

INSPECTION REPORT

**Felpham Community College
Felpham**

LEA area : West Sussex

Unique Reference Number : 126080

Headteacher : Mr R T Moggridge

Reporting inspector : Don Fry T4238

Dates of inspection : 11-15 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number:

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the College Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLEGE

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of college : | Comprehensive |
| Type of control : | County |
| Age range of students : | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of students : | Mixed |
| College address : | Felpham Community College Felpham Way Felpham Bognor Regis PO22 8EL |
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| Appropriate authority : | West Sussex |
| Name of chair of governors : | Mrs A Brown |
| Date of previous inspection : | 14 th November 1994 |

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| Adrian Jackson | English | Curriculum and Assessment |
| Alan Foster | Mathematics | |
| John Price | Technology | The Efficiency of the College |
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the college does well

Good standards are achieved by students in A level and GNVQ examinations and in mathematics, humanities, art and drama in GCSE examinations.

- Teaching was excellent or very good in over half of the lessons seen in the sixth form.
- Students' participation in the college community and their attitudes to their learning are good throughout and very good in the sixth form.
- The provision for students' social, moral and cultural development is a strength.
- The educational and personal guidance and care provided for students is a strength.
- Careers education is very good and the college has very good links with local employers.
- The governing body provides the college with additional expertise and is effective in its support for continued improvement.
- The financial management of the college is very good.
- The management of the college, under the leadership of the headteacher, systematically reviews the performance of students and staff and has planned effectively for further improvement in the standards achieved.

Where the college has weaknesses

- I. Standards in science by the end of Key Stage 4 are below the national average and, overall, students make unsatisfactory progress.
- II. Students who do not take business and information studies courses in Key Stage 4 do not meet the national expectations for standards in information technology.
- III. Teaching was unsatisfactory in eleven per cent of lessons seen in the inspection overall and in fifteen per cent of lessons seen in Key Stage 3.
- IV. There are many weaknesses in the provision for students with special educational needs.
- V. There is not yet enough detail in the targets set for improvements in students' work and progress in: departmental action plans; teachers' plans and marking; and the annual profile sent home to parents.
- VI. The college does not meet the statutory requirement that all students in Key Stage 4 should take design and technology.

Felpham Community College is an improving school with more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of students at the college.

How the college has improved since the last inspection

The college has significantly improved its A level results, which in 1999 were the highest it has achieved. GCSE results have not improved overall, but in 1998 they compared well with those of similar schools. Standards have improved in history, geography and religious education in Key Stage 3, and in modern foreign languages in both key stages, and are no longer below the national expectation as reported in the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There are fewer unsatisfactory lessons and more lessons in which teaching is good or better. The support, welfare and guidance provided by the college continues to be a strength and there is now systematic monitoring of students' academic progress.

The college has responded thoroughly to the issues raised in the last inspection. It has addressed the lack of specialist teaching in modern foreign languages, history and geography. It has improved the curriculum in both key stages and the sixth form. The college now meets statutory requirements for history, geography and religious education. With the agreement of the governors, it does not provide a daily act of collective worship because of lack

of space, but each group attends an assembly three days a fortnight. The whole-school marking policy addresses the issue of correcting inaccuracies in students' writing as recommended in the last report but there are still weaknesses in many students' spelling, punctuation and presentation.

Management processes have improved since the last inspection and an effective system of planning and review involving all departments and year teams has now been established. There has also been considerable progress in the use of assessment data and other evidence to identify strengths and weaknesses in the college's performance, and the monitoring of teaching has become a familiar and accepted aspect of the college's activities.

The improvements in teaching, the strength of systems for monitoring, planning and review, and the clear focus of current plans on raising achievement are sure indicators of the college's willingness and capacity to bring about further improvement.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

| Performance in: | Compared with all colleges | Compared with similar colleges | Key |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | <i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E |
| Key Stage 3 tests in English, mathematics and Science | C | B | |
| GCSE examinations: average total points score per student | B | A | |
| A/AS – levels: average point score | D | n/a | |

Over the past four years, the performance of students in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has been close to the national average. In 1999, results fell in English and science and improved in mathematics. At GCSE, the percentage of students achieving five or more grades A* to C has also been close to the national average but has not improved since the last inspection and fell in 1999. The college provides a broad curriculum in Key Stage 4 that offers the majority of students the opportunity to take ten GCSE subjects. This has a positive impact upon students' total GCSE point score. At A level, the percentage of students gaining the highest grades A and B is above the national average and there was a further significant improvement in A level results in 1999. Results at GNVQ are above the national average.

Students' overall attainment is in line with the national expectation in Key Stages 3 and 4 and above the national expectation in the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress in both key stages and good progress in the sixth form.

Quality of teaching

| | Overall quality | Most effective in: | Least effective in: |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Years 7-9 | satisfactory | Mathematics, Religious Education | Music |
| Years 10-11 | satisfactory | Mathematics, Art, Drama, Humanities | Science |
| Sixth form | good | English, Mathematics, Art, History, Sociology | |
| English | Satisfactory | | |
| Mathematics | Good | | |

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 89 per cent of lessons and it was good or better in 61 per cent. The best teaching was found in the sixth form. A strength in teaching is teachers' knowledge of their subjects. In a quarter of the lessons seen, teaching was excellent or very good: in these lessons, teachers had high expectations of students' achievement and behaviour, and were very clear about their choice of teaching methods. In the sixth form particularly, teachers use their assessment of students' work and progress to give helpful feedback and set targets for improvement. There were more unsatisfactory lessons in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. The majority of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory were with lower ability students. In weaker lessons, teachers are not sufficiently clear or challenging in their expectations of the progress students will make and do not give students enough guidance about how to improve, including setting detailed targets.

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

Other aspects of the college

| Aspect | Comment |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Behaviour | Good overall. The behaviour of a minority of students is unsatisfactory. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. |
| Ethos* | Good. Most students have positive attitudes to learning and relate well to each other and their teachers. The ethos of the college is very well supported by its provision of educational and personal guidance to the students. |
| Leadership and management | Sound overall. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the college systematically identifies its strengths and weaknesses and has well-judged plans to meet the targets it has set for further improvement. The monitoring of teaching and the standards of students' work is well established but needs to be more detailed in identifying aspects within subjects that are the keys to raising achievement. |
| Curriculum | Satisfactory breadth overall including the provision of extra-curricular activities. Statutory requirements for information technology and design and technology in Key Stage 4 are not fully met. The provision of personal and social education and careers education is a strength. There are weaknesses in some schemes of work, especially in relation to precise expectations of the progress students will make. |
| Students with special educational needs | Unsatisfactory provision. There are weaknesses in teaching, curriculum planning and the deployment and use of support staff. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development | Good overall, with very good provision for social development, good provision for moral and cultural development and sound provision for spiritual development. |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation | Sound. Teachers are well qualified and there are good arrangements for their continuing professional development. Resources are satisfactory overall and the new accommodation, including the library, has improved the college. There are weaknesses in the accommodation for science and music. |
| Value for money | Sound overall. The college spends more per student than the national average and sixth form provision is costly. However, standards are good in the sixth form, and in line with the national average in Key Stages 3 and 4, with the great majority of students making satisfactory or better progress. |

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the college

| What most parents like about the college | What some parents are not happy about |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>VII. Parents find it easy to approach the college with questions or problems and feel that they are encouraged to become involved in the life of the college.</p> <p>VIII. They value the college's concern for the welfare and success of students, and that their children like school.</p> <p>IX. They feel well informed about the progress their children are making.</p> <p>X. They are satisfied with the standards of work achieved.</p> | <p>XI. Inconsistencies in the setting and marking of</p> <p>XII. The behaviour of some students in some</p> <p>XIII. Lack of information about the content of the</p> |

The findings of the inspection support the positive aspects of parents' views. There is a high level of personal support and guidance for students. The ethos of the college is welcoming and open. Although there are differences between subjects, overall standards are satisfactory. The college provides a good range of information for parents but could tell parents more in advance about the programme of study to be covered each term. The inspectors found that homework is being set regularly but that there are inconsistencies between teachers in the value of the tasks set. There is a minority of students whose misbehaviour leads to unsatisfactory progress in some lessons.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise still further the educational standards achieved by students, the governing body, the headteacher and the senior management team should address the following issues, the majority of which are already identified as priorities in the current college development plan:

Raise standards in science in Key Stage 4 by:

- XIV. improving the weakest teaching, especially with regard to the level of challenge that teachers provide and the management of students' behaviour;
- XV. ensuring that all planning and marking is consistently effective;
- XVI. ensuring that schemes of work set clear expectations for what students will learn and the progress they will make;

(refer to paragraphs 11, 93, 96, 98 - 100)

Raise standards in information technology in Key Stage 4 by:

- XVII. improving provision and planning within subjects for teaching information technology, especially for those students who do not take business and information studies courses:

(refer to paragraphs 12, 63, 133, 135, 137 - 138)

Improve the weakest teaching by working with staff to :

- XVIII. raise expectations about the progress that can be made by students of all abilities;
- XIX. make sure the focus for each lesson is clear in terms of what students will learn;
- XX. increase the repertoire of teaching strategies and the ability to adapt these to different groups, especially the least able students;

(refer to paragraphs 21, 23 – 26, 62)

Improve the provision for students with special educational needs by:

- XXI. strengthening planning and the use of teaching strategies to ensure students with SEN make at least satisfactory progress;
- XXII. ensuring that the contribution of in-class support is consistently effective;
- XXIII. raising the level of challenge in the scheme of work for the Key Stage 3 literacy withdrawal programme;
- XXIV. making individual education plans more precise in the targets they set;
- XXV. making the deployment and the use of additional support staff more efficient in meeting the needs of students;

(refer to paragraphs 15, 28, 30 – 31, 35, 64, 74)

Make target setting more detailed in identifying which aspects of work students need to improve in: departmental action plans; teachers' planning; the reports sent home to parents; the mentoring of individual students.

(refer to paragraphs 28, 40, 53, 63)

Meet statutory requirements by ensuring that all students in Key Stage 4 take design and technology;

(refer to paragraph 32)

In addition to the key issues above, the following points should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- XXVI. ensure that decisions about the allocation of students to classes, the size of classes and the balance between boys and girls within teaching groups make a positive contribution to the progress students make;

(refer to paragraph 32)

- XXVII. address weaknesses in planning for progression in schemes of work;

(refer to paragraphs 24, 33, 100, 132, 154, 160)

- XXVIII. provide science and art with more double lessons in order to give more sustained time for practical work;

(refer to paragraph 32)

XXIX. address the issues of safety referred to in paragraph 52.

· INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the college

1 Felpham Community College is a mixed comprehensive school with 1231 students aged from 11 to 18. The number of students on roll has risen by approximately 200 since the last inspection in 1994. Students come from the local area of Felpham, Middleton and Elmer and, more widely, from Bognor and nearby villages. Approximately 60% of students attended the two local primary schools but students are also drawn from 17 other schools.

2 The intake of students covers the full range of ability. However, the overall ability of students on entry to the school as measured by standardised tests is weighted towards average and below average compared with that found nationally. Students come from a mix of home backgrounds and do not represent one predominant social class. The percentage of students with special educational needs and those with statements is above the national average: there are 272 students on the school's register of SEN including 35 with statements. The number of students eligible for free school meals (15%) is below the national average but has risen since the last inspection.

3 The college has set targets for GCSE results in all subjects for the year 2000 which set out to achieve an improvement in the overall results. The development plan aims to raise achievement in science and improve provision for students with special educational needs and for information technology. It also aims to bring about overall improvement by extending its programme of mentoring students, by working on issues of gender differences and the skills of literacy and numeracy, and by continuing to improve its provision for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1998 | 115 | 94 | 209 |

| National Curriculum Test Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of students at NC Level 5 or above | Boys | 69 | 73 | 72 |
| | Girls | 72 | 48 | 53 |
| | Total | 141 | 121 | 125 |
| Percentage at NC Level 5 or above | College | 67 | 58 | 60 |
| | National | 65 | 60 | 56 |
| Percentage at NC Level 6 or above | College | 31 | 35 | 26 |
| | National | 35 | 36 | 27 |

| Teacher Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Number of students at NC Level 5 or above | Boys | 58 | 80 | 75 |
| | Girls | 73 | 59 | 57 |
| | Total | 131 | 139 | 132 |
| Percentage at NC Level 5 or above | College | 62 | 66 | 63 |
| | National | 62 | 64 | 62 |
| Percentage at NC Level 6 or above | College | 38 | 37 | 29 |
| | National | 31 | 37 | 31 |

Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1998 | 109 | 105 | 214 |

| GCSE Results | | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A* to G | 1 or more grades A* to G |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Number of students achieving standard specified | Boys | 41 | 98 | 100 |
| | Girls | 53 | 98 | 100 |
| | Total | 94 | 196 | 200 |
| Percentage achieving standard specified | College | 44 | 92 | 93 |
| | National | 44.6 | 89.8 | 95.2 |

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and percentage of *such students* who achieved all those they studied:

| | Number | % Success rate |
|----------|--------|----------------|
| College | 0 | n/a |
| National | n/a | n/a |

Attainment in the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|------|------|--------|-------|
| 1998 | 23 | 33 | 56 |

| Average A/AS points score per candidate | For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent | | | For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| | Male | Female | All | Male | Female | All |
| College | 16.0 | 16.7 | 16.5 | 4.7 | 3.3 | 4.0 |
| National | n/a | n/a | 17.6 | n/a | n/a | 2.8 |

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

| | Number | % Success Rate |
|----------|--------|----------------|
| College | 45 | 91.1 |
| National | n/a | 79.1 |

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

| | | % |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| Authorised Absence | College | 7.98 |
| | National comparative data 1997-98 | 7.9 |
| Unauthorised Absence | College | 0.68 |
| | National comparative data 1997-98 | 1.1 |

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of students (of statutory college age) during the previous year :

| | Number |
|--------------|--------|
| Fixed period | 65 |
| Permanent | 4 |

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

| | % |
|------------------------|------|
| Very good or better | 24.7 |
| Satisfactory or better | 88.6 |
| Less than satisfactory | 11.4 |

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE COLLEGE

Attainment and progress

4 Students' overall attainment is in line with the national expectation in both key stages and above the national expectation in the sixth form. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in history, geography and religious education in Key Stage 3 and in modern foreign languages in both key stages, and are no longer below the national expectation. Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good progress in the sixth form.

5 At A level, in 1997 and 1998, the percentage of students gaining the two highest grades was above the national average. In 1999, A level results improved for the third year running and are now the highest the college has achieved: the average points score rose by almost two points representing an improvement of one grade in one subject per student. At GNVQ, the percentage of candidates achieving the full award has increased and is above the national average.

6 At GCSE, the percentage of students achieving five or more grades A* to C has been close to the national average since the last inspection. The number of GCSE points per student has been above the national average. In 1998, the point score was very high in comparison to schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals. However, GCSE results have not improved since the last inspection and in 1999 were the lowest since 1994. The school's records of attainment on entry to the school indicate that the overall ability of the students taking GCSEs in 1999 was low in comparison to other years. However, the percentage of passes at the highest grades A* to B was close to average. The school did not achieve the targets it had set for performance at GCSE in 1999 with the exception of mathematics where the target was exceeded. The targets set for 2000 appear challenging in comparison to the 1999 results but if achieved will match overall GCSE results in previous years.

7 In the 1999 national tests for fourteen-year-olds, the percentage of students achieving level 5 and above was close to the national average in English, mathematics and science.

8 Since the last inspection both boys and girls have achieved an average total point score at GCSE above the national average but girls do better than boys and better in comparison to the national average. In English, mathematics and science, the gap between girls and boys is widest in English at both GCSE and the end of Key Stage 3 tests.

9 In English, students' attainment by the end of both key stages is in line with the national expectation and above it in the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress in both key stages and good progress in the A level course. The 1998 GCSE results were above the national average but fell in 1999. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have varied from year to year without attaining the high point of 1994. In both key stages, students have sound standards of literacy. They read a wide range of texts, which become more demanding from Year 9 onwards. They express confident personal opinions about what they read and increasingly become more skilled in expressing their thoughts about literature at greater length, especially in Key Stage 4. Many students have weaknesses in the accuracy and fluency of their writing and low-attaining older students make poor progress in this aspect of their work. In other subjects, students use books well to find information, talk purposefully in discussion work, and organise longer pieces of writing well, for example in historical projects. There are, however, frequent weaknesses in the standard of planning and presentation of written work.

10 In mathematics, students' attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 is above the national expectation and well above it in the sixth form. Students make good progress throughout the college. GCSE results have improved since the last inspection. The 1998 GCSE results were above the national average and improved significantly in 1999. Students' use and application of mathematics is a strength throughout the college: for example, students in Key Stage 4 achieve very high standards in using mathematics to solve practical problems. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages and the great majority are competent in mental calculations and on paper. Their attainment in shape, space and measures is good and their handling of data is sound. Across the curriculum students use calculators well to solve problems. Students use a wide variety of graphs well in science and geography. They apply formulae well in physics. They use pie charts and bar graphs well in humanities. They measure accurately in design and technology and show good spatial awareness in art. In information technology they use computers confidently when displaying graphs from collected data or algebraic functions.

11 In science, students' attainment is above the national expectation in the sixth form. It is in line with the national expectation in Key Stage 3 and below it in Key Stage 4. Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Progress in the sixth form is good. GCSE results have fallen since the last inspection and were well below the national average in 1998.

12 In other subjects, by the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation and is above expectations in drama and religious education. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is above the national expectation in humanities (which is taken by all students), art, drama and music. For those students who do not take business and information studies courses, attainment is below the national expectation in information technology. Standards are in line with the national expectation in other subjects.

13 The majority of students make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects through both key stages with the exception of science and information technology at Key Stage 4. Students make good progress in mathematics and drama throughout the college, and in religious education in Key Stage 3 and humanities, art and geography in Key Stage 4. Overall, students make good progress in the sixth form.

14 Students made satisfactory or better progress in most lessons seen during the inspection week. In 14% of lessons, students made unsatisfactory progress. The best progress was seen in A level lessons and, more widely, amongst the most able students. In general, students make better progress in lessons in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. The progress of Year 7 students was good or better in just over half of the lessons seen, whereas in Year 8 this was so in only a quarter of lessons. Good progress was seen in both mixed ability groups and in groups set by ability. However, in classes set by ability, it was more common for the most able to make good or very good progress and the least able to make unsatisfactory progress.

15 Overall the progress of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 in relation to the literacy targets in their individual education plans. Their progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. There are also weaknesses in the progress that students with SEN and other low-attaining students make in both key stages. This is linked to lack of progress in their writing, their use of reference books, their presentational skills and their planning and design work.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

16 Students' attitudes to their learning are good throughout the college. Most students are attentive in lessons, listening carefully to their teachers and to each other. They contribute well to discussions especially in the sixth form where students communicate their ideas with interest and enthusiasm. Students apply themselves well to writing tasks and undertake practical work, for example in design technology and art, in a mature and responsible manner. Homework is noted and completed conscientiously by the great majority of students. Students participate well in extra-curricular activities, including visits abroad.

17 Relationships between students are good in all key stages. In discussion, they accept differing views and beliefs. They are considerate of the needs of different groups of students, including those with special

educational needs and disabilities. They show respect for each other and their teachers and take a pride in their college environment. All students interviewed expressed a keen interest in the personal and social education programme provided thematically for each year group. They respond particularly well to visiting speakers and empathise with the challenges that others face.

18 The behaviour of students, both in lessons and throughout the college day, is good. Students respond well to the college's stated aims and clear behaviour policy, feel secure about overall standards of behaviour and are well supported. They move about the college in an orderly manner, particularly in supervised situations, such as arrival and departure from assemblies. At lunch-times and at the end of the college day, most students behave in a considerate and sensible way. A small minority of students requires persistent reminders from staff about how to behave. In lessons, whilst the conduct of the great majority of students is good, the misbehaviour of a minority - predominantly boys in lower-ability sets – slows the pace of work and limits the progress of the class. Sixth form students, however, provide good role models for younger students.

19 Students respond well to opportunities to take responsibility, including participation in college council meetings. They work independently in subject areas such as mathematics, humanities, art and design technology, and respond well to guidance on study skills, offered through the personal and social education programme and in their morning tutorial sessions. Older students rise to the challenge of work experience, showing commitment and a good awareness of the demands of life beyond college

• **Attendance**

20 Attendance at the college is satisfactory. The rates of absence are broadly in line with national averages. In the last college year, students in Years 9 and 11 had attendance records below 90%. These were mostly due to family holidays and medical reasons. In Year 11, a small number of students accounted for a large number of unauthorised absences. Most students are punctual, although a minority of students arrive late for morning registration and a minority are also late for lessons during the day,

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

• 21 The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 88.6% of lessons. Teaching was good or better in 61.4% of lessons and very good or better in 24.7% of lessons. This is an improvement on the last inspection where teaching was satisfactory or better in 79% and good or better in 46% of lessons seen. Overall, teaching is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 and significantly better in the sixth form than in the other key stages, where a higher percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching was observed. There are strengths in the teaching of mathematics, art and drama throughout the college. Teaching was less than satisfactory in 11.4% of lessons: there were more unsatisfactory lessons in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4 and very few in the sixth form. There was a higher percentage of unsatisfactory teaching in music in Key Stage 3 and science in Key Stage 4. Most lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory were with lower ability sets or groups of students. Overall, there is a wide variety in the quality of teaching, ranging from excellent to poor, both within subjects and across the college.

· 22 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good overall. It is a major factor in the success of teaching in the sixth form. Good progress has been made since the last inspection to improve teaching, for example in modern foreign languages, by reducing the number of non-specialist teachers. Although there are still lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, this teaching is satisfactory and well supported by schemes of work and training.

· 23 Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are often high in mathematics. A good level of challenge is frequently provided for more able students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, for example in English, art, history and sociology. There is a high expectation that sixth form students following GNVQ courses should show a good level of independence in their research, organisation and presentation of coursework. However, expectations are low in too many lessons especially in Key Stage 3 where teaching does not sufficiently challenge the lower attaining students and, less frequently, more able students.

· 24 The quality of lesson planning across the college is satisfactory overall. It is stronger in Key Stage 4, and in the sixth form, where subject syllabuses provide the structure for teachers' plans. In mathematics, planning is consistently good across all key stages because teachers are consistently clear about what students will learn. In those lessons where planning was weak, objectives were unclear, and students were unable to build upon their knowledge, skills and understanding. Lesson planning too frequently did not offer sufficiently well targeted work for students of differing abilities within the teaching groups. Lesson planning was stronger where schemes of work provided an appropriate basis for teachers' short-term planning.

25 Overall, teachers use appropriate teaching methods but draw upon a limited range of teaching strategies. However, this aspect of teaching is stronger than in the last inspection. For example, there is now more scope for students to learn through pursuing their own enquiries guided by their teacher, especially in the sixth form. There is good practice in mathematics where different levels of questioning and open-ended tasks are used to elicit responses from students of differing attainment. In the best science teaching, teachers use a range of appropriate strategies including demonstration, exposition, discussion and seminars. In art, teachers use whole class teaching well to review homework and previous learning. In English, teaching methods in the sixth form are adventurous at times, though in Key Stages 3 and 4 they are too narrow and do not cater for the needs of the least able students.

26 Relationships between students and teachers are generally good across the college. Teachers' management of students is good in Key Stage 4. In the sixth form, good work routines and positive relationships are well established with students and this has a very positive impact upon students' standards of attainment. Teaching in mathematics is underpinned by a clear policy for the management of students and is consistent in what is expected of students' behaviour. In physical education, teachers' management of behaviour is especially good and there is sensitive work with students to ensure they remain on task. In a significant minority of lessons, especially in Key Stage 3, and with students of lower ability, classroom management is fragile and at times unsatisfactory.

27 The pace of lessons in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is good. In Key Stage 3, it is satisfactory across the curriculum and very good in mathematics where lessons are brisk and well planned. In ICT students work at a good pace, and make very good use of information technology. In art, religious education, humanities, sociology, physical education, good or very good use is made of available resources. In lessons that made unsatisfactory use of time, teachers' planning had not been rigorous.

28 Assessment is used well in the sixth form. Students are given detailed feedback on their performance and targets for further progress in their work. Assessment is especially good in English, mathematics and geography at sixth form level for able students. In mathematics, throughout the college, a number of assessment strategies are used successfully to give students regular feedback on their performance and teachers use these assessments well to inform their planning. In other subjects including history, art, drama, religious education and business studies, regular spoken feedback has a positive impact upon attainment. However, in a minority of subjects, including music and science, insufficient use is made of classroom assessment, especially to match work to students of differing abilities. Targets in students' individual education plans (IEPs) are insufficiently precise to measure their progress over time and do not include enough guidance to support subject teachers in their work with students with special educational needs. Although

teachers are aware of the students on the SEN register, the use of IEPs to inform lesson plans is unsatisfactory.

29 Homework is set regularly in all key stages. However, especially in Key Stage 3, there is a lack of consistency in setting purposeful tasks and marking homework promptly and helpfully.

30 The quality of teaching during individual or small group sessions for students with special educational needs ranges from unsatisfactory to good. A range of practical strategies is used to support students in lessons, for example, the use of highlighters to identify key words or phrases and work with word processors. Where teaching was good students were questioned skilfully and were provided with clear feedback. However, teachers do not use a full range of specific strategies, for example in teaching students to learn spellings. Withdrawal sessions for literacy in Key Stage 3, although clearly focused, lack challenge and are not sufficiently matched to the needs or prior attainment of the students.

31 Some teaching groups have a higher percentage of students with special educational needs. Work is not always tailored to their needs and progress suffers as a result. The effectiveness of the strategies used by subject staff to cater for the individual needs of students is variable. The quality of in-class support for students with SEN is inconsistent and in some cases subject teachers do not plan how best to work with additional support in lessons.

The curriculum and assessment

32 The college's curriculum has a satisfactory breadth and overall it promotes students' intellectual, physical and personal development well. It meets the requirements for most subjects of the National Curriculum. However, in Key Stage 4, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for information technology and design and technology for all students. Approximately half of the students do not follow a course in technology. Students who do not take information technology or business courses are not taught enough ICT in other subjects. In the sixth form, there is a broad and balanced range of A Level subjects and GNVQ courses. The amount of time spent on teaching has been increased since the last inspection and is now close to the average for all schools. In art and science, the allocation of single lessons does not give enough time for satisfactory practical work. The timetable allows departments to make decisions about the grouping of students but too often this has led to classes that do not provide the best opportunities for students to make good progress. Some classes are too large or have a marked imbalance between the numbers of boys and girls. There is scope for managers to give more consideration to which method of grouping students would be best for each cohort in their subject.

33 Schemes of work are satisfactory in that they provide adequate coverage of the programmes of study and syllabus content throughout each key stage and plan for progress in students' learning each year. Not enough has been done to ensure that students in Year 7 build upon what they have already learned and achieved in Key Stage 2 although, in English, planning has taken account of the literacy hour in primary schools. Aspects of schemes of work are unsatisfactory in science and music because they do not give enough support to teachers' termly plans. More widely, the planning of sequences of lessons or modules of work is often not specific enough about what students will learn and the progress they will make.

34 The planned curriculum provides all students with equality of access and opportunity to learn and make progress except in modern foreign languages where a significant number of students are disapplied from modern foreign languages from year 8 onwards. Provision for able and talented students has been strengthened by a written policy and guidance to staff which was informed by monitoring and interviews with students.

35 The annual reviews for students with statements of special educational needs meet statutory requirements and the college's provision meets the needs specified in the statements. More widely, however, support for students with SEN is unsatisfactory. In-class support is not well planned. The literacy programme for students with SEN in Key Stage 3 lacks challenge and does not successfully address the needs of students in withdrawal groups. The support for students is enhanced by a homework club, a touch typing club and reading mentoring by sixth formers.

36 In all key stages, there is a well-planned programme of personal and social education. It covers topics in sex, health, drugs and careers education well and it prepares students very effectively for adult life. In the week of the inspection there was no planned teaching of the PSE programme but students spoke very positively about the programme and the manner of its delivery.

37 The preparation of students for the next stages in their education and career is very good. For example, in Year 9, students discuss issues at work such as gender, disability and race with representatives of national and local employers. All students in Year 10 prepare an individual action plan following a careers forum before taking part in a very well run work experience programme. A small group of students follow a well-planned course, mixing GCSE courses with extended work experience placements in Year 11, which often leads to offers of employment.

38 There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities which has been extended since the last inspection. In physical education there is a good provision of sporting activities, including clubs for traditional team games and gymnastics and dance as well as successful inter-college and inter-form competitions. Sporting clubs are well attended, although attendance can at times be adversely affected by the short lunch break. The college has achieved good success in local competitions, both within team sports and through individual representation and has begun to make good links with local sporting clubs.

39 The whole college policy for assessment and marking gives broad guidance and leaves subject departments to develop their practices further and devise appropriate procedures. Teachers' assessments are generally accurate and consistent, especially at Key Stage 4. Moderation procedures are good in science, mathematics and English. Overall, teachers record sufficient evidence with which to make judgements about students' progress. The collection of information for tracking students' progress is good in history, mathematics and English and sound in other subjects.

40 The college is developing very effective systems, using information technology, to record and monitor the progress of students across the curriculum and from year to year. This information is being used well at whole college level to identify instances of underachievement and to identify students who would benefit from the well-run mentoring system to which twenty-three staff gave their time last year. The range of assessment information is less well used to inform curriculum planning in subjects. Just as there are weaknesses in setting targets in the marking of students' work, their annual profiles and individual education plans, so there is a lack of clarity about the overall strengths and weaknesses of students in a year group or key stage. Without this information, departments do not adjust their schemes of work or target specific weaknesses in overall student performance in their action plans.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

41 The college's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Its particular strength is an underlying belief in the importance of developing the whole potential of each individual, which is embedded in the college aims arrived at and owned by all staff.

42 Provision for students' spiritual development is sound and features most prominently in the reverential and thought-provoking year group assemblies and in art, drama and humanities. Assemblies are important focal events in which a wide range of people from inside and beyond the college speak about their beliefs. They provide opportunities for students to reflect upon experience and values, and create times for silent contemplation. Collective worship is broadly Christian but it fails to meet the statutory daily requirements as students have only three assemblies a fortnight.

43 The college develops students' spirituality through aesthetic displays of students' sculpture and artwork around the college, creative expression in drama and discussion in humanities about the effects of people's beliefs upon their behaviour. Some subject departments have found it difficult to plan formally their contribution to this aspect of college life and miss opportunities for encouraging students, for example, to wonder at the achievements of science and the arts.

44 The promotion of students' moral development is done well, encouraged by the role models set by committed, caring and hardworking adults in the college community. Charity Week not only raises a large amount of money for many causes chosen by students but is indicative of students' understanding of the principles of right and wrong. There is a successful scheme for students to report on any instances of bullying,

and this makes a practical contribution to understanding moral issues. Several departments cover moral issues arising out of slavery, the holocaust and other examples of human cruelty. Students have opportunities to officiate in games, understand safety codes and use expensive equipment. Many types of community service are given by students throughout the college.

45 A major influence on the very good social development of students is the college's year system whereby heads of year and their assistants and tutors stay with the same students for the full five years the students are at the college. This results in loyalty and a strong family feeling within a year group and throughout the college with numerous and continuous opportunities for students' development. Representatives from every tutor group serve on the College Council which gives all students the opportunity to experience democracy and citizenship and which has had successful results within and beyond the college. Nearly every sixth former has committed themselves to take on a responsibility for younger students. The college provides many clubs to appeal to the many different needs of teenagers and also organises the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The Youth Wing is very popular with its many visits and activities in the evening. Students learn to work co-operatively and collaboratively in science, design and technology, in mixed gender groups in PE, in mixed age groups in drama workshops and productions, in fieldtrips and residential experiences.

46 Provision for students' cultural development is good. There are many opportunities for students to learn more about their own cultural traditions and to appreciate the diversity and richness of others. For example, the regular college magazine, to which students contribute and which is eagerly read, celebrates many traditions, experiences, visits and visitors within this country and abroad. Humanities and religious education include studies of a variety of cultural issues and communities and the achievements of other cultures is also a feature of art, mathematics and textiles and food technology. Lessons in information technology and, in the sixth form, media studies give students experience of and insights into aspects of contemporary culture. Parents spoke enthusiastically about the involvement of students in successful drama productions and the recent creative arts evening.

Support, guidance and students' welfare

47 The arrangements for the educational and personal support and guidance of students are good and make a significant contribution to the progress students make. Members of staff know their students very well. Since the last inspection, the college has improved its monitoring of students' academic performance so that there is an easily accessible record of each student's ongoing progress. Linked to this, the college is extending to all years the mentoring of students to ensure that there is tutorial support for those who are most at risk of not achieving their potential. The year teams provide a well-managed structure of support for students and through their commitment to their students ensure that this aspect of the college is a major strength. The tutorial teams, including the heads of year, teach the personal, social and health education programme, which is organised very well, includes guidance on a comprehensive range of issues and is monitored for outcomes. The college liaises effectively with a wide range of external support agencies. The use of the tutorial time at the beginning of each day has improved since the last inspection. There is an agreed programme of activities monitored by the heads of year. However, during the inspection, there were inconsistencies in the quality of these sessions, which ranged from good to unsatisfactory. In the best sessions, tutors made sure that students were purposefully involved with the scheduled activity and made good use of the time for guiding and monitoring the work of their students.

48 Very good guidance is offered to students as they prepare for their Key Stage 4 option choices and to students and their parents about GCSE courses and the completion of coursework. Students and parents are also well informed about the choices open to them in higher education through documentation, career events and organised visits to higher educational establishments.

49 The procedures for following up any unexplained and persistent absences and lateness are good. The college liaises very well with the educational welfare service and the monitoring of attendance by staff members is supported by the use of a computerised record system. The recording, categorisation and monitoring of the lateness of individual students at the start of the day is thorough and consistent. The college

has set targets for improving attendance and is using a variety of strategies to achieve them; recent attendance figures indicate that these actions are proving effective.

50 The policies, procedures and guidance for encouraging good behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviour are clear, practical and consistent. The responsibilities of staff for managing behaviour and supporting each other are also clear. The college is taking further action to support students with emotional and behaviour difficulties, including improving joint planning between the heads of year and the learning support department. No evidence was seen of any bullying incidents during the inspection week and students interviewed said that bullying was not a significant issue for them. They confirmed to inspectors that any incidents were dealt with well by the staff.

51 Arrangements for the protection of children are thorough and in line with the requirements of the local child protection committee. The college has implemented a policy for the restraint of students.

52 Measures to ensure the health and safety of students are satisfactory. The college has a good health and safety policy that has been approved by governors. This is supported by management systems for risk assessment and monitoring of health and safety. First aid and welfare arrangements are good, although an assessment of first aid is required. However, the following health and safety issues require attention: radioactive materials should not be kept in a store with flammable materials; the door of this store should have an international radiation warning sign; and further action is needed to prevent the possibility of students gaining access to the kiln room in the art department.

Partnership with parents and the community

53 The partnership between the college and parents and the community is good. Parents are kept informed through regular newsletters. The college publication *Facets* sent home to all parents is especially noteworthy, containing photographs and articles on many aspects of college activities. Annual reports describe students' strengths and weaknesses in subject areas, but do not consistently state targets with enough detail for them to be used in an assessment of the progress students have made. Parents are fully involved and consulted during the process of annual reviews of statements and the college is systematic in informing parents when students receive additional support.

54 Parents are interested in their children's progress and the work they do at home. Their level of attendance at consultation meetings is high. Many support students in public performances. The parent teachers association has made a significant contribution to the college through social and fund-raising events.

55 Links with the community and beyond were positively acknowledged in the last inspection report. These have continued to improve and are now very good. Well-established links with local primary schools make a positive contribution to all aspects of students' transfer to secondary school. The college works with local businesses, industry and other educational establishments through the "Blueprint Business Education Partnership" project. It also has good partnerships with local churches, the local councils through membership of the Arun Youth Council Scheme, the nearby leisure centre, and higher education institutions. These links have been used positively to enrich the students' education, including their personal and social education and their knowledge and experience of the world of work. Employers have enabled the college to provide suitable work placements for all students for a week in Year 10 and for further sessions in year 12. This scheme has been well received by students, employers and staff.

56 The college has continued its role in adult learning in the community and has extended its provision as a result of improvements in the college information technology resources. The Youth Wing uses college resources and is a well-organised, focal point for young people.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE COLLEGE

Leadership and management

57 The overall quality of leadership and management is sound. Staff at all levels of management have acted in response to the main issues raised in the report and enhanced the quality of education provided by the college. Since the last inspection standards at A level have been improved. Standards at GCSE have not risen but the overall progress of students is satisfactory. In particular, the quality of teaching has been improved although there is a minority of lessons in which teaching is unsatisfactory.

58 The Governing Body carries out its statutory responsibilities through working closely with the headteacher and his senior colleagues and contributing their expertise to the benefit of the college. The structure and work of committees, including the links between them, ensure that they are well informed and fully involved at all stages of planning future developments. The governors have been active in improving the working environment of the college. They are increasingly involved in monitoring the standards attained by students and the action taken to bring about further improvements in examination results, for example in science. The current one-year development plan is firmly focused on raising standards of attainment and is a well-devised set of linked priorities, which both sustains work from the previous year and introduces well-judged new initiatives. It includes appropriate actions to continue the work of raising standards in science. There is no documentation of longer term planning which could be shared with all governors and staff.

59 The headteacher has successfully led the college in focusing on raising standards by making more analytical use of a range of data about students' attainment and progress. The collation and communication of this information has been managed very well. At one level, it enables governors and staff to review overall attainment and progress and to identify where there is scope for improvement. At another level, it enables subject and tutorial staff to target students who are not making enough progress. Overall, it is playing a key part in setting college targets and raising expectations of what can be achieved.

60 The headteacher, the two deputy headteachers and their senior colleagues form a committed, collaborative management team that is supportive of staff and students and informed about the strengths and weaknesses in what the college provides. The overall management structure makes it possible for all staff to contribute to the development of the college and the formulation of policy. However, not all staff are fully clear about the structure of line management and some senior staff have too many or too few responsibilities for line management, thereby reducing the effectiveness of their role. The post of key stage co-ordinator has much potential, for example in integrating the work of subject and year teams, but needs strengthening through identifying more specific responsibilities.

61 Under the leadership of the headteacher, the monitoring of teaching and other aspects of provision has become a familiar part of the college's routine. The monitoring programme is published in the annual diary and is carried out thoroughly so that evidence is detailed and secure. Its impact is most marked in ensuring consistency across the college in carrying out essential tasks: for example, the setting and recording of homework. At the next stage of development, it will be important for this monitoring programme to focus more on issues of quality by identifying and promoting the practice that most benefits students' progress.

62 The headteacher has also carried out his own extensive programme of observation of lessons and provided feedback and written guidance to staff about classroom management. Inspection evidence indicates that this had a positive impact upon the quality of teaching although the inspectors saw a minority of lessons in which the management of the class was still a weakness. There is a need for a longer-term plan to address weaknesses in teaching. To some extent the development plan provides for this through its priorities concerning formative assessment and the teaching of literacy. However, the college lacks an agreed set of varied strategies for improving aspects of teaching, including strategies for spreading good practice.

63 There is a well-established system of termly reviews between the deputy headteachers and middle managers, which report on progress and lead to improvement plans not only for subject departments but also for each year team. For the most part, these action plans address the priorities in the college development plan although this is more systematic in the year plans than in the departmental plans. Subject plans are not specific about the aspects of students' work that will need to improve if results are to rise and, consequently, are not clear about which features of teaching will be a focus for development. In turn, although most subject leaders are meeting college expectations by observing teaching, their monitoring is not focused enough upon those aspects of students' and teachers' work that are the key to raising attainment. Subject leaders also need to give more attention to the quality of medium term planning ensuring that every teacher is clear about the progress that students will make in each module of work. Not enough has been done to ensure there is good provision for the progress of students in the use of ICT within the subject.

64 The senior management team is actively involved in improving and monitoring the effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs. Satisfactory progress has been made against targets set in the action plan and priorities for further improvement have been identified. More needs to be done at departmental level to make better provision for these students, including the use of effective teaching strategies and in-class support. The policy for special educational needs pays full regard to the Code of Practice but the governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements in reporting how successfully the policy is implemented.

65 The management of the college has put in place systems that can be used to support further improvement. It is able to draw upon examples within the college of very good management practice, for example in mathematics and the sixth form. It has demonstrated that it can address key inspection issues – for example, by supporting improvement in modern foreign languages – and that it can initiate and sustain long-term change – for example, by enhancing the management role of the heads of year and their involvement in the monitoring of students' progress. There is now a need for further work on monitoring, action planning and management responsibilities to ensure that there is a greater impact on standards, progress and the quality of teaching.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

66 There are sufficient staff to teach the full range of the curriculum and they are generally deployed well to teach their main subject specialisms. The college has made progress from the previous report in ensuring the majority of teachers are well qualified in their subjects, although some non-specialist teaching still occurs in art and religious education. Teaching staff in the special educational needs department are well qualified and experienced. Administrative and other non-teaching staff are deployed well into teams, and make an effective contribution to the work of the college.

67 There are appropriate job descriptions, indicating roles and responsibilities, for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Arrangements for staff appraisal, which were identified as being over elaborate and costly at the time of the previous inspection have improved significantly following a review of the old procedures. All staff have been appraised, and the outcomes are used well to inform individual and whole college professional development needs. The college is currently preparing well for proposed changes in legislation relating to performance management.

68 Good progress has been made since the last inspection in refining whole college systems and procedures for the professional development of staff. The system is well managed, and follows a clearly understood policy. In-service training is clearly recorded and has addressed issues raised by the previous report. Training is linked closely to whole college and departmental development plans, is clearly recorded and has addressed issues raised by the previous report. Evaluation of the impact of training provision is sound. The college has recognised the need to extend this evaluation to the impact it has upon students learning and attainment. There are clear, co-ordinated induction procedures for new entrants to the profession and for students undertaking initial teacher education.

69 The college's accommodation is satisfactory. The older buildings constructed in the 1970s are

maintained very well. The new accommodation, including the hall, entrance, science rooms, sixth form and offices, is very good. The new library is a well planned and welcoming area that is much appreciated by the students. The accommodation for physical education is very good. The accommodation in music and in the older science laboratories is unsatisfactory. The next phase of planned improvement for the college will provide a new food technology building. Access for students with physical disabilities is good. The premises staff have improved accommodation, for example in the art department, and the environment has been made more attractive by carpeting many areas and mounting displays of students artwork in many parts of the college.

70 Resources for learning at the college are sound. Provision in English and mathematics is very good, well managed and effectively supports learning. It is good in art and physical education. In most other areas of the curriculum it is sound. In modern foreign languages, as at the time of the previous inspection, resources are unsatisfactory, especially in the provision of texts to support lower ability students. The provision for information and communication technology in designated areas is good, and has improved since the last inspection. In design technology, art, modern foreign languages and music students do not have enough access to ICT. The library is well stocked and is widely used by students. The college broadens and varies students' educational experience through its use of the local area and visits abroad.

The efficiency of the college

71 The college continues to extend the good practice identified in the previous report. The recommendations made in 1994 have been addressed, firstly by explicitly linking reserves to a rolling programme of improvement in resources and accommodation, and secondly, by ensuring that all bids in addition to capitation are clearly linked to improving student performance.

72 The college management successfully set the current budget within the context of a reduced grant. A range of financial models was carefully considered by the senior management team and the governors finance committee and the staff fully briefed before the final budget was decided. Resultant cuts were made in areas where staff were already on fixed-term contracts and the number of teaching groups was preserved by drawing on teachers' second subject specialisms.

73 The governing body has a very good understanding of its financial responsibilities, which it fulfils well. Governors are provided with a good level of up-to-date financial detail to support their decisions. The budget is well managed and expenditure closely monitored.

74 The college is clear about the level of additional funding which it receives from the Local Education Authority to support particular students with special educational needs. Expenditure is broadly accounted for by the teaching commitments of staff in the learning support department. Additional staffing to support students with special educational needs is adequate, but is not efficiently deployed or used throughout the college to meet the needs of students across the curriculum

75 Elsewhere, the college deploys its staff and resources effectively to cover most subjects in the planned curriculum. However, large teaching groups in science, art and music restrict the range of activities that can be taught. Not enough use is made by other subjects of the ICT resources provided for GNVQ and business studies courses.

76 Financial controls and administration are very good. Recommendations made in the most recent auditor's report were minor and have been acted upon. The college makes good use of computerised systems in its administration. Whilst expenditure on administration is higher than average, office staff make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the college and their support enables teachers to focus more specifically on their teaching duties.

77 Whilst sixth form provision is costly, both attainment and progress in the sixth form are good. The amount the college spends on each student is above the national average. However, given that attainment is broadly in line with the national expectation and that most students make satisfactory progress, the college

provides sound value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

- 78 GCSE results in 1998 were above the national average and fell in 1999. There has been an overall downward trend since the last inspection. Girls' results continue to be better than boys' although the gap has decreased since the last inspection. Results in English Literature were well below the national average in 1998 but rose significantly in 1999. There has been an upward trend since the last inspection although there has been a large fall in the proportion of students entered. At A level the percentage gaining A-E has been consistently high and in 1999 more than half the students gained grades A-B. In the 1999 national tests for fourteen-year-olds, results were in line with the national average as they have been for the last three years. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, students' attainment in all aspects of English is in line with the national expectation and their progress is satisfactory. Attainment at A level is above the national expectation and students' progress is good. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4.
- 79 In Key Stage 3 students make satisfactory progress in reading, talking and writing about set texts, which become more challenging in Year 9 where they study Thomas Hardy short stories, Shakespeare and contemporary plays. Students' responses are often strongly personal and frequently in narrative form. Students do not have a good knowledge of the range of writing styles, especially formal ones, and many have weaknesses in accuracy and fluency which hinders their progress. Reading journals show that many students continue to make confident, personal choices of books and they use the beginnings of each lesson well to sustain the reading habit. There is scope for the journals to become more demanding through the Key Stage.
- 80 In Key Stage 4 many students respond well to the study of literature and media texts, especially the wide range of poetry, and make good progress in conveying their ideas in sustained writing. Able students are skilful at planning and preparing assessed spoken presentations, on *The Crucible* for instance. Many students, especially boys, do not have fluent handwriting and make basic errors in spelling and punctuation. The weakest students make poor progress in writing, although often having much to say. Frequently the tasks set do not make sufficient demand of them and their weaknesses are not dealt with satisfactorily. All students make particularly good progress when teachers share assessment criteria with them and focus clearly on techniques of writing.
- 81 In the sixth form students write with increasing precision about character, language and technique and have a clear awareness of marking criteria when writing and redrafting their essays. They talk animatedly about their views of *Hamlet*, deepening their understanding through interactive discussion, speculative talk and enacting scenes.
- 82 The response of students is good overall. Many make full use of time for independent reading. Groups of more able students persist with demanding tasks, take responsibility for their learning in collaborative group work and lead class discussion with confidence, for example on contemporary poetry. Many students, especially those in the lowest sets, do not work hard enough in lessons and are too dependent upon their teachers for direction and encouragement. A level students are well-motivated and committed in discussion and in improving their own writing.
- 83 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but varies considerably, especially between high and low sets at GCSE. Teaching was good or better in approximately half the lessons seen. In the best lessons, clear

aims were shared with students and teachers were highly knowledgeable about texts, examination requirements and effective methods. These lessons expected much of students, for instance by challenging them repeatedly to be precise. In less successful lessons, planning focused upon the activity rather than the learning aim and did not take account of students' different needs. In these lessons, a narrow range of teaching strategies was used and not enough was expected of students in their rate of working and the levels at which they work. Liaison with colleagues from the learning support department was poor. Marking of writing is thorough but does not precisely focus on the aspects of writing which students need to improve.

84 The management of the department has been especially successful in leading the development of schemes of work to improve teachers' planning and create better continuity between Key Stages 2 and 3, including the introduction of literacy lessons in Year 7. The sharing of assessment criteria with more able students at GCSE and all students at A level has increased the progress made by these students.

85 Other areas of the curriculum make a sound contribution overall to the development of students' literacy skills. For example, religious education and business studies develop a good understanding of reading texts for information, and students reading aloud confidently in modern foreign languages and geography. They develop their speaking and listening well in discussion work in several subjects including religious education, ICT, business studies and history. Students organise their writing in a variety of forms and at greater length, for example in creating imaginary diaries and eye-witness accounts in history. Lower attaining students have difficulties managing the demands of reading, for example in geography, and there are frequent weaknesses in planning and presenting written work, especially amongst boys.

• **Mathematics**

86 GCSE results in 1998 were above the national average and improved in 1999. The percentage of students achieving grades A*-C has remained above the national average in the last three years and shows a significant upward trend since the last inspection. A level results in 1998 were well above the national average and the results for 1999 show further improvement. Results in the national tests for fourteen-year-olds are close to the national average. Students' attainment is above the national expectation in Key Stages 3 and 4 and well above average in the sixth form. All students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the college.

87 By the end of Key Stage 3 students' attainment in using and applying mathematics are good and their attainments in number are sound. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. They recall number facts and calculate with percentages and ratio well. Students' skills in solving equations, using formulae, and calculating angles and area are good. Their understanding of the properties of shape is good and their attainment in probability is good. Students' understanding of statistical enquiry is satisfactory but they do not have enough opportunities to develop it through the collection, analysis and interpretation of data to solve problems or justify hypotheses.

88 Key Stage 4 students make good progress in investigating problems and able students achieve high standards in justifying mathematical solutions. Extended investigative pieces of work by the most able students are outstanding in their communication and organisation. Students' use of mathematics to solve problems in practical tasks and investigations is of a very high standard. Attainment in algebra is good and students solve linear and quadratic equations successfully. Higher attaining students understand percentage and ratio well, and show a very good understanding of co-ordinate geometry and trigonometry. The great majority use mental number calculations confidently and carry out paper and pencil calculations successfully. Students' attainment in shape, space and measures is good. Their attainment in handling data is sound.

89 Sixth form students solve problems successfully in pure mathematics, statistics, and mechanics. They show good understanding and skills in mathematical modelling and solve mathematical problems well. Students understand calculus and sketch graphs and use them competently. They apply their understanding well to solve problems involving probability and statistics, trigonometry and graphs. Relatively high numbers of students, both boys and girls, choose to study mathematics in the sixth form and they make good progress.

90 Students' attitudes to mathematics are good and their good behaviour contributes positively to their attainment and progress. Students work constructively with sustained effort and co-operate well with each other and with their teachers. They take initiative when solving problems and developing extended pieces of mathematics coursework.

91 The quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good with some very good features. In the sixth form the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge well when clarifying explanations and they organise activities in lessons to match the range of students' abilities. Where the teaching was sound, students worked individually through booklets and made satisfactory rather than good progress. Where teachers use problems and investigations to provide a good balance between independent working and group work, teaching is very good. In the best lessons teachers provided for the range of students' abilities by setting questions at three levels of difficulty and gave students feedback on how they could improve their work.

92 High standards are also supported by effective management and teamwork in which detailed planning, the organisation of resources and monitoring of standards of attainment and of the impact of teaching are key factors.

• Science

93 In 1998, GCSE results were well below the national average and they did not improve significantly in 1999. Results have fallen since the last inspection. At A level, results were above the national averages for biology and physics and in line with the national average for chemistry. Results in the 1999 national tests for fourteen-year-olds were in line with the national average.

94 By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 4, it is below the national expectation. Attainment in the sixth form is above the national expectation. Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form and unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4.

95 In Key Stage 3, students make good progress in understanding the functions of organs in the human body, using appropriate terminology well to describe their ideas about the digestive system. Higher attaining students have a sound grasp of the reactivity of metals and use word equations with confidence when describing chemical reactions. Students make sound progress in explaining properties of materials in terms of particles. In their work on physical processes, students show a sound understanding of the reflection of light and the effects of friction. They make satisfactory progress overall in their practical skills, measuring and recording with appropriate accuracy. Higher attaining students, however, need further challenge in their investigational work to develop their skills to higher levels.

96 Key Stage 4 students make satisfactory progress in their use of scientific vocabulary, for example, giving detailed descriptions of the functions of blood and the process of respiration. In their work on changing materials, weaker students make insufficient progress in describing chemical reactions. Many students demonstrate sound standards in work on friction and speed calculation. Students continue to make appropriate progress in their practical skills, with high attaining students explaining their findings in good detail. However, the overall progress of students is unsatisfactory. Too many are working at a level which is not sufficiently challenging and have not built satisfactorily upon what they achieved at the end of Key Stage 3.

97 In the sixth form, students plan and carry out experimental work skilfully, using their science knowledge well to make and explain predictions. In physics and biology, students use the ideas of wave velocity, kinetic theory and cell structure well to extend their understanding. In chemistry, some students do not spend enough time on independent study and this restricts the progress they make.

98 Students' attitudes to science are satisfactory. They work safely and sensibly, with many taking responsibility for the organisation of their own practical work. Most students willingly answer teachers' questions but too few have the scientific curiosity to ask questions for themselves. Many students, including

some sixth formers, are over-dependent upon their teachers and are not developing the skills to work independently. There is a significant minority of students in Key Stage 3 and 4 who are poorly motivated, do not listen to instructions and are disruptive in lessons.

99 Teaching is sound overall, and in one in five lessons, it is very good or excellent. Most teachers explain ideas clearly to students and make sound use of class questioning, but not all make the purpose of the lesson clear at the outset. Planning is a frequent weakness: often, the work set is too difficult or not demanding enough. In one very good lesson, however, the teacher used an excellent knowledge of the students' previous attainments to direct a practical task at a range of levels appropriate to students' abilities. Relationships are generally secure, although in a minority of lessons, teachers do not have appropriate strategies to ensure that the class is managed satisfactorily.

100 The department, including the laboratory technicians, works well as a team. There is regular monitoring of standards of work and the quality of teaching. However, there is no consistent approach to planning lessons and marking students' work. The schemes of work do not provide teachers with clear guidance about what they should teach in order to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged and make satisfactory progress.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

101 GCSE results in 1998 were above the national average and improved in 1999. Results for girls were higher than those for boys in 1998 and the gap widened in 1999 with a further significant rise in girls' attainment. Since the last inspection GCSE results have improved significantly. Results for A level in 1998 were above the national average. The majority of students achieve the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 3 and make satisfactory progress. They achieve above the national expectation in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and make good progress.

102 There is a wide spread of attainment in Key Stage 3. For example, girls of average and above average prior attainment make good progress whereas a significant minority of lower ability boys and those with behavioural difficulties make unsatisfactory progress and their attainment is below what is expected nationally. Students use their sketchbooks regularly to record from observation and develop their skills well in pencil drawing. In this respect the majority of boys show strengths. Students experiment with colour and paint well in collaborative work. They produce high quality work based upon still life studies. Many students acquire good knowledge and understanding of the work of other artists, designers and craftspeople, and this is reflected in their investigation work in sketchbooks. Good use is made of books and art historical information though information technology is little used to enhance knowledge and understanding in art. The majority of students make good use of homework.

103 In Key Stage 4, the majority of students make good progress. Though girls' investigations often have more depth, boys' work shows good ideas and thematic development. Particular strengths in students' work include bold expressive large scale painting, their broad knowledge of art of different times and cultures and the breadth of investigations. They make satisfactory progress in ceramics, though their lack of technical expertise sometimes inhibits their success. Their work is considerably enhanced by first hand knowledge of art from college visits to galleries and museums in this country and abroad, their commitment to homework and extra-curricular provision.

104 Students in the sixth form studying A level develop good technical skills in drawing and large scale painting. They develop ideas well through sculpture and mixed media work. They experiment with a wide variety of media and techniques in their sketchbooks. Their knowledge of art is good and they put it to good use in their own practical work. They research projects independently, though their written contributions are often weaker than their practical work.

105 The majority of students show a real interest in their practical work. Year 7 students apply themselves

well to both sketchbook investigations and to homework. Older students confidently explore complex ideas through more contemporary forms such as installation. Sixth form students respond well to challenge.

106 The overall quality of teaching is good especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. A strength of the best teaching is good subject knowledge, high expectations and challenge which leads to students producing ambitious large scale work. In a minority of lessons in Key Stage 3, the management of behaviour is fragile and the range of work is too narrow to achieve student concentration. Teaching of ceramics is satisfactory though teachers' knowledge and skills are limited. Teachers' feedback to students both in lessons and through helpful written commentaries is good and has a positive impact upon students' progress.

107 The management of the department has many strengths, including the monitoring of teaching and curriculum planning. Schemes of work are sound though insufficiently detailed for the sixth form. Although progress since the last inspection has been good, large classes, limited space in classrooms and the use of non-specialist and part-time staff constrain further improvement, especially in Key Stage 3.

• **Business Studies**

108 Students in Key Stage 4 are working at a standard which meets the national expectation. The college will enter students for GCSE for the first time in 2000. A Level results have been broadly maintained since the last inspection. In the past two years, the percentage of students gaining grades A to E at A Level has been above the national average.

109 Students taking the Key Stage 4 business GCSE course have a sound knowledge and understanding of business concepts and of the contribution of information technology to successful research. They differentiate between public and private sector organisations, and recognise the relationship between business activity and its economic and social context. They use correct business terminology in describing business structures and methods. Working from advertisements they have collected, students understand the significance of recruitment and selection processes operating nationally and locally. They recognise the features of successful job advertising and the purpose of role descriptions for employees. Students identify accurately the elements of basic market research and its contribution to the design and promotion of a company's products. Students who are in the early stage of the new GNVQ Part 1 course are also gaining a sound understanding of key business concepts and techniques, which they relate accurately to their knowledge of local enterprise. Students understand key concepts of revenue, profits, fixed and variable cost in analysing business planning methods, ownership, sources of finance and cash flow. They undertake effective investigations into the local economic infrastructure, and present with appropriate evidence the results of research into the potential for new products and enterprises aimed at local and national markets.

110 Students use word processing and graphing software competently to produce questionnaires, text and charts detailing market research into consumer attitudes, and individual students search the Internet for information on potential business models. They have good skills in working with text-handling programs for creating business letters and forms, with spreadsheets for manipulating survey data and modelling business decisions, and with simple graphics to create ideas for marketing designs.

111 In the sixth form, students have an appropriate knowledge of standard analytical models of business and economic activity. They apply their understanding of business theory and practice to real business problems by undertaking systematic investigation and data collection from the local business environment. They use appropriate business and economic tools and techniques to interpret business, social and economic information, and they understand the significance of national and international macroeconomics in determining the nature and scope of business development. Students taking the GNVQ course have a good understanding of business organisations, their purposes and markets. They understand the importance to business of consumer demands, commercial pressures and financial and administrative processes. Sixth form students make sound use of information technology in researching, recording and presenting their own analyses of business activity. They are competent with a range of computer tools, including word processing, graphing and presentation software and they understand the contribution of information technology in the workplace.

112 Student's attitudes to the subject are good. Students of all abilities work well on tasks which require independent study and collaborative decisions.

113 The quality of teaching is sound overall. Teachers' plans include clear objectives which are made

explicit to students, and the organisation of resources is thorough. Teachers have a good knowledge of the world of business, introduce relevant examples from companies and organisations familiar to students, and are competent in applying information technology. Teachers pay close attention to questions and give regular feedback on students' performance. For example, in a GNVQ lesson, students received helpful individual advice about their progress and the changes they needed to make in their way of working. Where students need additional support with business terminology or practice, teachers are conscientious in providing individual help. They need to plan more opportunities for students to consolidate their learning by working in groups, to reflect on their own learning and to identify and use information resources independently.

• **Design and Technology**

114 The 1998 GCSE results were close to the national average but fell in 1999. Results in textiles were above the national average. Results in resistant materials have improved since the last inspection. In A level textiles, half of the students achieved A-E grades in 1998 but no A-E grades were achieved in 1999. By the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation and their progress is satisfactory. Girls generally outperform boys in design and research work, especially in Key Stage 4

115 In Key Stage 3, students' designing skills are not as well developed as their skills in making. Most use drawing instruments well and apply colour satisfactorily, but the quality of their freehand sketching, layout and lettering varies considerably. Students show varying levels of research detail and clarity in specifying the design of their products, with girls frequently out-performing boys in these aspects. Most students plan their making tasks clearly and logically, particularly in food technology. Students do not make enough use of software to communicate ideas, analyse their questionnaires and generally enhance the presentation of their work. They handle tools and machines competently, and have sound skills in cutting and shaping materials, for example in making moving toys. In food work they select appropriate ingredients and handle utensils and cookers competently and safely. Higher attaining students' retention and application of subject knowledge is often very good. Most students evaluate their work well and apply newly acquired technical language in its correct context

116 In Key Stage 4, in designing, higher attaining students and a high proportion of girls show a good standard of presentation, depth of research and development of ideas related to initial design specifications. In contrast, a significant number of average and lower attaining students show less pride in their design work, and do not research or develop their chosen ideas with sufficient rigour. This was most noticeable in resistant material courses containing a high proportion of boys who show a clear preference for practical work. Across the key stage, there were only a few good examples of students using ICT to enhance their designs, which had often been completed on home-based machines. Overall, the quality of students' making is significantly better and standards of fit and finish are often good. Students achieve high standards in food and textiles: for example, pastry work is equal to and often better than commercial equivalents, and oriental costumes for a Mikado production are of a high quality. Making skills in the production of sports trophies in resistant materials are also good.

117 In the sixth form, textile students showed satisfactory knowledge, understanding and progress in their current study of 1920's fashion. They researched well beforehand and presented their findings articulately. They understand the fashion influences of the period, and ably compare fashion trends, fabrics, and production methods against the work of modern day designers.

118 Most students respond well to their teachers and the subject, particularly practical activities. Girls show a greater aptitude for research and personal study. In Key Stage 4 a minority of students appear to lose interest and motivation when theoretical work is not varied or challenging enough, and some find it difficult to sustain concentration when working on longer-term projects and units of work. Sixth formers are responsible and mature and have adapted well to tutorial and seminar styles of learning.

119 Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory with some good features in Key Stage 4. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is strong. Teachers use a variety of strategies to help students make progress: for example, the use of demonstration and student groupings in a textile lesson, coaching in a graphics lesson, and

well-judged pace and intervention in a food technology lesson. Strategies in the planning and delivery of longer coursework units are weaker, especially in groups which contain a greater proportion of below average students. Not enough is done to motivate these students and match the work to their needs and abilities. The teaching of computer control has improved since the last inspection, but the wider use and promotion of ICT is currently being impaired by limited access to appropriate hardware and software.

120 The subject is well managed within a faculty structure but formal classroom monitoring has not yet been used to bring about further improvement, for example by identifying and spreading good practice.

• **Drama**

121 In 1998, GCSE results were in line with the national average and improved in 1999. In the past two years, all A level students have gained grades A to E. The average point score at A level was below the national average in 1998 but rose significantly in 1999. By the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form, students' attainment is above average for their age and they make good progress.

122 In Key Stage 3, students acquire a good range of drama techniques, skills and methods and become increasingly assured in performing. For example, they become more skilled in their use of movement and gesture through playing physical games, devising 'freezes' and practising stage fights. All students concentrate well and interact successfully. In the best work, students make full use of their physical resources, are expressive and intense, and project strongly when performing. In observing their work, students are alert but are not fluent in voicing their comments about the quality of drama.

123 In Key Stage 4, students achieve high standards in their practical and performance work. For example, they work quickly and collaboratively to devise a sequence of 'still pictures' which are very expressive and very well controlled. Students understand the elements of theatre and how to shape the response of an audience. In their own productions, they use a variety of theatre styles and create effects through their use of lighting, costume and voice. Their written accounts of practical work explain the effects of the decisions they make rather than just report on what they did, but they tend to write more about the performance than the process of devising, preparing and rehearsing. The written work of the most able students is very good.

124 Sixth form students taking A level Theatre Studies have a good understanding of how the different elements of theatre production combine to communicate the themes and motifs of a play. They have a good knowledge of theatre practitioners and technical language. Their written work successfully conveys their ideas but lacks detail about the interpretation of lines in a script, including the use of textual reference.

125 Students enjoy drama and their response to lessons is consistently good or better. Their involvement grows during the lesson and leads to satisfaction in what they achieve by the end. Teaching is consistently good and often very good. Teachers manage lessons very well. Lessons are very well paced and shaped. Teaching is enthusiastic and expert. A major strength is that teachers bring about improvement in each lesson through well-devised sequences of activities and by giving students frequent, helpful feedback. Non-specialist teaching in Key Stage 3 is well supported by training and advice. The scheme of work is rich in practical guidance but there is scope for more structure and clarity about the detail of what is to be learned in years 7 and 8. Both in lessons and in its very good provision of other drama activities, the department makes a valuable contribution to students' success in, and enjoyment of, college life.

• **Geography**

126 GCSE results in 1998 were well below the national average which represents a decline from the good results achieved in 1996 and 1997. There was only a marginal improvement in 1999. However, the current Key Stage 4 students are making good progress. Although the number of 'A' level students was small, the percentage of students achieving grades A/B was above the national average for 1998.

127 By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation. Students make satisfactory progress. Students explain the causes and formation of hurricanes and volcanoes and describe

how these influence the lives of people. They can find and explain the industrial location characteristics of the Sunbelt states of the USA. Local place knowledge is satisfactory, but that of distant places is less secure, especially for low ability students in year 8. Understanding of geographical terms and concepts improves from year 7 through to year 9. Students do not make the most of the many opportunities provided to develop enquiry skills.

128 By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation and their progress is good. Their knowledge and understanding of earthquakes and volcanoes are secure and students reveal sensitive perceptions of places in less economically developed countries. They understand how social, economic and environmental change impacts upon people when dealing, for example, with industry and agriculture. Their study skills reveal marked gains during the key stage and coursework produced meets expectations for students at this level. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

129 Progress at 'A' level is significantly good as students move through from year 12 to 13. Students are able to draw upon previous knowledge of both theory and fieldwork, and use this confidently to tackle class assessment and examination work. Individual local studies were at standards expected for 'A' level, with good local knowledge and enquiry techniques. Skills in mapping/diagrams and statistical analysis of data are weaker.

130 Students' attitudes at Key Stage 3 are satisfactory overall, though work from some groups was incomplete and poorly presented. Students responded best to investigative enquiry, problem solving and decision making activities, which promoted more critical thinking through well-paced work. Students' response in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is good. Examples of mature and perceptive class discussions occurred in both age groups. However, there were a significant number of students who were passive during lessons and lacked confidence to expand their views.

131 Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4 and A level it is good. Students responded well where teachers had secure subject knowledge of concepts and planned lessons for the clear development of learning objectives. Teaching was weaker where a consistent level of challenge was not provided, and the selection of resources and tasks did not match the ability of the students. Teachers do not give students enough information about what to do to achieve high marks.

132 Standards in Key Stage 3 have been improved since the last inspection with the introduction of a scheme of work which meets National Curriculum requirements, although the balance between skills, places and themes is uneven. Assessment tasks are built into the scheme well but staff are given too much choice in which tasks are used. Although fieldwork planning is good for each year of Key Stage 3, there is evidence of some students within year groups not receiving their entitlement. Information technology provision and use is a weakness and should be a priority for the department to address.

History

133 GCSE results were close to the national average in 1998 and fell in 1999. Examination results vary from year to year because history is an optional subject taken by a small group of students with a wide variation of ability. GCE A-level results at grades A-B are consistently in line with the national average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with the national expectation. The progress of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory and it is good in the sixth form.

134 In Key Stage 3, standards of attainment are higher and the progress of students is greater in Year 7 than in Years 8 and 9. Students have a good knowledge of historical chronology such as the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings, and understand why William felt it necessary to "harry the north". They make an in-depth study of Portchester Castle and Agincourt but there are few instances of students pursuing their own lines of enquiry. Students have a well-developed sense of the limitations of historical evidence when they arrive at the college and this is built on effectively. They organise their work well and communicate it successfully in a satisfactory range of forms.

135 In Key Stage 4, standards are sound. Students have a good general knowledge about Adolf Hitler and his part in the events leading to the declaration of war in 1939. They explain his motives and the impact of the social and economic context of the period. Students describe with accuracy the concept of containment and the “domino theory” in the context of the Cold War. They make satisfactory use of text books to enrich or reinforce the teacher’s presentation. Students’ work is generally well presented and they are developing a sound capacity for personal study through their coursework.

136 Standards are good in the sixth form. Students have a good knowledge of the Nazi period and good understanding of what communism is and where its roots lie. Standards are high in the study of historical methodology. Students collaborate very effectively in sharing the reading load and make good contributions in class discussions.

137 Students’ response is satisfactory in both key stages and good in the sixth form. Teaching is very good in the sixth form. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to build challenge into all tasks, including homework, and to provide students with useful feedback about how to improve. The use of model answers has a powerful effect on students’ preparation for public examinations. Teaching is good in Key Stage 4 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3. The range of strategies and methods of organisation that teachers use is more limited than in the sixth form. Whilst good schemes of work are in place, teachers’ planning does not describe what they expect different groups of students to learn in a sequence of lessons and this, in turn, weakens the impact of their feedback to students.

138 There is a good focus in the department on monitoring the standards of students’ work but this is not linked to plans for making improvements, including strengthening the quality of teaching.

• **Humanities**

139 Humanities is a course in geography, history, religious education and sociology which is taken as a core subject in Key Stage 4. The GCSE results were well above the national average in 1998 and above the national average in 1999. By the end of Key Stage 4, students’ attainment is above the national expectation and their progress is good.

140 A small number of lessons were seen during the inspection. Year 11 students have a good knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and history and are perceptive in their exploration of the philosophy and motivation of religious leaders. Year 10 students competently carry out sociological research, drawing upon a wide range of sources of evidence. They understand the factors that influence the life chances of individual people and social groups, and explain these in well-structured written accounts. Students make good progress in using methods of research and enquiry, specialist language and a range of techniques for presenting their ideas.

141 Students respond well to the course both in their interest in the topics and in meeting the written demands of the subject. They carry out independent enquiries, often collecting their own additional evidence, present their own views and support each other well in collaborative work. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of students’ ability to consider challenging issues and make their own judgements. They use a good range of strategies for involving students and supporting their work, including opportunities for the most able to work at a high level. However, there is scope for ensuring that the work of the least able students is always completed and does not depend too much upon the wording of other texts.

142 Well-managed teamwork, effective course construction and ongoing assessment, and resources well-matched to students’ needs and interests contribute to good standards. The course also contributes significantly to students’ personal development, both in the issues that are explored and in the methods of working that it promotes.

Information Technology

143 By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment meets the national expectation and progress is satisfactory. In Key Stage 4, students undertaking the business and information studies courses attain sound standards in information technology and make satisfactory progress. Students who do not follow these courses have insufficient skills or experience to meet the national expectation or opportunities to use control and measuring software and their progress is unsatisfactory.

144 In Key Stage 3, students use word processing, drawing programs and graphing software competently to organise and communicate straightforward information. They produce character studies, timelines and film analyses in English, and integrate text and pictures skillfully in historical investigations. They use spreadsheets effectively in ICT lessons to present data graphically, to model profit and loss accounts, and to create professional questionnaires, the results of which they transform into clear findings. In science many students work with home computers to word process reports on experiments, laying out their results convincingly as text and tables. Students retrieve information from CD-ROMs and the Internet, but they comment infrequently upon images they have printed or imported into their own work. They need greater challenge in systematically searching databases for detailed information. For their design and technology work, all students programme a computer to respond to a monitoring sensor in controlling external devices such as electric motors and buzzers. Their first-hand experience in subjects such as science of using information technology to measure physical events needs to reflect more closely the frequency and extent of computer-based work in the world of the professional scientist.

145 In Key Stage 4, approximately half of all students undertake information studies, business studies or GNVQ Part 1, in which substantial ICT work is required. The standards of attainment of these students in ICT are satisfactory. Students who do not follow these courses do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their ICT skills and knowledge to meet national expectations. Students taking the information studies, business studies and GNVQ courses are competent in using computers for communicating and handling information at a professional level. They combine text and graphics to produce effective reports on how retail businesses work and on opportunities for local enterprise. They employ word processing, desktop publishing and graphics software to gain experience of creating corporate identities, and to investigate formally the ingredients of marketing campaigns. They understand the potential of the Internet for electronic commerce and the significance of e-mail in operating a modern business. Students make efficient use of specialised software for generating questionnaires and for presenting results of surveys into consumer preferences. They work with a spreadsheet to model business decisions and to calculate accurate profit and loss accounts. In mathematics, students are competent in working with a calculator to experiment with changing numerical inputs to a computer model, with plotting results as graphs, and with using a spreadsheet for investigative work.

146 Sixth form students make independent use of a range of software available at college and home, with courses such as business studies and GNVQ offering formal requirements for the submission of ICT-based coursework. More planned opportunities for group and individual work with ICT would benefit a wider range of students in other subject areas

147 In all key stages, students enjoy their work with information technology and show a good commitment to learning. They take initiatives, collaborate where appropriate, and they manage resources and time efficiently. The quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is sound where formal units of discrete information technology work are built into the curriculum. Some teaching is good: for example, in one lesson the teacher clearly briefed the students on what they were going to learn by using the Powerpoint program and made time at the end for students to consider what they had learned about the effective presentation of information. In other subjects, teachers' planning and management of the use of information technology to enhance learning is inconsistent and at times unsatisfactory. They do not make enough use of students' enthusiasm and experience of using computers within IT lessons and in the world outside college.

148 Leadership and management of information technology across the college has addressed both of the significant issues raised in the last inspection: the assessment and recording of students' attainments in ICT at

Key Stage 3, and the provision of adequate resources. The development of an assessment and recording system now needs to be extended into Key Stage 4. There are good whole college policies and action plans but departmental plans do not take enough account of these. There is a need to train teachers in the planning and delivery of specific tasks which students will undertake within agreed time scales, drawing upon the best practice in the college, for example through joint planning. The college has effective plans for the implementation of the National Grid for Learning and for the use of support available from the national New Opportunities Fund ICT Training for Teachers.

· **Modern Foreign Languages**

149 Both German and French GCSE examination results were above national averages in 1998 but fell in French in 1999. German results since the last inspection have been consistently in line with or above the national average. French results, with the exception of 1998, have been below or well below national averages. Girls' results in French are markedly better than those of boys. The number of students taking French and German at Advanced Level is low. Results are in line with the national results at grades A-B and above at grades A-E.

150 By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment meets the national expectation in both languages, which have equal status within the college. Students make sound progress and higher attaining students make good progress. The progress of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Listening skills are sound, with students in most classes responding well to the use of the foreign language. Students are confident in speaking and have sound pronunciation and intonation. However, students' reading is restricted to a narrow range of texts and they do not select material for independent use. Their writing develops consistently over the key stage, but is often inhibited by ineffective use of glossaries, dictionaries and other reference materials. Students in some classes are developing their foreign language work through the use of information and communication technology and this is having a positive impact upon their written accuracy and presentation.

151 By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment meets the national expectation. Students make sound progress overall in developing their language skills. They meet the requirements of the modular GCSE course in all four skill areas. Students' listening and speaking work is generally stronger than their reading and writing. Grammatical knowledge and understanding are better developed in German than in French.

152 Students' attainment in the sixth form meets the national expectation, with examples of high levels of performance, particularly in writing where students make good progress over time. Reading skills are well developed in German, with texts from the Internet on topical issues used as a basis for discussion and essay work. Students speak confidently and communicate their ideas well.

153 Most students have positive attitudes to learning a language and maintain good levels of concentration in class. They contribute enthusiastically to whole-class activities, particularly enjoying activities where they can compete or get clear feedback on their performance. They take part in paired tasks maturely and talk about their work with confidence. Opportunities to work collaboratively in groups are rare, but students cope well when given the chance and are keen to take on responsibility. Forthcoming visits to Berlin and to Aachen have generated excitement amongst the students and have contributed positively to raising levels of motivation in German.

154 The quality of teaching is sound overall in all key stages. Some very good teaching was observed during the inspection, especially of German in the sixth form, but there were also a few lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers' linguistic competence is a strength and students benefit from hearing good models of spoken French and German. Teachers' expectations of students are generally high, with good levels of challenge built into lessons, but expectations in some lower attaining classes are too low. The majority of teachers have good relationships with students, maintaining high standards of classroom management and conducting activities at a brisk pace. Pace and challenge in the classroom, issues raised at the time of the last inspection, have been well addressed by the modern languages team. Planning is a weakness at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, particularly in French. Schemes of work in French lack focus

at KS3 and are inadequate in the sixth form. The modular GCSE course, followed by all teaching groups, provides a clearer framework for progression at KS4. The future development of more effective assessment procedures has rightly been identified as a priority for the team.

155 Following a period of staffing difficulties, the modern languages team is now stable and has the potential to make further improvement.

Music

156 GCSE results in 1998 were below the national average but results improved significantly in 1999. Results in other years since the last inspection have also been above national averages and at least in line with the students' attainment in other subjects. In recent years there have been no entries at A level. Students' attainment is in line with the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 3 and above it by the end of Key Stage 4. Students make satisfactory progress in both key stages.

157 By the end of Key Stage 3, most students have made satisfactory progress but attain at the lower end of what is expected. More able students make good progress, for example performing well on instruments and composing well-structured pieces with interesting melodies and appropriate harmonies. Standards have risen for these students since the last inspection. Although other students compose successful simple melodic pieces, they do not give enough thought to the expressive effect of the sounds they are creating. In general, students do not improve the expressive quality of sound when they are composing or performing. Students' singing, while usually enthusiastic, lacks sufficient tone colour and refinement. When listening, most students correctly identify simple musical elements and instruments. However, they do not discuss and evaluate their own and others' music with sufficient confidence or understanding.

158 By the end of Key Stage 4, most students make satisfactory progress and attain well, particularly in composing and performing where standards are higher than in listening. Few of the students entered for the GCSE music examination in 1998 had well-established musical skills. For that reason, standards were below those usually achieved and below those found during the inspection. The most able students make good progress and achieve highly in composing and performing. The best compositions are particularly well constructed, imaginative and evocative. Other students make satisfactory progress, composing and performing accurately within a more limited technical range. Most students correctly identify simple musical features and recall factual information accurately. However, they are less confident in distinguishing between different musical styles and in recognising musical characteristics when they listen to music.

159 Students' attitudes to learning are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 when they are involved in practical work that engages them actively. Their attitudes and behaviour become unsatisfactory when they are more passive or when activities are not managed effectively. Students in Key Stage 4 concentrate and respond very well, working carefully to improve the quality of their work. About 80 students learn an instrument or take part in extra-curricular activities.

160 The overall quality of teaching, including instrumental teaching, is satisfactory but inconsistent, ranging from unsatisfactory to very good. Teaching is most effective when it ensures that students are actively involved in music making and when knowledge is taught within the context of students' involvement in composing, performing or listening. However, especially in Key Stage 3, there are often weaknesses in managing classes. Lesson plans do not identify sufficiently clearly what students are intended to learn and some lessons include inappropriate activities that do not allow students to build on and extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. The scheme of work for music does not provide sufficient detail about what students are intended to learn, although further details are provided in supporting curriculum materials. Information about students' achievements is not fully used to match work accurately to students' differing abilities and prior attainment.

162 Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory and in a few lessons was not used effectively. For example, small rooms were not always fully used to allow students to compose and listen carefully to their music making. Weaknesses in teaching, accommodation and the organisation of pupil groupings prevent

students in Key Stage 3 from receiving a satisfactory, integrated music curriculum.

• **Physical Education**

163 GCSE results in 1998 were in line with the national average and showed a slight but continuing upward trend since the previous inspection. However, results in 1999 were significantly lower. In current Key Stage 4 examination groups, attainment in lessons is in line with the national expectation, reflecting the capabilities of the students choosing the course. Attainment at A level in 1998 was above the national average and improved significantly in 1999 with half of the students gaining the top grades. By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment is in line with the national expectation. Students in both key stages make satisfactory progress.

164 By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment in games is sound. They have secure individual skills, and apply these with confidence in small-sided games. For example, in a lesson on contact work, all students tackled confidently, and more able students employed correct and efficient techniques. Students' work in gymnastics and dance is sound. They perform appropriate actions, although their balance and sequence work lack clarity and body tension. When opportunity allows, students make satisfactory progress in planning and evaluating aspects of their own work, such as in developing short phrases of movement in dance.

165 By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment in games is sound and good in soccer, for example in skills of passing. Students have a sound understanding of strategies used in conditioned games, for example, using defensive strategies in basketball. Examination students perform well in swimming to achieve good results against times set by the national requirement. Students' understanding of exercise principles is appropriate. A small number of students reach high standards in their work but more able students do not always achieve their full potential.

166 In the sixth form students' attainment is good. Overall their knowledge is appropriate, and more able students apply their knowledge well in the context of sporting activities.

167 Students' attitudes towards the subject are good. The vast majority show clear commitment to performing and relationships between students are good, working together well in a variety of groupings. When given the opportunity, they accept responsibility well for aspects of their own learning.

168 The quality of teaching is sound with a significant number of good features, particularly in Key Stage 4. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to target questions and in purposeful summaries at the end of lessons. Teachers succeed in motivating the majority of students to achieve high standards. In the best cases, teachers use pace in lessons well to reinforce learning activities. For example in a dance lesson, the teacher structured tasks with clear deadlines for students, which enabled them to make good progress. Teachers' expectations do not always extend more able students fully, and learning intentions are not always made clear to students. However, in one very good example, the last section of the lesson was used very well to reinforce the key teaching points.

169 Informal, but effective, monitoring of provision has sustained standards since the last inspection and led to improvements in the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 4.

Religious Education

170 GCSE examination results for 1998 were well below the national average. The 1999 results were significantly better but were still low. 1998 was the first year the college entered candidates. The current GCSE groups are studying a different syllabus and their target is to exceed the national average. There is no A level examination course.

171 By the end of Key Stage 3, students achieve levels of attainment above those expected in both attainment targets in the locally Agreed Syllabus and they make good progress. Standards have risen compared to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Students have an increasing knowledge and understanding of the main features and principles of Christianity and of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. They appreciate the importance of a religion to its followers and realise the contribution of religious education to personal and vocational life. They make good progress in learning about the principles and history of religious faiths and in expressing viewpoints both in discussion and in extended writing.

172 In Key Stage 4, the attainment of those students currently studying the GCSE course is sound and they make satisfactory progress. Their knowledge and understanding of religious faiths is satisfactory but their ability to evaluate viewpoints and to make links between beliefs and moral behaviour is limited. Standards of attainment in the statutory course for all students in Key Stage 4 are good. This course is part of GCSE humanities where the examination results have been consistently well above the national average. Students explore religious beliefs, drawing upon a variety of sources, including their own experience and knowledge, and making connections between personal and historical perspectives. For example, they study the beliefs and motives of Martin Luther King within the context of Christianity and the history of the Church, discussing theological, biblical and philosophical perspectives.

173 The college has begun a general course in the sixth form that meets statutory requirements. Students spoke appreciatively of what they were studying and the college should consider the possibility of extending what the course currently provides.

174 Students' attitudes are good overall. Students are interested in the subject and respond eagerly in oral work and collaboratively in groups. Behaviour in all classes was very good. Students are doing extra research, for example, making educational visits on their own initiative.

175 The quality of teaching is good overall and includes some which is excellent or very good. Teachers have a good specialist knowledge and approach lessons well prepared and with high expectations of students' success. They set open-ended tasks and imaginative activities, extend able students through research assignments and provide good support for less able students.

176 Since the last inspection, there have been considerable improvements in staffing, teaching, curriculum planning, assessment procedures and the departmental resource base. These have led to a rise in students' attainment, especially in Key Stage 3, and provide a good foundation for further improvement.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

177 During the inspection a team of fifteen inspectors spent a total of 60 days in the college. They observed a sample of 191 lessons for a total of 153 hours and spent another 32 hours inspecting samples of students work. They also observed six assemblies and twenty-six tutorial sessions. The team inspected the work of three students from each year group and other collections of work from each subject area, the sixth form and the individual learning support department. Inspectors spoke with students during the week and interviewed six students from each year group in Key Stage 3 and 4 as well as sixth formers. Inspection team members interviewed the chair of governors and other members of the governing staff. They attended meetings of staff and extra-curricular activities. Documentation provided by the college was analysed before and during the inspection. The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 39 parents, received written comments from parents and analysed responses to a questionnaire sent to all parents.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Student data

| | Number of students on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of students with statements of SEN | Number of students on college's register of SEN | Number of full-time students eligible for free college meals |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Y5 – Y13 | 1231 | 37 | 272 | 182 |

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 69.56 |
| Number of students per qualified teacher | 17.7 |

Education support staff

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 19 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week | 468 |

[Secondary colleges]

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes: | 76% |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|------|
| Average teaching group size: | KS3 | 29.2 |
| | KS4 | 25.5 |

Financial data

Financial year:

| |
|------|
| 1998 |
|------|

| | £ |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| Total Income | 2821563 |
| Total Expenditure | 2709852 |
| Expenditure per student | 2342 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 79155 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 190866 |

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

| |
|------|
| 1231 |
|------|

 Number of questionnaires returned:

| |
|-----|
| 190 |
|-----|

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| I feel the college encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the college | 16.4 | 68.3 | 9.0 | 5.3 | 1.1 |
| I would find it easy to approach the college with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 42.1 | 52.1 | 1.6 | 3.7 | 0.5 |
| The college handles complaints from parents well | 24.3 | 52.5 | 14.4 | 7.2 | 1.7 |
| The college gives me a clear understanding of what is taught | 13.8 | 60.1 | 13.3 | 11.7 | 1.1 |
| The college keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress | 24.1 | 58.3 | 10.7 | 4.8 | 2.1 |
| The college enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work | 25.7 | 54.0 | 15.5 | 4.3 | 0.5 |
| The college encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons | 17.1 | 61.0 | 15.5 | 5.3 | 1.1 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home | 15.1 | 67.0 | 4.9 | 10.8 | 2.2 |
| The college's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren) | 21.5 | 53.8 | 19.4 | 4.3 | 1.1 |
| The college achieves high standards of good behaviour | 16.4 | 52.5 | 21.9 | 7.7 | 1.6 |
| My child(ren) like(s) college | 22.9 | 62.8 | 11.2 | 2.1 | 1.1 |

