attainment in ICT. The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 were close to the national average in 2004, and work seen during the inspection was of a similar standard. No national data is yet available for the 2004 applied GCSE examination. Results were above the examination board average for the course but were below the average for other subjects in the school. In lessons, the standards seen for Year 10 are broadly consistent with these results but Year 11 are below average. Prior attainment was significantly lower for these students and there is a mismatch between their skills and those needed for the course.
120. All students in Years 7 to 9 achieve well, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. In the GCSE groups, achievement is satisfactory for Year 11 and better in Year 10. All students follow a Key Skills ICT course within design and technology and make satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence shows good year-on-year progression in students' skills. In communication work, Year 7 students can combine text and graphics to produce slide presentations and leaflets but much early work is marred by low standards of literacy. Use of the national strategy helps to ensure that by Year 9 there is a significant improvement in literacy and higher-attaining students can tailor their response to specific audiences. Average Year 8 students can create a spreadsheet to calculate and display the cost of a bedroom design. A year later, higher-attaining students successfully modelled complex mobile phone tariffs. A strength is the development of independent learning skills, which serve students well.
121. Teaching is predominantly good or better. All teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and can communicate it effectively, using a good range of strategies. The very good resources are used well to enhance students' learning. In Years 10 and 11 the poor literacy skills of lower-attaining students meant that learning often did not match the good teaching. Good planning, positive relationships and the very good management of students' behaviour all help to raise standards. Very good assessment procedures and helpful marking give students a clear understanding of the standard of their work and how to improve further. Teachers provide good support in the classroom but opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge higher-attaining students. Gifted and talented students in Year 7 benefit from the ICT project at the local football club.
122. Within the faculty of design and technology leadership and management of ICT are shared. They are effective because of good teamwork and communication. There is a very good culture of self-review, well informed by detailed analysis of results and assessment data. The curriculum is under review, including Years 8 and 9, where the rotation of subjects and the below average time available have a negative impact on achievement. Performance management is well established. There is a good team commitment to improvement. Management and maintenance of hardware by the technicians are excellent and Internet access is safe and well monitored. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in provision and resources. There is good capacity for further improvement.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

123. ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Provision has improved considerably, with a well above average computer-to-student ratio now. The in-school consultant provides excellent training tailored to meet the needs of individual departments, but there are still some underdeveloped or weak areas. Interactive whiteboards are used very well in art, design and technology, science and in English, where images of animals were linked imaginatively with Macbeth. English and science also make good use of laptop computers. The library has good and well-used ICT resources. The librarian enabled students with special educational needs to create computerised multimedia stories combining text, images and sounds. These students also make good use of software packages to develop basic skills. In modern foreign languages, music and religious education, computer use is satisfactory but there is insufficient use in mathematics, geography and physical education. Digital cameras, still and video, as well as computerised lighting, enhance provision in drama.

## **HUMANITIES**

124. There are full reports for geography, history and religious education below. In addition, sociology was sampled. GCSE sociology is taught every two years and the last group to take the examination was in 2004. Almost half of the group attained an A\* to C grade pass. In relation to school analysis of data, this represented satisfactory achievement. In the one lesson sampled, in Year 10, the standard seen was average and teaching and learning were very good, which resulted in very good achievement. Students had a secure understanding of a variety of research techniques and had successfully planned interviews with visiting residents from a local residential home for the elderly.

## Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment at GCSE is well below average.
- Teachers within the department are conscientious and enthusiastic.
- Good classroom management creates a good working environment for learning.
- Regular and supportive marking provides guidance on improvement.
- Successful teaching strategies need to be established and fully shared across the department.
- Students require further support with their literacy and writing skills.
- ICT could be developed further as a learning tool.
- There is a lack of fieldwork for students.

### Commentary

125. Standards in geography are below national averages at the end of Years 9 and well below the national average in examinations at the end of Year 11. GCSE results for 2004 are well below national average in relation to A\*- C grades and this represents a decline from the previous year. However, this represents satisfactory achievement given these pupils' well below average attainment on entry. Students on the whole gain lower grades in geography than in many other subjects and this provides a challenge for the department. Results in previous years have been consistently below average and girls tend to obtain better results in geography than boys.
126. In Years 7 to 9 the standards of work seen are below national expectations. Students are making satisfactory progress in lessons. An emphasis on literacy skills has helped to raise standards. Teachers are emphasising reading and using the correct geographical terms and this is having a positive effect on achievement. There is good provision for lower-attaining students, including those with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress, particularly when they are supported by learning support assistants. A large number of students have English as a second language and require considerable support with both reading and writing. In view of this, most of these students are achieving well and make good progress in lessons. Many pupils still have difficulty with extended writing and the department needs to develop further the literacy skills of all pupils. Most pupils are able to draw simple maps and diagrams as well as use other geographical skills. Most pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory for coping with statistics, graphs and concepts such as scale and direction that are used in geography. Limited use is made of ICT to support learning.
127. In Years 10 and 11 the standard of work seen is below average, although achievement is satisfactory in relation to prior attainment. The ability range of the groups is more balanced this year and many students are working towards the higher A\*- C grades in GCSE. Structured lesson plans provide a good base for learning and pupil progress is supported by end of module assessments. Year 11 projects provided opportunities for research on the service provision in the local area of North East Coventry. Students demonstrated good skills in collecting data, interpreting the information, using maps and diagrams and evaluating the research. Teachers put emphasis on developing literacy skills by using key words and writing frames for extended writing. The key appears to be to develop further the literacy skills of all pupils so that they are more confident with written work.
128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, although there is some variation within the department and between the key stages. There is good teaching in Years 10 and 11 and, as a result, students make good progress in their learning. Good classroom management creates a positive working environment for learning and ensures a swift pace to most lessons. Students behave well, allowing teachers to give detailed attention to individuals. A variety of appropriate teaching methods is used successfully to engage the pupils and enable them to learn effectively. Students make good progress when lessons are prepared with clear learning objectives, in line with the learning styles of the students. Learning is good when the teacher ensures real understanding of topics and sets structured attainable tasks. Opportunities

are missed to develop students' skills in geography with the limited amount of fieldwork available. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.

129. Marking of pupils' work is supportive, in line with the faculty assessment policy and shows pupils how to improve their work. Homework is not set consistently by all teachers and the department could use homework more effectively to reinforce and extend what is learnt in school. Teaching was less effective when the teacher spoke for long periods or there was too much dependence on the teacher, not allowing the pupils to work at their own pace. Good progress was made within structured lessons when teacher explanations were clear, there were relatively short, attainable, tasks and teachers provided guidance with writing and note taking. The challenge for the department is to encourage the pupils to work more independently, albeit with structured guidance, so that they can develop their skills of analysis and evaluation.
130. The department is led and managed satisfactorily by an experienced subject co-ordinator within the humanities faculty structure. She provides support for an enthusiastic and conscientious team of teachers. However, some of the team are non-specialist teachers and the monitoring role through classroom observations needs to be more rigorous. There is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching across the department and there is a need for more guidance with lesson plans and successful strategies for effective teaching and learning. The departmental members need to meet more regularly and revisit the schemes of work and lesson plans so that good practice is established and fully shared across the department. There is good display work in the main geography room, which has a positive effect on students' learning, but much of the teaching is in humanities classrooms with no specific subject identity. The department has addressed all of the issues in the previous report but future progress will require a clear plan for improving the quality of teaching across the department and subsequently raising the attainment of all pupils.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below average.
- Teachers demonstrate high levels of commitment and give students extensive individual support.
- Teachers do not place enough emphasis on students' acquisition of historical skills.
- Strategies for the development of students' literacy skills are not systematic.
- Students' attitudes to their studies are good and they speak highly of their teachers.
- ICT is used well as a learning tool.

### Commentary

131. At age 14, standards are below average but are improving and more students are now demonstrating the potential to reach higher levels. GCSE results in 2003 were well below national expectations, but a significant number reached grade D and all students entered attained a grade. Examination results in 2004 were similar to the previous year. In work seen during the inspection, performance matches these standards and many students find the step from narrative to analysis and evaluation difficult.
132. From well below average attainment on entry to the school, students achieve satisfactorily in all years and there are examples of students in Years 7, 8 and 11 making good progress in their understanding of the topics under consideration, the Battle of Hastings, for example.

However, because many students, particularly in the GCSE years, have an underdeveloped understanding of the nature of evidence and because their literacy skills are weak, they find much of the work difficult and their progress is hampered as a result.



133. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and is good in several lessons. Where teaching is good, students are fully engaged and they have opportunities to share their ideas with their classmates. In a Year 8 lesson on conditions on board ships in 1500, students approached their work with maturity, valued the discussions with their classmates and spoke warmly of the approach of their teacher. Where teaching is satisfactory, there is sometimes too much teacher talk and not enough emphasis on developing students' abilities to work like historians. None the less, in all lessons, teachers and learning support assistants care deeply for the welfare, both academic and social, of the students for whom they are responsible and support for individuals experiencing difficulty is a strength. Moreover, there are many opportunities for students to use computers for research and to complete assignments.
134. Leadership is satisfactory and fosters high levels of teamwork among teachers in the area. Management is sound and ensures that resources are well matched to the needs and abilities of the students. Teachers recognise that a more systematic approach to the development of students' literacy skills is needed and are working hard to establish consistent strategies to improve the historical skills of their youngsters.
135. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the quality of advice given to students on how to improve their work is higher. Furthermore, teachers' and students' use of ICT is more extensive and this has contributed to raising students' standards. Because teachers demonstrate real commitment to their students and to their subject, the area is well placed for further development and future success.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are too low. In particular, students do not learn enough about different religions.
- Statutory requirements are not being met in Years 10 and 11 because there is insufficient curriculum time.
- Students develop their understanding of ethical issues well.

### Commentary

136. Religious education takes place in Years 7, 8 and 9 through integrated humanities. There are no national tests in religious education at the end of Year 9. Teachers assess students' knowledge at the end of the year, and records show that attainment is average. In Years 10 and 11 there are units of work identified in citizenship lessons, which have a religious flavour. No students are entered for a GCSE course in religious education.
137. In work seen, standards by the end of Year 9 are below average. Students acquire some understanding of different faiths and of moral and ethical issues. Those in Year 7 showed straightforward understanding of religious symbols and festivals. There were some good newspaper articles describing the marriage of Rama and Sita and students carry out Internet research. There are some good opportunities to write about personal feelings and to allow students to respond individually to questions of faith and belief. In Year 9 there is a unit looking at religious dimensions to environmental issues and students do good work in looking at these from different perspectives. Work covered during Years 7 to 9 is largely based on the requirements of the Coventry Agreed Syllabus, but there is less attention given to learning

about religion rather than learning from religion. Students achieve satisfactorily in the first three years. There was insufficient evidence to judge the progress of those with special educational needs or those who are at an early stage of learning English.

138. Students cover some aspects of religious education in Years 10 and 11 citizenship lessons. Very little work was available during the inspection and no lessons took place. The units of work cover moral and

ethical issues, and some regard is given to the teachings of different faith groups. In work seen, students had explored what it is to live in a multicultural society. They had looked at the attitudes of different religions towards marriage and divorce. All work seen was fairly short and superficial, with little emphasis on knowledge of religious traditions and beliefs. By the end of Year 11, standards are well below average and achievement for those in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.

139. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and in half the lessons seen both were good. Teachers plan a variety of activities, which help to keep students interested and motivated. In a good Year 9 lesson, they were considering deep ethical issues – such as whose side was God on in war. They were encouraged to express their own ideas well. Where learning is satisfactory rather than good, the pace is a little slow and some activities do not stretch higher-attaining students.
140. The subject is within the humanities faculty. The humanities' teachers are an effective team and there is a good learning environment in the faculty. Strategic leadership of the subject, as provided by the senior management of the school, is unsatisfactory because the lack of time for religious education in Years 10 and 11, identified as an issue in the previous inspection, has not been tackled. Provision does not meet the requirements of the Coventry Agreed Syllabus and improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Within the constraints imposed by the school leadership the leadership and management provided by the subject co-ordinator are good.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

141. In addition to the full inspection, design and technology, the health and social care course was sampled. Standards of students' current work seen in the health and social care applied GCSE course are broadly average and students make good progress. Teaching and learning are good, and students are encouraged to draw on their own past experience, and use good research skills to develop a number of study units, organised within and outside school.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong leadership and management are resulting in the emergence of effective strategies for positive change.
- Good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are resulting in improved standards and students' good achievement.
- Students do not show sufficiently how they develop the detail of their design ideas.

### **Commentary**

142. Teachers' assessments over the last two years indicate that standards were in line with national averages by the end of Year 9. Current standards of work in Year 9 are below average. This represents good achievement for all students compared with their well below average levels of attainment on entry in Year 7. In Years 7 to 9 students experience a range of materials and processes, but do not develop their understanding of systems and control in as much depth. They do not show consistently how their design ideas are developed in each material area. In 2003, GCSE results were below the national average, overall, but students did as well or better than they did in their other subjects. Provisional results in 2004 show significant improvement, overall, and GCSE standards are now above average. Students achieve better results in design and technology than they do in their other subjects. Standards have improved, particularly in resistant materials where they are notably well above average because of very good teaching. Current standards of work in Year 11 are at least in line with national averages, and show that achievement for all groups of students is good. Students model their ideas well, and produce good formal drawings, but do not have sufficient sketching skills to show clearly how their designs are

developed. There is some variation in the application of ICT to students' coursework because of uneven access.

143. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are good, overall. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and the non-specialist staff are well supported. In Years 7 to 9 the levels of expectation are not consistently high, especially in the degree of challenge set in design tasks. Some inappropriate techniques are being taught in textiles. Teachers provide good support materials, which result in good learning and lesson pace. Some recent developments, for instance, in improving writing skills for project evaluations, are starting to make a positive impact on attainment but are not yet used by all teachers. In Years 10 and 11, teachers encourage a variety of techniques such as prototyping and product analysis to help students develop their own ideas. In the best lessons, students work independently to develop coursework and are well monitored and individually supported. Additional challenge and support for gifted and talented pupils are less well defined. Students are not sufficiently taught how to generate design ideas.
144. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong faculty ethos and a clear sense of direction by staff, resulting in rising standards. The faculty has recognised the need to match assessment more closely to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9. Both learning and technical support staff are well deployed, and very good preparation in food technology lessons improves pace and learning opportunities. ICT facilities are generally good, but need to be developed further in textiles. There is a progression in the use of computer-aided design (CAD). Good enrichment opportunities, such as participation in the 'Formula 1 Challenge' and the school Young Engineers Club, are successful.
145. Since the last inspection improvements have been good. Standards in Years 10 and 11 have improved and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of the subject have been built into teachers' planning.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

146. The school has achieved Arts College status. In addition to reporting fully on art and design and music additional briefer reports on dance and drama have been added to this section of the report.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Standards in GCSE examinations are significantly above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11, and the majority of students achieve well and progress at a good rate.
- Teachers and students enjoy very good working relationships and students benefit from high levels of personal tuition and guidance.

- The full potential of ICT as a learning aid is not fully developed in Years 7 to 9.
- Assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 are not used effectively.

### Commentary

147. Teachers' assessments of Year 9 students in 2003 and 2004 were above average. In the current Year 9 standards are above average. This represents good achievement for most students in relation to their knowledge, understanding and skills when they entered the school. Lower ability students, and those with special educational needs, make good progress. Students apply themselves purposefully to their work and are supported very well in lessons. Fast tracking of students results in many gaining early GCSE success. Students of all abilities research and develop their art and use line and tone effectively in their drawings.
148. The proportion of students gaining grades A\*- C in GCSE examinations in 2003 was significantly above average. Boys' performance was well above average, with rising trends in recent results. In the current Year 11 standards are well above average. This represents very good achievement for the majority of students by the end of Year 11. This is a direct result of assessment procedures that ensure students have opportunities to discuss their achievement and set targets for future development. Students with special educational needs achieve well and benefit from personal tuition and guidance. Good matching of tasks to capabilities ensures that higher-attaining students are sufficiently challenged. The breadth of media opportunities and development of personal interests have had a positive impact on boys' achievement. Sketch-books are used very well and students' work shows the influence of important movements in art and design or of particular artists.
149. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 11. Very good teaching was observed when students were actively engaged in debate about their work and were clear about their intermediate learning objectives. When behaviour is well managed and teachers use sharp questioning to ensure the participation of all students, responses are very positive. Teachers are aware of the capabilities of their students and often meet their needs through good quality individual tuition. They use their knowledge and subject expertise to very good effect and lesson preparation is very good. However, in Years 7 to 9, assessment procedures are not used well enough to inform students of the levels they are working at, or what they need to do to improve, nor are they related to National Curriculum levels. Since the last inspection, ICT is now used to support students' learning in many areas of art and design but there are some opportunities missed to use ICT in Years 7 to 9.
150. The leadership of art and design is very good. Staff work very well as a team and give freely of their time to students, which extends learning. They bring a broad and varied range of experience to the subject and departmental meetings are used to share ideas and good practice. Taught skills are enhanced by opportunities for students to make contact with artists and artwork, both in and out of college. The management of the department is very good and schemes of work and departmental policies provide very good guidance for staff, so that consistency is ensured throughout the department. The work of the department is well monitored through classroom observations and work sampling. The curriculum is very good, offering courses in fine art, graphic design, sculpture, textiles, three-dimensional and media and lens-based studies. The recently appointed head of department, who is also head of the creative arts faculty, has already made a positive impact and has clear vision for future development. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent, most notably in the award of Arts College status, which has led to an ethos of high expectations and excellence. GCSE results are now significantly above national average, with A\* and A grades being achieved. Teaching and learning are now very good and there is good provision for the use of ICT to support students' learning.
151. **Dance** is taught weekly to students in Years 7 and 8 in the creative arts faculty. In Years 9 to 11, some students opt to follow the GCSE dance course. Since 2001 there has been a rising trend in the proportion of students attaining A\*- C grade passes; in 2003 this proportion was well above the national average and in 2004 this was maintained. The creative arts faculty has a policy of fast track entry, which means that some Year 9 students start the GCSE course early.

152. Three lessons were sampled. In a Year 9 fast track GCSE lesson, teaching and learning were very good, which resulted in very good achievement by all. The teacher's enthusiasm and the challenge offered ensured that all were fully involved and on task throughout. By the end of the lesson all had successfully learned basic ballet movements and were able to choreograph a short sequence of their own, using a combination of feet, arms, plie and arabesque. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson, all students remained on task and were determined to improve their standard of performance. The quality of teaching was very good both in this lesson and in a Year 7 lesson because teachers had high expectations and fully challenged all students.

## **Drama**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop as independent learners.
- There is a good emphasis on students evaluating their own work.
- The quality of learning is frequently affected by noise disturbance from adjoining rooms.

### **Commentary**

153. All students in Years 7 and 8 have a drama lesson for half of each year. There is provision in Years 9 to 11 for students to take two creative arts GCSE courses, and numbers taking drama have risen considerably. Some students, however, do not continue with drama beyond Year 8.
154. GCSE results in 2004 were average, and rose considerably from the well below average standards of 2003. These results represent good achievement, as standards on entry to the course were below average. Current standards in Year 11 are average, and these students are achieving well, too. There are no national tests for drama in Year 9. Standards seen in the inspection show that those who take drama in Year 9 are attaining average levels, and they are achieving well.
155. Students learn a good range of dramatic skills in Years 7 to 9. They can select appropriate techniques to show character and to develop plot. In Year 8 they work on monologues and learn how to build up a character's background in order to make the drama convincing. In Year 9 they learn to distinguish between different genres, styles and conventions. For example, in a lesson seen, students were using melodramatic techniques and exploring stock characters. Higher-attaining students can sustain a role convincingly and use body language and facial expressions well to convey character and emotion. Lower-attaining students are much more self-conscious and lose concentration easily.
156. At GCSE, students develop further their knowledge and understanding of dramatic conventions and performance skills. They learn how to analyse their own and others' performances. By the end of Year 11, students can portray character and sustain role convincingly, using movement, voice and gesture, aware of the audience. They also carry out research into a playwright and they analyse scripts showing the build-up of dramatic tension. Students achieve well on the course. Throughout the school, those who are at an early stage of learning English also achieve well, as do students with special educational needs.
157. Teaching and learning in the subject are good. Teachers are confident subject specialists and they plan lessons well, in particular by providing good opportunities for students to work independently. They give helpful feedback and encourage students to evaluate their own, and each other's work, well. The level of noise coming from adjoining rooms frequently holds learning back. This disturbs concentration and means that teachers have to go over points

more often. Lower-attaining students with short concentration spans are particularly affected in this way.

158. The head of the subject provides good leadership and management. There is a strong focus on raising standards and achievement and the teachers form an effective team within the creative arts faculty. The monitoring of teaching and learning is developing. The subject has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The great rise in the numbers on the GCSE course and the improvements of standards in Year 11 are particularly notable.

## Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' progress is impeded by weaknesses in teaching methods.
- Limitations in accommodation and resources restrict students' musical opportunities.
- The curriculum lacks a sufficient range of activities to develop fully students' musical education.
- Students enjoy music lessons and work confidently in ensemble performances.

### Commentary

159. In the 2003 GCSE examination music results were below average. In 2004, results were poor. The trend in results over the past few years has been very erratic. Standards in Year 9 are below average but represent good achievement since students enter the school with well below average standards. Standards in Year 11 are below average and represent unsatisfactory achievement for those students who continue with music to GCSE level. Throughout Years 7 to 11 there are no significant differences in students' standards and achievement according to gender, special educational needs or ethnicity. Gifted and talented students do not achieve as well as they could.
160. Students develop confidence and accuracy in whole-class performance work. They co-ordinate their performance well with others. Composition work is very variable, with a minority producing some good work. Whilst a minority develop effective jazz style pieces, the majority rarely extend their ideas beyond simple formulae. Listening skills are underdeveloped. Students have little understanding of musical styles other than jazz. They are diffident at appraising their work and are weak in their understanding of musical terminology. Students behave well and have good attitudes.
161. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Teachers' good quality musicianship stimulates students to learn. Teachers use their own performing skills well to demonstrate ideas to students. However, students are restricted in what they achieve because too many lessons are extended instrumental rehearsals rather than focused teaching sessions. Lesson planning does not sufficiently integrate all aspects of the music curriculum. Too much time is spent on a single activity. Students are not challenged when teachers rarely ask questions or provide appropriate tasks to extend them. Students cannot develop creative independence where teaching is over-directed. Students are unclear about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Errors in students' literacy go unchecked. In a small minority of lessons poor class control seriously impedes learning.
162. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The new faculty head has identified significant weaknesses in the department and has initiated changes that will quickly have an impact on the quality of its work. Schemes of work need to cover the full range of the music curriculum and lessons provide a more integrated learning experience. Teaching needs to be monitored to ensure that work is focused on students' learning. The school band performs to a high standard. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. The department lacks a second dedicated teaching room. There are insufficient practice rooms for small group work. ICT is underused. Keyboard work lacks earphones to ensure concentrated learning.

163. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, especially in teaching methods and aspects of the curriculum.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In 2003, the proportion of students attaining A\*- C grade passes was broadly in line with the national average.
- Though standards are below average by the end of Year 9, students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their capabilities on entry to the school.
- The range of accommodation is very good and allows for a good range of activities to be taught throughout the year.
- A range of extra-curricular provision throughout the year broadens students' learning.

#### **Commentary**

164. By the end of Year 9 standards are below average; students achieve satisfactorily in relation to their well below average standards on entry to the school. By the end of Year 9 all groups of students have a sound knowledge and understanding of the principles and procedures for warm-up, and they are developing their individual skills in swimming and other activities. It was not possible to observe any lessons in the compulsory course in Years 10 and 11, hence no comment can be made on standards or the achievement of students in this age group.
165. In Years 10 and 11 a group of students is selected by the physical education faculty to follow the GCSE course. This is an 'extra' GCSE qualification in addition to those courses students choose from the subject option blocks at the end of Year 9. Prior to 2003 the proportion of students attaining A\*- C grade passes had been below the national average. However, in 2003, the proportion was broadly in line with the national average but, in 2004, was very low. The small sample of students' work provided did not provide sufficient evidence to comment on standards or achievement.
166. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Learning objectives are made clear at the start of lessons; thus, pupils know what is expected of them. Lessons are well planned for structure, pace and progression but often there is insufficient challenge for the full range of ability in classes, for example, for the more physically capable in a mixed Year 9 swimming lesson and in a mixed Year 9 ball skills lesson. In a Year 7 mixed gymnastics lesson a lack of focus on the quality of work meant that some students were underachieving because some of their work was inappropriate and dangerous. Students' attitudes are satisfactory, and this helps create a positive learning atmosphere. They are involved in pair and small group work and are provided with opportunities to observe each other's work. However, they are not encouraged to identify strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement; hence, they are not being taught the skills of evaluation sufficiently well. Teachers use questions well to ensure that students understand the terminology being used. They circulate well in lessons and their constructive praise and criticism make students aware of what they need to do to improve. On occasion, though, this praise does not reflect on the actual quality of work students are producing. Often, at the end of lessons, there is a tendency for teachers to give all the feedback without asking students to comment on what they have learned. There are missed opportunities to use ICT in practical lessons to support students' learning. Assessment levels at the end of Year 9 are not fully grounded in the requirement to assess the four strands of the physical education National Curriculum. The quality of marking of GCSE theory work is inconsistent and students are not being told what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

167. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent outside support has ensured a focus on provision in Years 7 to 9 but this has yet to have an impact on standards. The recently undertaken faculty self-evaluation of provision has provided a focus for the work of the faculty on raising all-round standards and the quality of students' achievements. Apart from some analysis of GCSE results, monitoring of data is not well developed and, as a result, there is little use of assessment data to help with future planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
168. A range of extra-curricular provision throughout the year, including both recreational and competitive fixtures, broadens students' learning opportunities. Student participation in recreational activities during the week was low. Some individuals have achieved representative honours at local and district level in athletics, hockey and football. All students have access to at least 100 minutes quality physical activity per week – this is slightly less than the government's national public service agreement target of two hours per week. This is enhanced by the opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities in Years 7 to 11. There are some links with local community sporting organisations that are of direct benefit to pupils.

### **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

169. Business and other vocational courses were not reported on fully but these subjects were sampled.
170. One lesson was observed in leisure and tourism. In this lesson, students made satisfactory progress in developing their understanding of various aspects of customer service in the leisure and tourism industry. Evidence from pupils' work indicates thorough coverage of the syllabus and standards in line with the ability of the students, which were just below the national average. Teaching was satisfactory.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

A good PSHCE programme is in place and well co-ordinated by heads of year. The scheme of work is well planned and covers an extensive range of issues, including sex education and alcohol and drugs abuse. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the world of work. Careful attention is paid to developing students' confidence in study skills and examination techniques to help them to succeed.

#### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students develop good presentational and listening skills.
- Teaching is good, overall.
- There is a very comprehensive programme in Years 10 and 11.
- Students have good opportunities for participation in school and community projects.
- Assessment and reporting in Years 7 to 9 are inadequate.
- Students do not have enough opportunities for written work.



## Commentary

171. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average but close to average in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is, therefore, good. When students arrive in the school they often lack oral confidence and do not relate well to one another. However, by Year 11, they are able to present their ideas to others with confidence and they show respect for their peers by listening carefully to their views. This is because they are given numerous opportunities to engage in debate, particularly in Years 10 and 11. They also learn to empathise with others through, for example, the work they do on refugees and ethnic minorities. Students develop good knowledge and understanding of issues relating to citizenship because of well-planned programmes, particularly in Years 10 and 11. They have opportunities to engage in democratic processes because the school has a very effective school council. The school guarantees that all students will have the opportunity to engage in community projects during their time in the main school. However, there is not enough emphasis on presenting and justifying opinions in writing.
172. Teaching is good, overall. Students are well motivated and engage actively in lessons because relationships are good. Teachers have been successful in creating the kind of working atmosphere that allows discussions to take place in a safe and supportive environment. The effective use of outside speakers brings variety and interest to lessons. Students make good progress because lessons are well planned, with clear objectives supported by good resources. Lessons are particularly effective in Years 10 and 11 because teachers have good subject knowledge and feel confident when handling controversial issues. Lessons in Years 7 to 9 are taught by tutors who are sometimes less confident in teaching a subject which is not their speciality. Students' work is regularly and thoroughly assessed by a variety of methods in Years 10 and 11. However, there is little evidence that progress is assessed in Years 7 to 9.
173. Leadership and management are good, overall. The subject is in the process of development and there is, as yet, no co-ordinator for the whole school. Teachers, in Years 10 and 11, do not have the opportunity to meet on a regular basis. However, there is a clear vision for the future and this is ensuring that the subject is having an increasing impact. A whole-school co-ordinator is about to be appointed and issues identified in this report are already being addressed. Students in Years 10 and 11, for example, will be entered for the GCSE short course in the near future so that students will have increased opportunities for written work.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, eleven 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 2004.

### *A level courses (A2)*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	9	89	98	0	48	42.2	85.9
Art & Design (Fine Art)	2	100	98	0	53	70.0	88.5
Biology	5	80	97	0	41	36.0	79.7
D & T Product Design	7	86	97	0	35	40.0	77.5
Dance	1	100	92	0	43	80.0	84.5
Drama and Theatre Studies	2	100	99	0	43	40.0	84.9
Economics	4	100	99	0	54	55.0	89.4
English Literature	18	100	99	6	45	54.4	85.6
History	5	100	99	0	46	52.0	85.1
Mathematics	3	67	96	33	55	53.3	88.3
Maths (Further)	1	100	94	0	70	80.0	97.5
Punjabi	2	100	76	0	39	60.0	78.8
Physics	2	100	96	50	45	70.0	82.4
Psychology	7	100	97	0	41	57.1	80.8
Sociology	16	100	98	19	45	73.8	84.5
Totals	84	95	N/a	7	N/a	55.7	N/a

### *Level 3 GCE AS level – 3 units*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business (VQ)	4	100.00	N/a	25.0	N/a	27.50	N/a
Inform. Tech. (VQ)	1	100.0	N/a	0	N/a	30.00	N/a
Totals	5	80.0	N/a	20.0	N/a		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
Business (VQ)	13	100	90	15	25	73.9	67.4
Inform. Tech. (VQ)	14	93	89	7	29	57.1	68.9
Totals	27	96	N/a	11	N/a	65.2	N/a

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well from a low base.
- Learning in lessons is good as a result of teachers' very good, confident subject knowledge.
- Subject evaluation is not yet sharply focused on raising standards.

#### **Commentary**

174. Students in the past have been entered for the AS and A2 examinations in English literature. This year there is an AS group studying English language and literature. The faculty has put this on in response to students' requests and after analysing GCSE trends.
175. A2 results in 2004 were very low when compared with national standards. These were lower than those in the previous two years, when they had been well below average. Students in this group nevertheless achieved satisfactorily when compared with their very low standards on entry to the course. All eighteen passed the examination, although the highest grade was a B, obtained by one student. In the 2004 AS-level examinations, twenty-two students were entered and twenty-one passed, with three obtaining an A or B grade. This group achieved well when compared with their standards on entry to the course.
176. Work seen during the inspection showed that standards are below the national average and that achievement is good, as they are well below on entry to the course. Students get a good grounding in the techniques of both linguistic and literary analysis. They learn to compare stylistic features of texts and they use technical vocabulary correctly. Higher-attaining students express some quite sophisticated and profound ideas, although they lack oral fluency and use a lot of colloquial and informal language in discussion. The standard of written work is low for A level students, and they are often held back from attaining a higher grade by clumsy, ungrammatical expressions. Students also lack the wide-ranging general and literary knowledge that would help them to understand the contexts and references of literary and other texts.
177. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they ask pointed questions and explain aspects thoroughly. Lessons are planned to contain a range of activities, which usually include group work and discussion. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards effectively to highlight points. There are some parts of lessons when the pace and energy levels drop, and learning is somewhat slower. Work is well marked and assessed, with teachers indicating helpfully how it could be improved.
178. The subject is well led and well managed. The head of faculty has a vision for improvement centred on raising standards and achievement. There is a well-established teaching team, which has focused on making learning in lessons interesting. The evaluation of the work of the department, including analysing trends and achievement, is not yet used rigorously to drive up standards. There has been a significant rise in the number of students taking A-level English since the previous inspection and the good quality of teaching has been maintained. Improvement has been satisfactory.

#### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

179. Overall, standards of literacy and spoken English are below average. Students' reading skills are good enough to enable them to carry out appropriate research. They tend to speak informally and colloquially in discussion, although they can get across their ideas clearly. Some subjects, such as sociology, give students good help with structuring essays and they encourage them to carry out independent research.

The standard of writing is generally lower than would be expected for A level students, and in some cases this is preventing them from gaining higher grades. This is the case in business studies, psychology and English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A clear intention to increase the numbers and quality of students taking A-level mathematics is improving provision.
- Teaching and learning are good, as teachers have strong subject knowledge, plan well and prepare detailed notes, although with a limited range and variety of teaching and learning methods and insufficient use of ICT.
- Students work hard, show interest in mathematics and ask perceptive questions, but are not aware of how they can improve their work.

### **Commentary**

180. There were no A level candidates in 2002 and 2003, and only three students in 2004, too few to make national comparisons but resulting in grades B, D and U. The highest attaining student also achieved a C in further mathematics, a great achievement considering his GCSE results. Only four students took AS in 2003, and only one passed. In 2004 there were no AS results as an insufficient number of modules were examined.
181. Standards seen are below national expectations, but show good achievement as prior attainment is much lower than found nationally. All Year 13 students obtained B grades at GCSE, while the larger Year 12 group, achieving well at this stage of the course, has three students with A grades. Students found the big jump from GCSE to A level work was helped by the use of 'Bridging' units, and are coping well with the algebraic demands of the new 'Core Pure' mathematics module. Knowledge of solving quadratic equations, from their GCSE higher tier work, helped them sketch the curves and find the roots of more complex quadratic equations. Mechanics, being studied by both Year 12 and 13 students, is well received and the concept of mathematical modelling well understood. Year 13 students are retaking the Statistics 1 module, and showed knowledge and understanding of probability, using Venn and tree diagrams appropriately. Higher-attaining students in both Years 12 and 13 are working in line with national expectations.
182. Teaching and learning are good, overall. The four teachers taking different topics in the A level course have appropriate qualifications and a range of experience. Subject knowledge is good, teachers plan well and prepare detailed notes for themselves and the students. Teachers know their students well, and they help individuals effectively with good questioning techniques. Students respond well, work hard, show interest and ask perceptive questions. Teachers are aware of the literacy difficulties of some students, and help them develop the correct use of mathematical language while explaining in simple terms. Methods of teaching and learning are limited, with teacher exposition, explanation and students working through exercises being the norm. A good example of students presenting their method and answer to the class was seen in a Year 13 lesson on probability, but the skills of research and presentation are not yet fully developed. Verbal feedback to students is good, but assessment is not rigorous enough, with too few constructive comments on written work, so that students do not know exactly what they must do to improve.
183. Leadership and management of mathematics in the sixth form are satisfactory, most of the recent focus having been on raising standards and expectations of students in Years 7 to 11. Although there is a clear intention to improve the numbers and standards of A level students, so far there has been little action or formal strategies. GCSE retake lessons take place for those students with D grades, and although standards are below national averages, achievement is good. There are no other courses for developing

the numeracy skills or mathematical awareness of the majority of sixth-form students. The opportunity to take further mathematics A level at Warwick University is very good provision, taken at present by one Year 12 and one Year 13 student. Although the department has an interactive whiteboard and graphical calculators, there is insufficient use of them, and generally not enough access to or use of ICT. There were also missed opportunities to widen horizons, extend and enhance the personal development of students, by references to the power and beauty of mathematics, the cultural and/or the historical background to topics, or the use of mathematics in the real world.

184. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, although A level results have not changed significantly. There is a clear intention by the head of faculty to improve the number and quality of A level students, to widen the range and variety of teaching methods, as well as the possibility of other courses for non A level students. Plans are in place to improve standards and provision.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

185. A whole-school policy on the use of mathematics across the curriculum has been in place for the last four years. The mathematics faculty teachers offered in-service training to all staff. New materials are proving useful in helping students to develop their mental mathematics. Students are working at levels below national averages. At present, there is no numeracy co-ordinator in the school, and co-ordination of approaches to numeracy across other subjects continues on an informal basis. Inspectors found no evidence to indicate that weaknesses in mathematics were having a negative impact on students' progress in their sixth form courses. For example, in business studies lessons students were developing their numeracy skills when Year 12 GCSE students constructed a spreadsheet for cash flow, used formulae to make calculations and appreciated the implications of varying the input.

### **SCIENCE**

186. The focus of the inspection was on chemistry. Lessons in biology were sampled and were of a good standard in terms of teaching and learning. Students responded to stimulating teaching in a positive way.

### **Chemistry**

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' high subject expertise ensures good learning opportunities for students.
- The use made of ICT to support teaching and learning is good.
- Lessons are well planned and structured so that students are keen to learn.
- There is a need to challenge and stretch students and to expect them to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

### **Commentary**

187. In 2003 A level results were below national average standards. In 2004 there were no entries at A level and those students at the end of Year 12 taking AS level gained grade equivalents at an average standard. Low student numbers in these years make accurate comparison difficult. There is, however, a pleasing increase in enrolment numbers in the current Year 12 class and work seen in lessons, along with scrutiny of students' work indicates that current students are producing work of an average standard in both years. The fact that three

students in Year 12 have a single science background and two of the students in Year 13 spoke no English three years ago supports the judgement that overall achievement based on prior attainment is good.

188. Teaching and learning are generally good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are planned with care. A variety of activities in lessons maintains students' interest and gives them motivation to work hard. Year 12 students responded well to a mixed theoretical and practical approach when analysing samples of aspirin in a lesson aimed at developing their experimental skills and extending their understanding of molar calculations. A Year 13 group enjoyed their science and applied intellectual effort as they explained the shapes of electronically plotted graphs in a data-logging exercise on pH changes in acid-base titrations. Students are provided with very good prepared notes, which also contain assessment exercises. During lessons they add annotations and highlight important points, thus resulting in sets of useful revision notes. Regular homework is set and used to assess students' understanding of topics and marking offers guidance on how to overcome difficulties.
189. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The teachers form a very effective team and there is a strong commitment to continuing improvement. The experience and expertise of the teachers lead to students approaching the learning process and tasks with a confidence that they will be successful. Relationships in class are very good with teachers aware of the needs of individuals. Assessment is satisfactory in general but strategies need to be introduced to evaluate the extent to which students' understanding has increased within a lesson and to measure their short-term progress. Accommodation is good and a good range of resources, including the improving situation in ICT, is supportive of students' work.
190. Overall, progress since the previous inspection has been at least satisfactory. Standards of attainment remain average and the number of higher grades at A level is small. However, work currently seen in class indicates that achievement is good and the numbers in Years 12 and 13 have improved. Provision for ICT is now good and its application to learning much improved.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus in the inspection was on the Advanced Vocational (AVCE) course.

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and the number of students studying the subject have both increased significantly because the AVCE course is well-matched to students' needs and capabilities.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan well and have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and the course requirements.
- Assessment and marking are thorough, so students know how to improve their work.
- The very good accommodation and resources provide a very good learning environment.
- Students have confidence in their teachers and in the course.

### Commentary

191. In 2003, A level results were well below the national average and below students' other subjects. The switch to AVCE brought an above average pass rate in 2004, but a lower than average grade because of the paucity of high grades obtained. National comparisons for the ASVCE examination taken by Year 12 are not yet available. Results were above the examination board average for the course in terms of both the pass rate and the average grade. Grades for coursework units were significantly higher than those for the externally examined units. Standards are in line with the requirements of the course.
192. Overall, students are achieving well. Students start the course with below average prior attainment and only a minority have studied for GCSE or an equivalent qualification in ICT. Students are well motivated and have good independent study skills. Achievement at AS level is very good with standards that are well above the national average. Retention is high, with the great majority of students continuing to Year 13. The two harder theory units in Year 13 result in lower levels of achievement but

it is still good over the two years with standards that are close to the national average. Students use computers with a high level of skill and competence. They can set up and install both hardware and software, including an operating system. Year 12 learn professional publication skills such as computerised indexing and consistency of appearance. Contact with a local small business develops commercial awareness for Year 13 and enables them to design, create and document successfully a suitable database for the company. Portfolios are mostly well organised, with clear annotation and development evidence, but many contain spelling and grammatical errors. Higher-attaining students are characterised by greater levels of detail and justification in their work, with higher literacy standards.

193. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teaching, is shared between two teachers, and is always good or better. Much of students' learning is via independent learning tasks but good planning by teachers makes the learning objectives and assessment criteria clear so that students progress well. Teachers use their very strong knowledge of the subject and the course requirements to support students and indicate how they can improve their work. Classroom relationships are very good. Students contribute willingly in class and they support one another well. Discussion showed that they have confidence in their teachers. They appreciate the regular and detailed written feedback on assignments and the one-to-one support sessions with teachers. Only a very few students wish to pursue a career in ICT, with the others seeing it as a useful tool. All students feel that the course meets their needs well and that they received good advice about it beforehand. The transition in learning styles from GCSE is well managed.
194. Leadership and management of the course are good. There is a team commitment to high standards and improvement. Results are analysed in detail and are used to inform planning. Hardware resources are very good and are excellently managed. Students' work is well monitored, including attendance. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved and the number of students has trebled in the past three years.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

195. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is good. As a result of the earlier Key Skills course all students are confident and competent users of computers and they have good access to them. ICT is used very well in business education, where it is integral to the course. Students were seen to use spreadsheets very skilfully to model cash flow in a business. In history and sociology students enhance their learning through the development of high quality PowerPoint presentations. Good practice was also noted in art, design and technology, psychology and science. Overall, there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average for the higher grades.
- Students achieve well in both their English and European history courses.
- Teaching is good and teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students are very good and they enjoy their studies.

## Commentary

196. Since 2002, students' performance at grades A and B has been below the national average, but in 2003 and 2004 all students attained a grade. In work seen during the inspection, standards are improving and, although still below average, more students are now demonstrating the potential to reach the higher grades.
197. From well below average GCSE performance and, in many cases, from no prior knowledge of examination history, students achieve well in both years. A minority of students find it difficult to use the subject terminology accurately and in context but most are making good progress in seeing the past in shades of grey; more competent students talk convincingly about the views of relevant historians, on the reign of Henry I, for example, and also in relation to the careers of Krushchev and Stalin.
198. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers know their subjects in depth and students benefit from their very clear explanations of quite complex issues, the rebellions after the Norman Conquest, for example. Moreover, students are fully engaged by the subject matter and value the individual support from their teachers, of whom they speak highly and who have a keen understanding of where students are experiencing difficulty. Individual support, therefore, plays a key role in reinforcing learning and motivates students to want to succeed. In Year 13, for example, several students plan to read history at university and are grateful for the advice of their teachers on how they will need to approach study in higher education.
199. Leadership and management are good and foster many opportunities for students to follow personal research using text sources and also ICT. High levels of teamwork are much in evidence and teachers are fully up-to-date with historical thinking and issue their students with information on the latest publications, on Josef Stalin, for example.
200. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and students achieve better in research, analysis and evaluation of evidence. The subject area is well placed for further success.

## Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as a result of good teaching.
- Students benefit from very good individual guidance on written work.
- Good achievement is sustained because lessons continuously challenge and test out understanding.
- Good leadership and management have ensured analysis of weakness and improved lesson content to tackle them.
- Lower-attaining students lack challenge to extend their understanding fully.

## Commentary

201. In 2003 A level examinations, results were below the national average, overall, and for the proportion gaining higher grades. Low numbers make gender comparisons and comparisons with the previous year inapplicable. The subject was not reported at the time of the previous inspection.
202. In work seen, standards are average. In Year 12, students define and apply specialist terms surrounding studies of social conformity accurately. This is because teachers use stimulating examples and lively questioning to help students relate technical classifications to observation of everyday life. Students go on to develop a clear understanding of the ethical considerations and controversies underlying the treatment of participants in well-known psychological experiments. In Year 13, higher- and average-attaining students marshal well a detailed knowledge of published authorities and classic studies. They deploy this shrewdly to support and question their previously held views on controversial questions,



such as the influence of media violence on the individual. In the course of well-designed classroom activities, they evaluate the validity and applicability of evidence critically. Boys and girls make equally lively contributions to discussion and apply their knowledge of research findings with a firm grasp of the diversity possible in interpretation. They think for themselves and learn together collaboratively because teaching methods are well focused to develop such skills. At the same time, lower-attaining students lack the focused teacher challenge and prompting to boost their learning to its fullest extent.

203. Achievement is good where lesson activities are regulated subtly to make continual challenges to extend student understanding, through questioning, suggestion and the opportunity to test out knowledge mutually. Students grasp new ideas and understand the meaning of new terminology rapidly because lessons keep up the right mixture of challenge and support.
204. Teaching and learning are good because they ensure that classroom activities exploit student curiosity and interests by making them relate theory to difficult moral issues that concern them. Teachers use very good subject knowledge to brief students comprehensively, as well as to question them to strengthen their understanding. The variety of activities holds student interest well through contrast and measured repetition. Written work is marked in immense detail, and students benefit from very helpful individual guidance. It spells out clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve.
205. Leadership and management are good. There is a sharp vision for the expansion and development of the subject in the future. Weaknesses in previous student performance have been analysed systematically. Better lesson content and more interesting teaching methods have been put in place as a result, leading to improved standards in the work seen.

## **Sociology**

Provision in sociology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although all students have attained at least a pass grade since 2002, overall standards are well below the national average.
- In relation to their prior learning, few had studied GCSE sociology before joining Year 12, students achieved well in the 2004 exam.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and results in very good achievement in lessons.
- Students' views of the provision of sociology are very positive, as are their attitudes in lessons.

### **Commentary**

206. Since 2002, all students have attained at least a pass grade in the GCE A level examination. Few have attained higher-grade passes, hence, overall results have been below the national average. Nevertheless, in relation to their prior attainment, school data, based on a commercially produced system of analysis, showed that, in 2004, three-quarters of the students added value in relation to the grades they eventually attained. This represented good achievement, especially since few had studied the subject at GCSE prior to joining the sixth form. Fewer males than females took the course, so it is not possible to comment on gender comparisons.
207. The standards seen in Year 13 are average. Students achieve very well and have developed a very good understanding of, as well as critiques of, traditional and contemporary theoretical sociological perspectives as applied in the sociology of religion. Students use ICT effectively to support their independent research.

208. Teaching and learning are very good. A very good command of the subject, along with genuine enthusiasm, ensures that students are challenged to think sociologically and to refer to appropriate empirical research and different theoretical perspectives. As a result, they are also growing in confidence and being very well prepared for their examinations. Lessons are demanding of students but a variety of structured activities ensures that they are engaged and deepening their knowledge and understanding of, for example, feminist perspectives in a Year 12 lesson and new American religions in a Year 13 lesson. Very effective use of resources enlivens lessons and provides students with the background knowledge and understanding required to do well. Very good quality marking, particularly of essays, is much appreciated by students because their strengths are identified and they are told what they need to do to improve. Their very positive views of the subject and the quality of classroom working relationships result in a very positive learning atmosphere in lessons. On occasion, in Year 12 lessons, the teacher could ensure that students work with those they do not normally work with. This would develop their personal confidence more and strengthen further their working relationships with others.
209. The subject is part of the humanities faculty. Leadership of the subject is good and management is satisfactory. There is a focus on ensuring good quality provision along with further improvement of standards, but self-evaluation of the subject within the faculty is not yet fully embedded. Sociology was not reported on at the previous inspection.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

The focus in the inspection was on product design.

### **Product design**

Provision in product design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching helps students to work independently and develop innovative design ideas.
- Monitoring and short-term target-setting procedures need to be improved to help all students achieve as well as possible.
- Students do not get sufficient opportunity to develop their design culture knowledge and values.

### **Commentary**

210. In 2003, standards at A2 level were below national averages in the higher grades for the small number of students taking the exam, but all students gained a pass. Overall, students perform broadly in line with predictions but lower than expected from past attainment. At AS level, standards were above the national average for the small number of students who 'banked' their awards. In 2004, the number of students obtaining a pass at A2 level fell below the national average, but, again, numbers were low. At AS level, standards were broadly average.
211. Currently, work seen is broadly average and students' achievement is satisfactory, overall. There is some variation in the progress of students' coursework in A2 and AS groups and short-term target-setting needs to be tighter, and to a more regular programme. Students can work independently and are able to generate individual and novel design ideas, but do not universally develop 'quick sketching and designing' techniques to show how they develop their designs and ideas.
212. Teaching and learning in Years 12 and 13 are satisfactory, overall. Teachers help students with examination techniques and understanding, when they explore assessment criteria well, and help students develop their own strategies to explore the pre-exam focus areas for design. Students would welcome more diversity in teaching methods, including better use of focused industrial visits and industry links. There is not enough opportunity for extended intellectual debate and discussion to extend students' general design culture, knowledge and values.

213. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some enrichment visits have taken place with local companies, and students have been encouraged to carry out research by visiting retail outlets. Teachers and students make good use in general of ICT, but students have not yet accepted their own copy of pro-desktop CAD software. There is a lack of appropriate CAD CAM to support students working at this level in textiles adequately. Design and technology courses were not inspected at the time of the last inspection.

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

214. The focus for the inspection was on art and design. Other subjects were sampled such as dance and performing arts, where standards were high and the quality of teaching and learning were good and on occasions very good.

#### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and lessons are well planned with good integration of theory and practical work.
- Leadership and management are very good and make a significant contribution to raising students' standards.
- Assessment is thorough and the support given matches students' needs.
- Students share ideas fully and work well together.
- The present accommodation is inadequate for sixth form study and limits further development of vocational and GCE AS/A level courses.

#### **Commentary**

215. The college offers a range of art and design courses. These include GCE AS/A level courses in art and design, fine art and photography. Results in 2003 on the GCE A level courses were well below national average, without any students gaining higher grades (A or B). All students achieved a pass grade, but entry numbers were small. Retention rates are now improving and recent results show upward trends in achievement.
216. Standards in the current Year 13 are average. Achievement on courses, overall, is good, when account is taken of the broad range of attainment indicated by the students' entry qualifications. Progress is well promoted by the demands of the work and guidance offered. On most courses the quality of work in students' portfolios confirms average standards. Students develop appropriate vocational and technical skills and can talk about their work with knowledge and enthusiasm. They display ability and understanding of information and communication technology in their assignment work. Some students show flair and resourcefulness. Portfolios of art and design work show that students have carried out thoughtful investigation and some creative exploration of ideas. The working environment is stimulating, with high quality work on display. Sketch-books show good annotation and understanding of the compositional principles and techniques needed for development of coursework assignment. Good sharing of ideas and opinions on the influence of styles, genres and approaches to their own work and the work of other artists was evident.
217. The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and has improved since the last inspection. The art and design staff have very good subject knowledge and technical skill. All students speak well of the support provided by the teachers. Project briefs are well designed: they include clear aims and objectives, staged tasks, well-defined assessment criteria and deadlines for completion. Consequently, students understand what is required of them and work at a good pace, making good progress. The use of a good range of resources maintains students' interest and helps them to learn. Teachers integrate

theory and practical work effectively and are successful at drawing on the cultural diversity within the college to stimulate creative ideas. Students work well on their own and learn well from one another. Teachers give appropriate attention to presentation skills. Assignments and assessments are cross-marked and the arrangements for the co-ordination and checking of assessment processes are good. Students receive support and feedback on their progress and are aware how well they are doing. Visits to galleries and a shared commitment to extra-curricular enrichment, including very good community links, are some of the factors contributing to the success of the department.

218. Leadership and management are very good. Communications between teachers are effective. Students benefit from enthusiastic and committed teachers who work well together. Course teams meet regularly and targets for retention and pass rates are regularly monitored. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, most notably in the restructuring of AS and A level courses and the increase in students taking A level courses. The present inadequate accommodation for sixth form study undermines the potential development of further media activities in both two and three dimensions.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

The GCSE course in leisure and tourism was the focus for the inspection.

### **Leisure and tourism**

Provision in leisure and tourism is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students develop confidence and increase their knowledge and understanding of this vocational area.
- The quality of teaching and learning is mostly good.
- Work placements do not contribute sufficiently to learning.
- Assessment of work is not providing enough information to help students to improve.

#### **Commentary**

219. This is a new course, which was started in 2003 with fourteen Year 12 students. In 2004 fourteen students were entered for the examination and most achieved their target grades, with over a third achieving a Vocational GCSE 'C' grade or better. Results for leisure and tourism were not quite as good as those achieved in other vocational subjects by these students.
220. The standard of work being produced by current students is in line with course expectations. Most students are producing work that reflects their level of attainment and are achieving well. Many are well motivated and well organised, with an increasing capacity to work independently. They develop their confidence and gain a sound understanding of many aspects of the leisure and tourism industry, particularly marketing and factors affecting the development of the industry. They are well supported by teaching staff. The accuracy of written work is generally good, although there are limited opportunities for extended writing and the standards for girls are better than for boys. Most students are able to write for different purposes. There are restricted opportunities for students to present information in graphical form and to derive information and draw conclusions from basic statistical and graphical information. Overall, though, satisfactory progress is made in the Key Skills of communication, number, and information technology, which are related to realistic situations in the travel and tourism industry.
221. The quality of teaching, overall, is good but with some small variation in the quality of individual lessons. In one lesson on marketing, the lesson was very well planned with a good range of activities. Teaching immediately engaged most of the students and students of all abilities in the group developed a good understanding of how organisations target the market by gender and social group. Relationships were very good between students and with the class teacher, although a minority of boys were unable to

sustain concentration for some of the lesson. On-going assessment of work is not providing enough information to help students improve and is not providing appropriate short-term targets.

222. Leadership and management are satisfactory. All members of staff who teach leisure and tourism work and plan well together but schemes of work do not identify how Key Skills will be developed. Work placements are well organised and all students spend one day on placements. Significant opportunities are being missed to relate the placement more effectively to work being done on the course.

## **BUSINESS**

There are A/AS AVCE courses in Business Studies as well as an Applied Business Vocational Double Award GCSE course. These courses were the focus for the inspection.

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in A/AS business studies show that students make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is very good on all courses.
- Vocational courses in business studies are appropriate for many students.
- Students have opportunities to work at their own pace on assignments.
- Students require further support with their writing skills in preparation for examinations.
- Display of higher grade examination answers would benefit students.

### **Commentary**

223. Overall, standards in business studies are at present average when compared with national standards. In AVCE A/AS business studies, the examination results this year were average and this has been a consistent trend over the last two years. GCSE results in the first examination of the Applied Business Vocational Award were below average. When account is taken of the students' GCSE grades at the start of these courses, this represents good achievement in all business studies courses. Students benefit from the opportunities provided by the coursework part of the syllabus but do less well in the written examinations. The development of literacy skills is an important area for improvement if the students are to gain the higher grades in the examinations.
224. In work observed in Years 12 and 13 standards were average in both A/AS and GCSE business studies. Achievement is good in relation to prior attainment and target grades. In the GCSE group, many students entered the course with below average attainment at GCSE but are now working towards the higher grades in this subject. Students are developing their numeracy and ICT skills. Year 12 GCSE students constructed a spreadsheet for cash flow, used formulae to make calculations and appreciated the implications of varying the input. Students are developing their analytical skills so that they can achieve at a higher level. Year 13 A level students made good progress when considering the factors involved in the calculation of depreciation costs and profitability ratios in a business. Lessons seen in business studies indicated that there was an increasing emphasis on the development of analytical skills as well as the accumulation of knowledge.
225. The nature of these courses has enabled the steady accumulation of knowledge and basic understanding of the subject matter. Detailed systems of assessment, with clear guidelines for the assignments, allow students to make progress at their own pace. Students are encouraged to resubmit their assignments after initial moderation in order to improve their grades. Students require considerable teacher support in the preparation of assignments and the interpretation and analysis of data. Students on all courses are increasingly using word

processing, graphics and Internet research in their assignments with supportive guidance from the teachers. Year 12 A/S students used computers for their assignment on a selected local business.

226. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good on all courses. Teaching was often inspirational, encouraging a stimulating and challenging working environment. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and this helps students develop their understanding of the topic. Lessons are very well planned, with clear learning objectives, so that students understand the tasks and outcomes. A variety of teaching methods is used in order to enable the students to learn effectively at a good pace. Students make particularly good progress when there is a balance between teacher-led activity and independent or group work. Teachers encourage the students to ask and answer questions so that they can reflect on the topics and further develop their understanding. Teachers recognise the individual needs of students by asking targeted questions, selecting particular groups and making sure that tasks are achievable. Group work and presentations are particularly successful and ensure that students are engaged by the work. Year 12 A/S students are fully involved in a carousel of group activity when they undertake practical analysis of packaging and branding in a lesson on marketing. Work is assessed regularly with supportive and diagnostic comments. Students know what they have to do in order to improve their work.
227. Leadership and management of the department are very good. An experienced head of faculty leads a strong team of energetic teachers who have had experience in business and commerce. Lesson observations are a regular part of performance management and teachers work well as a team and share good practice to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Accommodation and resources are good, but more display of students' work would provide supportive guidance on the requirements of the examinations and assignments, particularly for the higher grades. Teachers are confident with ICT and are using PowerPoint imaginatively as a teaching and learning tool. The department has good links with local businesses. The department takes students on a regular basis from Warwick University and the trainees provide valuable support in classes as part of their training.
228. The department has addressed the issues raised in the previous report. There are now more opportunities for independent work in both the A/AS and GCSE courses. Students are particularly encouraged to initiate ideas in class discussions and group presentations. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The department is in a strong position to move forward and build on its success.

#### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

229. These courses were not focus subjects during the inspection. However, courses were sampled and the quality of teaching and learning on the enrichment courses was good. Students clearly enjoyed and benefited from the wide range of enrichment courses that are provided.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>		<b>3</b>
Attendance	2	4
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	2	3
How well pupils learn	2	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		4
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	4
The effectiveness of management	2	3

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